

SELECTIONS FROM
Meditations on the Gospel

VOLUME II

BY JACQUES BÉNIGNE BOSSUET

translated by

SISTER LUCILLE CORINNE FRANCHERE, O.S.B.

with a special introduction by

REV. L. COLIN, C.S.S.R.

and

REV. TH. REY-MERMET, C.S.S.R.

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SELECTIONS FROM
Meditations on the Gospel

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME II

THE FIRST PART

	PAGE
1ST DAY	The preparation of the Cenacle. 3
2ND DAY	The Pasch. The life of the Christian is only a transition. 7
3RD DAY	The washing of the feet. The power of Jesus Christ and His humility. 10
4TH DAY	The Father has delivered all that is most dear to Him to Jesus Christ. 12
5TH DAY	Jesus Christ is true God and true man. 14
6TH DAY	Jesus Christ is God of God, born of God. 16
7TH DAY	Jesus Christ, born of the Glory of God, was to return to God. 19
8TH DAY	Jesus humbles Himself at the washing of the feet. 21
9TH DAY	Peter refuses to allow Jesus to wash his feet. 22
10TH DAY	Cleanse yourself of the smallest stains. You are pure, but not all. 24
11TH DAY	Judas is washed like the others. 27
12TH DAY	Jesus commands His apostles to imitate Him. 28
13TH DAY	Jesus is troubled. One of you shall betray Me. 31
14TH DAY	What is the cause of Our Lord's disquiet? 34
15TH DAY	The horror of sin is the cause of Our Lord's anxiety. 36
16TH DAY	I desired with a great desire to eat this Pasch. Jesus Christ is our Pasch. 38
17TH DAY	The pact and betrayal of Jesus. 41
18TH DAY	The new Capharnumite murmurers. 44
19TH DAY	Spiritual rebirth is explained by Our Saviour to Nicodemus. 46

	PAGE
20TH DAY	Reception of the Eucharist is real participation in the Body and Blood of Our Lord, in memory of the death He suffered for us. 48
21ST DAY	The disciples are scandalized. 50
22ND DAY	What caused the incredulity of the Capharnumites? 52
23RD DAY	The discernment of the faithful and the unbelieving disciples. 56
24TH DAY	The Eucharist is the strength of the soul and of the body. 59
25TH DAY	The Eucharist is the viaticum of the dying. 60
26TH DAY	The sacrifice of the Mass. 63
27TH DAY	The simplicity and the grandeur of this sacrifice. 69
28TH DAY	The Lamb stands before the throne of God. 71
29TH DAY	The Eucharist is the blood of the New Testament. 72
30TH DAY	This is the New Testament through the Blood of Our Lord. 74
31ST DAY	An act of thanksgiving. 77
32ND DAY	The treachery of Judas is discovered. 79
33RD DAY	Who are destined for the kingdom of God? 82
34TH DAY	The power of Satan. 84
35TH DAY	Jesus cares for the apostles. He is placed in the rank of scoundrels. 85
36TH DAY	The glorification of Jesus. 87
37TH DAY	Jesus prepares our intellects for the greatest truths through submission, and through a holy fear. 89
38TH DAY	Jesus Christ is our assurance and our rest. 90
39TH DAY	Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. 92
40TH DAY	No man cometh to the Father, but through Jesus Christ. 94
41ST DAY	God alone is enough for us. 96
42ND DAY	The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. 98

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vii

		PAGE
43RD DAY	Jesus Christ operating through His miracles shows us the Father in His works.	100
44TH DAY	The miracles of the apostles are greater than those of Jesus Christ.	103
45TH DAY	Jesus predicts all that must happen to Him. He goes voluntarily to His death.	108
THE SECOND PART		
1ST DAY	There is strength in the word of the cross: bear the fruit of the cross.	115
2ND DAY	The commandment of the Cross is love.	116
3RD DAY	The full and perfect joy of obeying through love and not through fear.	117
4TH DAY	Those to whom He discloses all His secrets serve Jesus Christ as friends.	118
5TH DAY	We must and can ask for anything in the name of Jesus Christ.	120
6TH DAY	Jesus and His disciples are despised by the world. The injustice of the world's hatred.	121
7TH DAY	The testimony of the spirit of truth reassures.	125
8TH DAY	Sadness at the absence of Jesus.	126
9TH DAY	The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the Jews and the world of their incredulity.	127
10TH DAY	The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of injustice.	133
11TH DAY	The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of the iniquity of its judgements.	134
12TH DAY	The Holy Spirit is equal to the Son through His works.	136
13TH DAY	The Holy Spirit is equal to the Son through His origin: He announces future happenings, and penetrates the secrets of the heart.	137

	PAGE
14TH DAY	What does Jesus mean: <i>Again a little while?</i> 138
15TH DAY	Sadness is changed into joy. 141
16TH DAY	Suffer and do violence to yourself. 142
17TH DAY	This joy cannot be taken from you. 143
18TH DAY	What one must ask in the name of Jesus Christ. 145
19TH DAY	Everything comes to us through Jesus Christ. 147
20TH DAY	The forlornness of Jesus Christ. 150
21ST DAY	Consent to the Divine Will. 151
22ND DAY	The four words or prayers that Our Lord addressed to His Father. 152
23RD DAY	Jesus raises His eyes to heaven when beginning His prayer. 155
24TH DAY	The infinite glory of the Father and of the Son. 156
25TH DAY	Jesus saves all those whom the Father has given Him. 157
26TH DAY	The elect are taken from the world by the Father. 159
27TH DAY	The Son instructs those who are given to Him by the Father. 161
28TH DAY	How the Father gives the elect to the Son. 163
29TH DAY	Jesus does not pray for the world. 164
30TH DAY	He prays for those in whom God is glorified. 166
31ST DAY	He asks that they be one as His Father and He are one. 167
32ND DAY	The child of perdition. 170
33RD DAY	Jesus Christ keeps the faithful in body as well as in soul. 171
34TH DAY	What is the world? 173
35TH DAY	Jesus is not of the world, nor are His true disciples. 174
36TH DAY	Jesus prays for all the elect: that they may be one. 175

TABLE OF CONTENTS**ix**

	PAGE
37TH DAY	Faith, full and entire, is the effect of the unity of the faithful. 177
38TH DAY	Jesus shares His glory with His elect. 178
39TH DAY	The elect are completed in one. 181
40TH DAY	The justice of God is unknown to the world. 182
41ST DAY	The justice of God is unknown to the presumptuous. 184
42ND DAY	The elect are loved by God in Jesus Christ. 185
43RD DAY	Let us have a firm faith in Jesus, the real Messiah. 187
44TH DAY	The secret effect of the prayer of Our Lord. Jesus Christ's prayers are always granted. The predestination of the saints. 190
45TH DAY	Let us unite ourselves to Jesus Christ. 194

THE FIRST PART

What happened in the Cenacle before Jesus left.

THE FIRST DAY

The preparation of the Cenacle (Matt. xxvi. 17-19; Mark xiv. 12-17; and Luke xxii. 7-13).

On the first day of the Azymer, at the end of which it was the custom to sacrifice the Pascal lamb, the disciples came to Jesus and, as they knew how exact He was in all the observances of the law, they asked Him where He wished that they prepare the Pasch for Him. (Matt. xxvi. 17) It is the disciples who speak to Him of it. Masters following the example of Jesus Christ must accustom all those in their charge to judge for themselves what the law of God and His service require, and to seek, concerning that, the mandate of their master.

And Jesus said to them: Go to the city to a certain man. (Matt. xxvi. 18) The Evangelists do not name the man, and Jesus Himself, without giving the man's name to the disciples, merely pointed out to them a certain direction in which they were to go to find him. Go to the city, He said: On entering there you will meet a man carrying a pail of water. Follow Him to the city. And entering the house where he enters, you will say to the master: Where is the place where I am to eat the Pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large room richly carpeted and hung with beautiful tapestries. Prepare it for us with all that is needed. (Luke xxii. 8-13)

St. Mark tells us that Jesus gave this order to two of His

disciples; Saint Luke names Saint Peter and Saint John.

From this information we see that something magnificent is being prepared, something greater than an ordinary Pasch, since He sends His two most important apostles to make the preparations: Saint Peter whom He had placed at their head, and Saint John whom He honored with His particular friendship. The Evangelists do not tell us His usual custom of observing Passovers, nor whether he was accustomed to choose a place where there was a large room richly carpeted and with many tapestries. The Church Fathers surmise, however, that this formal preparation was in honor of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Perhaps Jesus wished to show with what care places consecrated to the celebration of this mystery should be adorned. In any event, this is the only occasion on which Jesus seems to have wished not to appear to be poor. Christians have learned through this example that rituals of pomp and ceremony, in evidence since early times, should be used in order to celebrate the Eucharist with honor according to the means of the different churches. But what we must learn principally is to prepare ourselves to receive it worthily; that is to say, to prepare for the Eucharist a beautiful room, a heart dilated through the love of God, and capable of the greatest acts, with all the ornaments of grace and of virtues which are represented by the beautiful tapestries with which the room of the Last Supper was adorned. Let us prepare worthily for Jesus Who is coming to us: everything must be in readiness to receive Him.

Jesus used the example of the water carrier to make His disciples understand that even the most ordinary actions in life are directed by divine Providence. What

could have been more commonplace to them than meeting a man who had just fetched a pail of water from a fountain outside the city? And what was more ordinary than that this man should carry the pail of water into the house at the same moment that the two disciples were to enter the city? Nevertheless, this action was governed secretly by the wisdom of God as other similar actions are ruled by Him. When events occur which we consider to have taken place by mere chance or by accident, we must understand that it is God Who regulates them, even as He does our least movements. Yet God never interferes with our liberty; rather, He directs all actions according to His secret designs.

This passage shows us that Jesus had some disciples who were unknown to the rest, and whose names He did not reveal except on very rare occasions when He was obliged to declare them to others. Thus, when He wished to make His formal entrance into Jerusalem, Jesus sent two disciples to a village which He designated, and commanded them to bring Him a she-ass which they would find there with her colt. He assured the two men that *as soon as they said that the Lord needed them the owner would part with them.* (Matt. xxi. 3) He evidently chose several disciples of this sort in the city and in the country, upon whose faithfulness and obedience He could rely. And yet, He did not disclose their names to the disciples except when necessary. Through this means He taught the disciples that discretion was called for under certain circumstances. The disciples showed that they had profited from His example when, in the Gospels, long after the Saviour's death, they hesitated to mention certain names. However, they were not always so secretive in the

use of proper names. For example, not only have we learned that the man who helped Jesus carry His cross was named Simon the Cyrenean, but it has been verified *that He was the father of Alexander and Rufus* (Mark xv. 21), who were well-known among the faithful. But, here as elsewhere, discretion had to be used to decide when some people's names should be made public in order to better verify things, or when secrecy was called for.

St. Peter and St. John found things just as Our Lord had told them they would. The water carrier did not fail to be at the place outside the city gates through which they entered to go to the house which Our Lord had chosen. So, too, the ass's colt was found at the designated place near the entrance of the village, tied to a gate between two paths. A man was standing there, with many other strangers, and he *asked the disciples what they wished to do with this colt.* (Mark xi. 4-6) It would seem that chance made him speak; but no, he was the one who was to allow the animal to go at the first request of the disciples, according to the word of their Master. Finally, they learned that the colt had never been mounted. It had to be thus in order to accomplish the mystery, and to show that the Saviour was one day to rise up and to lead an unmanageable people, that is to say, the Gentiles, who until then, had had no law, nor any leader who had been able to subdue them. All things are governed, small things as well as the greatest, and fit in with the great purposes of God.

Behold then, everything is prepared. The large, richly adorned room is ready. The Saviour is expected. Let us now witness the great ceremony in which He will give

Himself to His faithful. Let us meditate on this event. Let us believe. Let us strive to be worthy, and open our hearts as well as our eyes.

THE SECOND DAY

The Pasch. The life of the Christian is only a transition.

Before the Pasch, Jesus knowing that His hour had come to pass from this world to His Father, as He had loved His own people, who were in the world, He loved them to the very end. (John xiii. 1)

We know that the word *Pasch* means *passage*, or *pass-over*. One of the reasons for this name, which is also the one that Saint John is concerned with in this statement, is that the festival of Easter was instituted when the ancient people were to leave Egypt to *pass over* to the Promised Land of their fathers, which passage was a figure of the transition which the new people were to make from the world to the celestial Fatherland. The epitome of Christian life consists in making this crossing in a becoming manner, and it is to this end that Our Lord continues to direct His conduct more than ever, as Saint John informs us here.

The first thing that we must notice is that we must make this Pasch, or this transition, with Jesus Christ. For this reason, the Evangelist begins his account of this Pasch with these words: *Before the day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing that He was to pass out of this world to His Father.*

Ah Jesus! I present myself to You to make my Pasch in Your company; I wish to pass with You from this world to Your Father, Whom You have wished be mine also. *The world passeth*, said Your apostle. (I John ii. 17) The figure of this world *passeth* (I Cor. vii. 31), but I do not wish to pass with the world; I wish to pass to Your Father. On this trip that I must take, I ask You to accompany me.

In the ancient Pasch, the Jews who were to go out of Egypt, to pass over into the Promised Land, had to appear in traveler's garb, *a stick in their hands a cincture around their waist*, in order to hold up their clothes; *their shoes worn*, always ready to leave; and *they were to hurry to eat the Pasch* (Exod. xii. 11), in order that nothing delay them, and that they keep themselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice. This is a figure of the state in which the Christian must place himself to keep this Pasch with Jesus Christ, in order to pass over to His Father with Him. Oh my Saviour! Receive Your traveler; I am ready. I care for nothing else. I wish to pass from this world with You to Your Father.

Why then do I feel regret at leaving? Can it be that I am still attached to this world? What error of judgment attaches me to this place of exile? You are going to pass, my Saviour! And, resolved as I was to pass with You, when I am told that I must leave, never to return, I am troubled. I cannot accept this reality nor do I wish to hear about it. Cowardly traveler! What do you fear? The transition you are asked to make is the one which the Saviour was also required to make. Are you afraid to pass with Him? But listen: *Jesus knowing that His hour had come to pass from this world*. (John xiii. 1) What attachment holds you to this world that you do not wish to

leave it with Jesus? Would He have left the world, if it were so good to remain in it? But listen again, Christian: Jesus passes from this world to go to His Father. If it were necessary to leave the world, without any prospect of going to something better, insignificant though the world is, and though one would not lose much in losing it, one might experience some regrets, because, after all, one would have nothing better. But, Christian, you will not pass in this way. Jesus passes from this world, but to go to His Father. Christian, you must pass with Him; you too are passing to the Father. The place you come from is a place of exile. You are returning to the paternal home.

Let us pass joyfully from this world, but let us not wait until the last moment to begin our passage. When the Israelites left Egypt, they did not arrive at the Promised Land immediately. Rather, they traveled through the desert for forty years. Nevertheless, they celebrated their Pasch because they were leaving Egypt, and were going to begin their journey. Let us learn to celebrate our Pasch from our very first step. May our passage be perpetual. Let us never stop. Following the example of the Israelites, let us regard our shelters as temporary, and our surroundings as a desert. Let us remember that our home is elsewhere. Let us march, march, march. Let us pass with Jesus Christ; let us die to the world and its pleasures daily. Let us say with the apostle: *I die every day*. (I Cor. xv. 31) I am not of the world; I am passing through; its attractions do not hold me.

THE THIRD DAY

The washing of the feet. The power of Jesus Christ, and His humility (John xiii. 1-5).

As He had always loved His own, He would love them to the end. (John xiii. 1) At the moment of His passage, when Jesus was going to leave His apostles, He loved them more than ever, and showed them the most intimate proofs of His love. This was the consolation He wished to leave them before going away. In fact, all that He tells them this night is filled with tenderness; all that He does shows His great love, the greatest proof of which He is going to give them in the Eucharist.

This is how He began: *After supper, the devil having already placed in the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, the plan to betray Him; Jesus knowing that His Father had placed everything into His hands, and that He was born of God, and that He would return to Him, arose from the table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, girded Himself; then having poured water in a basin He began to wash the feet of His disciples, and He dried them with the towel which He had around His waist. (John xiii. 2-5)*

This is our lesson for today. How beautiful it is! How glorious, my Saviour, is the consolation You fill me with through the reading of Your Gospel! Every page contains words of consolation and of eternal life, but I do not know whether I have read there anything more touching than this. My Saviour, increase my joy in this holy read-

ing in order that the chaste delight with which it fills me may remove from me all attraction to this world.

After the supper (John xiii. 2) in this passage Saint John recalls another supper, *where He was leaning on Jesus' bosom; where Jesus gave to Judas a piece of bread dipped.* (John xiii. 23, 26) There was, therefore, another supper. In fact, there were two, of which the latter was partaken after the washing of the feet, and was the one at which Christ instituted the Eucharist: the ceremonial supper which was probably preceded by the supper of the Paschal lamb. We shall not enter into these questions, but seek here only to enlighten ourselves. It suffices to believe that the meal during which the Eucharist was instituted was a particular meal which was filled with mystery as we shall soon see. The first supper then was the one which satisfied a physical need. Behold, after this meal, Jesus rose from the table in order to prepare His disciples for this other meal, and He washed their feet.

Jesus knowing that His Father had placed everything into His hands, and that He was born of God and was returning to God. (John xiii. 3)

Let us reflect on these words: Saint John is concerned here with the grandeur and the power of Jesus, and he wishes to fill us with this idea, in order that the picture which he will give us later of Our Lord's humility and of His love may be even more vivid. Let us pause again, and delight in this utterance of St. John: *His Father placed everything into His hands*, according to what He Himself said: *All has been placed into My hands by My Father.* (Matt. xi. 27) And elsewhere: *All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth.* (Matt. xxviii. 18) This

power, of course, belonged to Him naturally, from the beginning, because He was God, always residing in God, through Whom God has taken everything from nothingness. Nevertheless, this power came to Him from His Father, Who, having already given it to Him through His eternal birth, confirmed it during the time of His passion in a very particular manner, because it was through His passion that He was to acquire everything, including the right of purchase and acquisition, which He possessed naturally by right of His birth. And this One to Whom all was given in such an excellent manner, is the One Who is going to wash our feet. This is what Saint John wished to point out. On our part, let us then humble ourselves. Oh Jesus! I submit to Your authority, to the one which You have over me, as Creator, to the one which You possess as Redeemer. You are my sovereign Lord, my gentle and only Master; *You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel.* (John i. 49) What obedience do I not owe You, being Yours by right of so many titles, and by titles of this nature so authentic, so unchangeable, so amiable, so divine!

THE FOURTH DAY

The Father has delivered all that is most dear to Him to Jesus Christ.

All has been delivered to Him by His Father. (Matt. xi. 27) This *all*, which has been delivered to Him by His Father, is principally this *all* which He referred to when

He said: *All that My Father gives Me, comes to Me.* (John vi. 37) And this *all* is His Church, especially the saints in His Church, and among the saints, especially the elect. Behold this blessed *all* which is delivered by the Father into the hands of Jesus, and of Whom He Himself said: *They were Yours and You have given them to Me.* (John xvii. 6) And a little before: *You have given power over all flesh, over all men, to Your Son, in order that He give life eternal to all whom Thou hast given Him.* (John xvii. 2) Let us add: And the One to Whom the Father has delivered all that is most dear to Him, that is to say His elect, His dearly beloved, He is the One Who is going to wash our feet! My Saviour, You have so humbled Yourself for us! I in turn must humble myself before You. My Saviour, may I be among those whom Your Father has given You in order that You may give them eternal life! I shall be among them, if I am faithful to Your grace, and if I keep Your commandments. Guide me, my Saviour, in order that I may be among this blessed flock, of which You have said: *My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life. That which My Father has given Me, is greater than all: He Himself Who has given it to Me, is above all things, and one can take nothing from My hands, no more than from His, because My Father and I are but One.* (John x. 27–30) What is there to fear after that? Nothing at all, except to fail in one's vocation. Let us abandon ourselves to those all-powerful Hands, and say to Jesus: *Oh Lord! I hope in You; I give myself to You; I shall not be confounded.* (Ps. xxx. 1)

THE FIFTH DAY

Jesus Christ true God and true man (John xiii. 3).

Let us pause at these words: *Jesus knowing that everything was delivered into His hands, and that He was born of God, and that He was returning to God.* (John xiii. 3) *Born of God* without alteration, without succession, without order of time, with an inexplicable purity, like a ray of light coming from the sun, which does not cut itself off from its source and always bears within itself all the strength of its principle. Saint Paul calls it: *the brightness and the reflection of the glory of His Father* (Hebr. i. 3): born nevertheless not by extension, like the sun-beam which is merely the light spread and carried far outward, but born of God as a thought is born of the mind and continues to remain there always: born of Him, consequently, like some living thing, or rather, like life itself; the realization of which caused Saint John to say that *life was in Him* (John i. 4); that is, that it was there as in the Father, that it was there as in the source; *as the Father has life in Himself, thus has He given to the Son to have life in Himself.* (John v. 26) He is then born of God in this manner, being of being, life of life; born through the perfect knowledge that God has eternally of Himself, like His thought, His intelligence, His wisdom; like His interior word, through which He tells Himself all that He is; like the vivid and natural expression of His perfections and of all His Being; as carrying within Himself all His beauty; as being *His*

bright and perfect image, and figure of His substance. (Hebr. i. 3) Born consequently like another Himself, like His Son, of the same nature as Himself; God like Him; but likewise a God with Him, the same God as He is, because He does not proceed from the effusion of a part of His substance, but proceeds from His entire substance, since His substance does not suffer from division nor from sharing; so that His substance, His life, His divinity, is communicated to Him entirely, is common with the Father, to Whom there remains nothing special and particular, except that of being Father: just as there only remains to the source, only that of being the source; all the rest, so to speak, flows entirely into the stream.

There, as much as it is permitted to men to express themselves, there I say, is what it is to say *born of God*. These are the expressions of which the Sacred Scripture makes use in order to help our feeble intelligence rise above itself. And all this is told in summary in the Nicene Creed, wherein it is stated that the Son of God is engendered and born of the substance of His Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of a true God, of the same substance as His Father, and the same God as He, because the Lord our God is but one God, and all that is God and true God, can be only One, this unity being the substance and the very essence itself of the Divinity.

But why lose ourselves today in these sublime thoughts? We do so to consider, with Saint John, and through a firm and lively faith, that You, my Saviour, being God, are equal to God, and the same God with Your Father from Whom You are born while remaining eternally in His bosom. Nevertheless, You have wished

to humble Yourself even to the washing of our feet; You have humiliated Yourself in this way before Your creatures in order to teach us to humble ourselves not only before You, but also before our brothers, before our equals, before men created like ourselves. Even, moreover, before our inferiors, if our natural smallness permits us to place anyone in this class.

THE SIXTH DAY

Jesus Christ is God of God, born of God (John xiii. 3).

You are, my Saviour, *born of God*; born, first of all, in eternity, in conformity to the word of Micheas: *His birth is from the days of eternity* (Mich. v. 2), from a perfect existence with God the Father from Whom You proceed; otherwise, You would not be the ray from this Sun; You would not be the brightness of His glory, nor the figure of His substance; since His substance is from eternity. You would not be His thought; You would not be His Son, the perfect Son of a perfect Father; the Son of a Father always perfect, to produce, to engender. You are, therefore, born of God in eternity, before all time, but also born of God in time, when Your Father Who engendered You, and Whom You bear eternally in Your bosom, united a human nature in its entirety to Your Person Who is equal to Him and co-eternal in the breast of the Blessed Virgin; a soul united to a human body, in order that the same One Who is perfect God, be also perfect Man. You are the Son of God and the Son of

Mary; the same Son, the same God. In this way dear Jesus, You are still born of Your eternal Father, because You have not had any other Father, but Him. Moreover, the mother Whom You have has remained a virgin because she became fruitful only when the *Holy Spirit* came to her, and *the Power of the most High overshadowed her*. (Luke i. 35) Conceived in a manner so pure and so divine, the One of Whom You were born, was not less so. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, You are born of Mary ever a virgin, and were born in this manner in order to appear before men as You Yourself said: *I came forth from the Father and am come into the world* (John xvi. 28): not, of course, that You came where You were not, but rather that You appeared where You had not been visible. And behold, Your birth in time, when, being made mortal man, You appeared among us.

It is thus that You came into the world, as Man, but at the same time You remained as God in the bosom of Your Father, according to the words of Saint John Your precursor: *No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of His Father, He hath declared Him* (John i. 18), and has made Him known to us. As You Yourself said: *And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man Who is in heaven*. (John iii. 13) You descended from it, and yet You are there, for, as God, You never leave heaven, which is the place of the glory of Your Father, and You can never leave it. As mortal Man, however, You have left this glory which was natural to You, and have appeared in lowliness. You have made Yourself Man: *and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw Your glory, as it were of*

the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
(John i. 14)

But how is it that Saint John said that he had seen Your glory? Is it because he saw You at the resurrection, mounting to heaven? Or even that he had seen You on Mount Tabor? These thoughts enter his mind, but he declares instead that he saw You in Your glory when He saw You *full of grace and of truth*; full of the grace of miracles, and healing all the wounds of our bodies; full of the grace which sanctifies us, since Your apostles said to You: *Oh Lord, increase our faith* (Luke xvii. 5); and the afflicted person cried from the bottom of his heart: *I do believe Lord: help my unbelief.* (Mark ix. 23) It is thus, then, that John saw You *full of grace*. For the same reason, he saw You *full of truth*, because You were announcing the truth to men through Your preaching, and at the same time You placed it in their hearts through the inspiration of Your grace, enlightening them both from within and from without. We have, therefore, seen Your glory, even in the midst of Your lowliness, because we saw there the truth and the grace with which You were filled not only for Yourself, but also for us, since *of His fullness we all have received, and grace for grace.* (John i. 16)

Therefore we saw Your grace in the midst of Your humanity. If, at the same time that we saw You with the eyes of faith as the only Son of God, we also saw You with the eyes of the body as the most insignificant of men, as a man of sorrows and filled with afflictions, we saw You so because You voluntarily hid Your glory. You suspended the effect of it. You reduced Yourself to this level because of Your love and kindness. Nevertheless, filled

with this glory which You had brought from God when You were born of God, You came to wash our feet!

Even were I the possessor of glory, I should now wish to forego it. But I have none. I have nothing. I am nothing; and so, it is only a question of abasement, or rather, only of keeping my nothingness obedient to You.

THE SEVENTH DAY

Jesus Christ, born of the glory of God, was to return to God (John xiii. 3).

*Knowing that He was born of God, and that He would return to God. (John xiii. 3) He Who is born of God in this manner can do no more than return. The grandeur within Him must prevail. He could humble Himself only in order to approach us, to bring us His graces, to give us a perfect model of humility, of gentleness, of sweetness, of patience, and of all virtues, and in order to render Himself the victim of our sins. To do that, He had to descend as far as the tomb, but as Saint Peter said: *it was impossible that He should be held by it.* (Acts. ii. 24) It was necessary that the life which was in Him should prevail. It was necessary also that, since He had decided to lay aside His glory, He would soon have to return to it: *if He humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross, God would later exalt Him, and give Him a name which is above all names* (Philip. ii. 8, 9), in order to accomplish what Jesus asked of His Father: *And now glorify Thou Me, Oh Father, with Thyself, with the**

glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee. (John xvii. 5) This is what Saint John meant by these words: *Knowing that He was born of God, and that He was to return to God.* (John xiii. 3) Because it was not possible that He remain forever separated from a glory which was so natural to Him, Jesus asked to bring us to it with Him when He returned: *My Father, I wish that there where I am, those whom You have given Me, be there also with Me; in order that they contemplate My glory, which You have given Me, because You have loved Me before the creation of the world.* (John xviii. 24, 25) To contemplate this glory is to rejoice in it; to participate in it. According to Saint John: *We shall be like Him, because we have seen Him as He is.* (I John iii. 2) And this is the accomplishment of what He said: *And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one; and that the world may know that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.* (John xvii. 22, 23)

May those who love Jesus Christ savor these words: *I go to prepare a place for you; and if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself; that where I am, you also may be.* (John xiv. 2, 3) Behold the manner in which Jesus Christ was to return to God. Behold the meaning of the words of Saint John: *was born of God, and was returning to Him.* And when He was about to accomplish this glorious return, being Who He is and knowing what He knows, as Saint John remarks, He actually wished to wash our feet. Be still. Be still my restless thoughts. Let me contemplate Jesus at the feet of His apostles, at our feet, and at the feet of all His faithful, whom He saw in His apostles.

THE EIGHTH DAY

Jesus humbles Himself at the washing of the feet (John xiii. 4, 5).

He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments; these were the garments of honor which free persons wore—He allowed Himself only the kind of garment that those accustomed to serve were wont to wear. *And having taken a cloth, He attached it before Him:* in other words, *He girded Himself.* To gird one's self, generally, was the posture of the one who was to serve, according to what is written: *Be like the servants who tend to their masters,* and again: *Amen I say to you, that He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing, will minister unto them.* (Luke xii. 35–37) Here, in mentioning girding Himself, Jesus refers to girding with a cloth which was the habit of a service even more lowly than washing feet. Notice. Jesus does it all Himself. He Himself sets aside His garments; He girds Himself with the loin cloth; He Himself pours the water into the basin—with these same Hands which are the dispensers of all graces, with these Hands which are the Hands of a God, Who has done all through His power, with these Hands Whose single imposition, whose touch, cured the sick and resuscitated from the dead—with these same Hands He poured water into a basin and washed and wiped the feet of His disciples. This act was not a mere ceremonial, but an effective service which He rendered to all of them, and the lowliest of services since He must

kneel at their feet to render it. He cleansed the filth and the dust gathered on their bare feet. Behold what Jesus did, knowing Who He was, from all eternity, and in time, and What He was to become after the resurrection, and His triumphant ascension. Imbue me, Oh Jesus, with Your natural grandeur, and with Your voluntary lowliness, in order that at least, in my natural littleness, I may have no difficulty in keeping myself humble and in serving my brothers.

THE NINTH DAY

Peter refuses to allow Jesus to wash his feet (John xiii. 6-9).

Saint Peter was imbued with the grandeur and lowliness of his Master, when he cried out: *What, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet!* (John xiii. 6, 7) You, the Son of God! Wash me, a sinner? *Depart from me for I am a sinful man* (Luke v. 8): a mortal man, a nothing; but, what is worse, I am a sinner. Ah! depart from me, I cannot endure Your approach. All the more reason now, that You come to wash my feet, and render me a service so unworthy of You; a Master to His disciple; a Lord, and such a Lord, to His slave. Ah Lord! No matter what You might say, I shall never permit it: *Lord never dost Thou wash my feet.* (John xiii. 6)

Saint Peter's acts were characterized by fervor. It was not yet well regulated, but it was genuine. In reply to his refusal, Jesus said to him: *You know not yet that which*

I wish to do, but you will know it soon, and in good time. It was as though He said: Let me alone; I know why I am doing it. Peter was obstinate, however, and forced Jesus to say to him: *If I do not, thou shalt have no part with Me.* In reply, with the same fervor, Peter said: *Ah Lord! not only my feet, but my hands and my head.* (John xiii. 8, 9) He did not yet understand what it meant to be washed by Jesus, and in what baptism he would have to be plunged to follow His example—the word of the Master had not yet penetrated: *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized* (Luke xii. 50); I must be baptized in My own blood, and I reserve this baptism of suffering for My servants: I shall wash their feet; I shall wash their hands; I shall wash their head by this baptism. Peter did not yet understand this mystery. He did not yet understand perfectly how impure are our thoughts, our actions, or how much we need our head and our hands to be washed. Nevertheless, possessed with the desire to be with his Master, and to be one with Him, he cried out: I give You all, hands, feet, and my very head; wash me as You wish. I wish to be with You, no matter what the cost; no matter what the price, I wish to have You. Do what You wish, not only with my feet, but also with my hands and with my head.

You will be heard, Peter; your feet and your hands will be washed; you will be crucified, head down. It is thus that your Master will wash you: Behold the bath which He is preparing for you: *You do not know it yet, but you will know it in time.* Ah Lord! not only my feet, but my hands and my head. Let us imitate Saint Peter. Let us abandon ourselves to our Saviour. We do not yet know what He wishes to do with us: our weakness could

not suffer it, but no matter what it may be, *my heart is ready; my heart is ready, Oh God!* (Ps. lvi. 8) I repeat, that I give You all; hands and feet, all that I am—my intellect and soul.

THE TENTH DAY

Cleanse yourself of the smallest stains. You are pure, but not all (John xiii. 8-10).

In the Orient, indeed in all hot countries, bathing is very frequent, and after one has bathed in the morning, and during the day, there remains the night, when one washes one's feet to cleanse them from the dust gathered while coming and going. This is the meaning of these words of the Spouse: *I have washed My feet, how shall I defile them?* (Cant. v. 3) Jesus Christ makes use of this simile to make His faithful understand that after having cleansed themselves of great sins, they must take care to purge themselves of those which they contract in the daily usage of human life, which, though much smaller in comparison with the others, are nevertheless great sins in themselves. A soul which loves God finds nothing slight in that which offends God, and if it neglects to purify itself of these faults, they would put it in a deadly state, gradually weakening the vigor of the soul, so that it would offer little resistance against great temptations, which would cause it to succumb too easily. Violent temptations can be conquered only by an ardent charity.

Jesus saith to him: he that is washed, needeth not but

to wash his feet, but he is clean wholly. And you are clean but not all. (John xiii. 10) Jesus, then, teaches us, through these words, that we are not permitted to neglect the slightest sins; this is what He wished to signify by the washing of the feet. In order to penetrate the entire mystery, He shows, by the care that He takes to wash the feet of His apostles, at the moment that He was going to institute the Eucharist and make them participate in it, that the time when we must apply ourselves to purging these venial sins is when we are preparing ourselves for Communion, when it is a question of uniting ourselves perfectly with Jesus Christ, to which union these sins present such a great obstacle that, if one were to die before having expiated them, the Beatific Vision would be delayed, possibly for several centuries. We must, therefore, feel ourselves all the more obliged to purify these sins before Communion, because it is principally through it that we must be restored, since the others are cleansed by another sacrament.

Neglect in purging ourselves of these faults could result in an excess which could render the attachment to these sins not only dangerous, as it always is, but even mortal. The person who is not concerned about sin except insofar as it damns shows that it is the pain that he fears, and that he does not truly love justice; that is, he does not love God as he is obliged to do. He must fear therefore that he must soon lose, through his extreme indifference, all that remains to him of this divine fire.

Let us, therefore, wash carefully, not only our hands and our head, but also our feet, before approaching the Eucharist. Otherwise, the Spouse will come to us with a sort of disdain. Although these daily sins will not prevent

Him from saying to us as to the apostles: *You are pure*, He warns us nevertheless to purge ourselves of them if we wish to approach to receive His body and His blood with all the required purity. And He shows us the enormity of this obligation when, while washing the feet of His apostles to inspire them with the care of purifying themselves of these sins, He said to them: *If I do not wash you, that is to say, if I do not wash these stains from your feet, thou shalt have no part with Me* (John xiii. 8) not only because they delay, as we have already seen, the Beatific Vision and perfect union with God, but again, because negligence in cleansing them can cause dangerous indifference between the soul and Jesus Christ, which, past a certain degree, becomes mortally sinful.

Cleanse yourself, therefore, dear Christian; cleanse yourself of all your sins, even the smallest, when you are about to approach the Holy Table. Wash your feet with care; restore yourself completely for fear that you might partake of the Saviour's body unworthily since you see so clearly that this sin, which possibly only venial now, could become mortal through the attachment that you might develop for it. Even though we might not be entirely deserving of this indignity, which renders us guilty of the body and blood of the Saviour, we could make ourselves unworthy of great graces, without which we cannot conquer great weaknesses, or the great temptations with which life abounds. We could, moreover, render ourselves unworthy of this perfect communication with the Spouse, and cause to come between Him and us, if not complete rupture, at least indifference, which could bring about the rupture itself.

Lord! wash my feet, in order that I may say with the

Spouse: *I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?* The habit of cleanliness is an inducement to preserve purity: the whiter the garment, the more evident are the stains on it; the cleaner we are, the more must we avoid soiling ourselves, if we desire to be ranked with those of whom it is written, *that they are without spot before the throne of God.* (Apoc. xiv. 5) This is our goal, and, to this end, we must remember this beautiful doctrine of Saint Augustine: while we cannot live here without sin, we can leave here without sin, because, while sins abound here, the remedies to cure them are not lacking.

THE ELEVENTH DAY

Judas is washed like the others (John xiii. 10, 11).

You are clean, but not all: for He knew who he was that would betray Him; and it is for that, that He says: You are clean, but not all. (John xiii. 10, 11) Nevertheless, although He knew *that the devil had already entered his heart* (John xiii. 2), in order to inspire the scheme to betray his Master, Our Lord washed Judas' feet as He did the others, and warned him that He saw his crime in order to persuade him to reform. Let us pause to consider with Saint Paul that: *the goodness of God leadeth to penance, while with our hardness and our impenitent heart, we amass for ourselves great treasures of hatred.* (Rom. ii. 4, 5) Such was the disposition of Judas.

How many Judases dwell among Christians! How

many unhappy ones that a thousand demonstrations of God's kindness cannot turn away from their resolution to do evil! Let us not be counted among this number. If we have been in the past, let us no longer be so. Let us remember, at any rate, that He sees us; that He sees the one who is to betray Him; and yet, He washes his feet. Holy water is presented to him to urge him to penitence; Jesus is ready to receive him with His love and with His graces, provided that he wash himself and repent.

THE TWELFTH DAY

Jesus commands His apostles to imitate Him (John xiii. 12-16).

Jesus clothed Himself again, and having reseated Himself at the table, before continuing His supper which He had interrupted, before coming to the celestial meal, He spoke of it as follows: You see what I have just done: you call me your Master and your Lord; and you have reason to, for I am. (John xiii. 12, 13)

In the verses following this passage, Our Saviour teaches us to render to our brothers whatever service we can, including the corporal, although we are not obliged to do so.

In those days the washing of feet was common. Saint Paul notes among the conditions of the widow who was to be chosen to serve the poor: *that she had been hospitable, that she had washed the feet of saints. (I Tim. v. 9, 10).* Profiting by this example, let us choose some

service of this kind according to our own manners and customs. For example, let us serve the sick in a hospital, or perhaps some invalid who is helpless and might need such service, and every time that we render it to some one, let us render it as we would to Jesus Christ, in a most responsible manner, effectively and, consequently, in the most humble manner possible. And, let those who render such services and who are supposed to stand on ceremony—prominent people, prelates, superiors of communities—enter into it with the spirit of this ceremony. Let them enter into it with profound and sincere humility. Let them consider that, in reality, our nature is servile, we are born serfs through sin, a reality which difference in conditions cannot efface.

We must serve our brothers not only with humility, as Our Saviour did, but also like Him, with love, remembering these words: *Jesus having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.* (John xiii. 1) It was, therefore, not only to practice humility, and to give us an example of it that He washed the feet of His disciples, but also through tender love, through the pleasure that He had in showing them how much He esteemed them; to raise the dignity of human nature, fallen into servitude. Let us serve our brothers then in the same spirit, with esteem, with tenderness, and to honor Jesus Christ in them.

In a moral sense, we truly wash each other's feet when we mutually and tactfully caution one another about our faults, always ready to excuse them, not allowing that our neighbor be undermined in any way, and by this means purging him of the least faults, and then only through humility so that in judging others we develop

within ourselves a sincere and veritable tenderness for all Christians, who are our brothers, and for all men, who are our flesh.

Jesus Christ, after having said: *As I have done to you, so you do also* (John xiii. 15), and after having shown men the service that they must render to their equals, in order to make them understand how, for a higher motive, they must serve their ministers, adds: *He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me: and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.* (John xiii. 20) Here we see the beautiful linking, the tracing back to their origin, of the ministers of Jesus Christ to Himself, and of Jesus Christ to God His Father! Let us accustom ourselves to see Jesus Christ in our pastors, and in Jesus Christ all the majesty of His Father.

When He spoke to His apostles in this way, Jesus Christ always inserted something about the traitor Judas, to confirm them, not only in faith, while making them feel that He knew all, but also in sentiments of goodness and humility; since knowing, as He says, those whom He had chosen, and knowing the black designs of this traitor, He had not refused to wash his feet; and not only that, but He had allowed him to sit at the table, and had served him the same as the others; and, what is beyond all comprehension, He gave him, as He did the others, His body and His blood.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY

Jesus is troubled: One of you shall betray Me (John xiii. 21).

Jesus, having said these things, was troubled in His spirit, and declared saying: One of you shall betray Me. This disquiet in the holy soul and spirit of Jesus Christ is worthy of special attention. That which presents itself to our mind, first of all, as the cause of this trouble is: *One of you shall betray Me.* The crime, the betrayal, the perfidy of one of the disciples of Jesus is the chief cause of this interior trouble. Sin in general always troubled Our Lord, but particularly the sins of those who were closest to Him, like Judas, whom He had numbered among His apostles. When He thought that His passion, through which He was to destroy the power of sin, was to introduce into the world so many crimes, crimes so enormous, so strange, so unheard of—the betrayal of a Judas, the inhumanities of the Jews, their ingratitude—He was troubled. It is that realization, more than all the rest, which caused Him this disquiet. We would not be mistaken in believing that this was the bitterest draft from His chalice.

Three specific places in Scripture mention that the holy soul of Jesus was troubled. On one occasion, He said: *My soul is troubled.* (John xii. 27) Another time, seeing the tears of the Jews and of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who wept over his death, *He trembled in His spirit and troubled Himself.* (John xi. 33)

In the present passage there is no doubt that the reason for His trouble was the crime of Judas, and of all those who were to cooperate in His death, for the Evangelist remarks that, when he said that *He was troubled*, He said at the same time: *One of you shall betray me*. Also, on the eve of His passion, Jesus said: *My soul is troubled*, and sin must have been the principal cause of His trouble since nothing deserved to move Him so much. Finally, if one remembers how troubled He appeared at the death of Lazarus, and at the tears that it caused to flow, one can not believe that the mere death of the body would cause Him this trembling and this trouble. Rather, He considered the death of the soul in that of the body which was the figure of it. He reflected that it was sin that brought death into the world. Lazarus was the image of the sinner in his most deadly and horrible state, which is the one in which we are, through the sins of callousness and of habit, where we rot in our crime.

Thus this disquiet that Jesus felt was a result of the horror with which He was seized on considering sin: this is what caused this violent revulsion as evidenced by His trembling. And, if it is permitted us to penetrate into His most intimate thoughts, that which troubled Him the most on this occasion, is that He considered the bad effect that His death and the merit of His bloodshed would produce in sinners, in becoming for them an occasion to abandon themselves to sin, through the hope that this occasion would give them to obtain pardon. Sin is most horrible in this aspect because it seems to serve the goodness of God and the grace of His redemption. If this is when sin is most horrible, then it is also, conse-

quently, under this aspect that it caused the greatest horror, the greatest shock, the greatest trouble to the Saviour.

This anxiety Jesus felt at the approach of His death was not only caused by the crimes, the cruelties, the injustices and the perfidies which were to lead Him to His last agony, but still more because He saw that in some way He would be the innocent occasion of it. For, although far from having given cause for the jealousy and the injustices of the Jews, He did all He could to correct them, and it was their malice alone which was the cause of their violence. Nevertheless, it was no less true that the sanctity of Jesus, His doctrine, His miracles, His pressing condemnations, which were intended to bring about their salvation, excited this jealousy and this implacable hatred against Jesus Christ, and that Judas took this occasion to forsake Him on account of the words spoken in favor of Mary, when she had poured so much precious perfume upon Him.

To all that, we must add that He had to suffer death, as a just punishment for all the sins for which He was blamed, and He was going to His death as guilty in some way. Thus the horror of sin seized Him, and He saw Himself surrounded by it, penetrated with it. Oh, cruel spectacle for the Saviour of humankind! He saw sin grow through the evil usage that would be made of His death. Many would say that He was not the Son of God; that all the miracles through which He had proved it were nothing but illusions. His death would be a scandal to the Jews, and folly to the Gentiles, and even to the faithful themselves. What an occasion for vengeance! In general, all those who would not profit by His death

would become more culpable, more punishable, more damned. How touched by their misfortune was this good Saviour, Who loved all men so tenderly, especially His faithful ones, and Who had become Man only to save them. Oh, Jesus! This is what troubled Your holy soul. This is what caused You this heartache, and the others which we shall see in what follows. Let us then resolve to have a horror of sin, and let us see, in the anxiety of Jesus, how much our own consciences should be troubled.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY

What is the cause of Our Lord's disquiet (John xiii. 21)?

It seems to me, Oh my Saviour, that You wish us to understand in some way, what this trouble was, which is so often spoken of in the Gospel. It is certainly an interior anxiety; otherwise, the Evangelist would not say: *He was troubled in spirit*. Neither would Our Lord Himself say: *My soul is troubled*. But what is this trouble within Him then if it is not the horror of a great evil, of an extreme evil, of the greatest of all evils, which is sin, with all the terrible circumstances which we have just seen, that Jesus had before Him: horror which, once aroused in His holy soul, was reflected in His body, and caused reactions somewhat like those which we feel at the sight of extremely unpleasant objects.

Anxiety of the soul results principally from the diversity of thoughts which come into the mind on the

occasion of extraordinary matters. *Why are you troubled, and why do so many thoughts come into your hearts?* Jesus Himself asked His disciples (Luke xxiv. 38), when He saw them so frightened at His appearance to them after His death. These thoughts, with which the soul is so disturbed and agitated that it does not know what course to follow or what to do, are what troubles it. For this reason, the soul is beside itself; it is no longer master of itself.

Shall we even dare to suggest that something of this nature took place in the sacred soul of Jesus? *Now, He said, My soul is troubled; and what shall I say? Shall I say to My Father: Save me from this hour, where I shall have so much to suffer? But for this cause I came unto this hour: Father, glorify Thy name.* (John xii. 27, 28)

Behold this diversity of thought. One sees a kind of perplexity in these words: *What shall I say?* A kind of irresolution in these words: *What shall I ask My Father? May He deliver Me from so many evils? All questioning ends finally in Jesus' abandoning Himself entirely to God's will, and for His greater glory.*

Has there been a veritable irresolution in the holy soul of Jesus? God forbid, because irresolution comes only from weakness of reason, and arises when one does not see clearly enough to determine what must be done. Could such a disposition be found in the soul of the Saviour, to Whom eternal Wisdom was united, and Which directed Him constantly? No, this could not be. However, although there had not been any veritable irresolution in a soul so firm and so enlightened, Jesus experienced something resembling it, since He suffered within Himself from these different thoughts, caused on

the one hand by the natural horror of a death accompanied by so many terrible circumstances, and on the other, by a perfect determination to surrender Himself to it, because God wished it so.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY

The horror of sin is the cause of Our Lord's anxiety (John xii. 27, 28).

In order to understand how sad and distressing this condition really was, we must remember that that which horrified Jesus Christ was not only the pain and the death which He was to suffer, although this horror of death and pain was natural to His human nature, but also sin which He regarded as the thing most opposed to Him, and which caused His aversion. He looked upon death, as we have already seen, as the effect, as the pain of sin. His was caused by thousands of enormous sins: it augmented the heinousness and the number of them, in the manner already stated. Ah! What a chalice! How great, how overwhelming is the bitterness of it!

A Father of ancient times tells of the dispositions of three hermits concerning the injuries which were inflicted upon them. One of them reflected, and examined his conscience anxiously to determine whether he had flown into a passion, or whether he had shown any impatience. The other one looked upon the one who had outraged him as a man who brought great evils upon himself through the just judgement of God, and he was

sorrowful about it to the point of tears. But the tears of the third one were far more abundant and much more bitter, because he considered the outrages made upon him as so many offences against God, of which He Himself had been the cause, although innocent. Let us set aside the first disposition which cannot be designated as that of the Saviour. The other dispositions, however, were in Him, but much more ardent, because He showed more tenderness for men, and a much stronger impression of the judgement of God, and a horror of sin beyond anything that one can imagine.

When it pleased Him, when it was expedient—and it was so especially during the time of His passion—to give Himself up entirely to this feeling of compassion for sinners and to the horror of sin itself, that which He suffered was inexpressible, and one must not be astonished to have heard Him say: *My soul is troubled* (John xii. 27) or to hear Him admit a little later: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.* (Matt. xxvi. 38)

My Saviour! this disquieting of Your sacred soul was necessary. For one reason, it was necessary to excite and to cure the lack of feeling in mine, which, far from being troubled by its sin, feels neither the weight nor the wound of it, and, for another, in order to banish this confusion of my senses affected by the diverse passions which tyrannize me by turns. Lord, strengthen me against so many evils. May I cease to be so susceptible to the pleasures and to the sorrows of the body, wherein I find myself plunged through the acquisition and the loss of perishable goods.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY

I desired with a great desire to eat this Pasch. Jesus Christ is our Pasch (Luke xxii. 15).

While Jesus spoke to His disciples about the one who was to betray Him, they continued their supper, and the Son of God, wishing to establish the new Passover through the institution of the Eucharist, said: *with desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.* (Luke xxii. 15) That which followed, as we shall see, shows the great love with which Jesus, *Who had always loved His own, loved them,* and as Saint John says, *He loved them unto the end.* (John xiii. 1)

Therefore, to enter into His designs and a similar disposition, let us remember that the Passover, the sacred victim of the ancient alliance out of which was to flow the blood of the deliverance, was, as were many other victims of the ancient alliance, not only to be sacrificed, but also to be eaten, and that Jesus Christ wished to give Himself this character of a victim by giving us for life this same body, which was to be offered only once for us at His death. For this reason He said: *I have desired with desire to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.* (Luke xxii. 15) When Our Lord made this statement, He did not refer to the legal Passover which would end, and which He had often celebrated and eaten with His disciples. Rather, when He said: *I have desired with desire to eat this Pasch with you,* He referred to the Passover of the new alliance, just as though He had said: I have de-

sired to be your Pasch Myself, to be the lamb immolated for you, the victim of your deliverance, and for the same reason that I have desired to be a victim veritably immolated, I have also desired to be a victim veritably eaten. He accomplished this by these words: *Take, eat, this is My Body given for you.* (Matt. xxvi. 26; Luke xxii. 19) It is the Pasch out of which must flow the blood of Your deliverance. You will come out of Egypt, and you will be free as soon as this blood is shed for you. All that will remain for you to do will be to eat, in imitation of the ancient tribe, the victim from which it came. This is what you will accomplish through the reception of the Eucharist, which I will leave you when I die, to be eternally celebrated after My death. To eat the flesh of the Paschal lamb was, to the Israelites, a sacred pledge that it had been immolated for them. The eating of the victim was a way of uniting with it, and it was in this way that they participated in peace or thanksgiving sacrifices—if he offer a lamb before the Lord (Lev. iii. 7)—as it is stated in the law. Also, St. Paul says: *behold Israel according to the flesh: are not they, that eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar? But the things which the heathens sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.* (I Cor. x. 18–21) If, then, Jesus is our Victim, if He is our Pasch, He must have these two characters: one, to be immolated for us on the cross; the other, to be eaten at the holy table as the Victim of our salvation. And this is what He desired, so ardently, to accomplish with His disciples. Both characters were to be realized in His Person. As He was to be immolated in His own body, and in its proper substance, He had to be eaten this way: *Take, eat: this is My body given for you,* as truly eaten, as truly given; it is

present at the table where He is eaten, as at the cross where He will be delivered to death, and where He will offer it, drained of blood, for love of you.

As Saint Paul says: *let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* (Philip. ii. 5) If He desired with such ardor to celebrate this Pasch with us, let us have the same desire to partake of the Pasch with Him. This Pasch is communion. In it, Jesus hungers for us to eat of this celestial meat. He desires to be eaten, and, by this means, to be our Victim in every way. Let us have the same ardor to participate in His sacrifice by eating this Divine Body immolated for us. If He is our Victim, let us be His. *Let us offer our bodies, as Saint Paul says, I beseech You therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service.* (Rom. xii. 1) *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil, concupiscence and covetousness which is the service of idols.* (Colos. iii. 5) Let us humble ourselves like the One *who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.* (Philip. ii. 6, 8) Let us mortify ourselves: *And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with their vices and concupiscences.* (Gal. v. 24) This is our Passover: to be united with Him, to pass over from this life to a better one, from the senses and the spirit of the world, to God. Only at this price shall we be able to render ourselves worthy of eating, with Jesus Christ, the Pasch which He has desired so much, and to nourish ourselves with the flesh of His sacrifice.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY

The pact and betrayal of Jesus (John xiii. 27–30).

And after the morsel, Satan entered into him; he therefore having received the morsel, went out immediately. (John xiii. 26, 27)

That which thou dost, do quickly. That was the last notice that Judas was to receive from Jesus Christ before accomplishing his crime. This signal given to Saint John, to serve Judas at table, to present him with a piece of bread which He had dipped for him, was no less for this traitor than for others, a mark of honor and of familiarity according to custom. It was apparently at this time that Our Lord said: *Thou hast said it* (Matt. xxvi. 25); that is, I know that it is you—the most forceful way of warning him. Judas was conscious of Our Lord's recognition: *And at the same time Satan entered into him. (John xiii. 27)* He had done so before: *(the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him)*. But now, after the morsel was dipped, the devil entered into and took complete possession of this wretched being, who was now completely delivered to him. And behold, a moment later, Judas left the company of Jesus, to return no more except to betray Him.

Judas was given yet another piece of bread, if one can call it that, but this is not noted particularly, because it was given to all of them; this was the body of the Saviour. Saint Luke notes expressly that Our Lord said after the

supper: *But yet behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.* (Luke xxii. 21) Judas had even placed his hand on the celestial dish, on the cup which was filled with Our Lord's blood! Oh, deadly morsel, terrible drink for Judas! I do not doubt that this sacrilegious communion hastened his doom, and that it was an occasion of scandal for him; for, although the sacred Scripture does not state, at this point, that Judas had been scandalized at the mystery of the Eucharist, it is sufficient that it is noted in another place: Judas was of the number of those who murmured at Capharnaum at the first proposition of this mystery. It was he who gave occasion to the Saviour to ask His apostles: *And you, do you also wish to leave with the others who are leaving Me?* Then, although Saint Peter had answered Him in the name of all as he was accustomed, and said: *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed and known that You were the Christ, the Son of God,* Jesus made him understand that he did not receive this declaration for all. Rather, He continued: *Have I not chosen you twelve; and there is one of you who is a devil.* And, Saint John continues, *He meant Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, who was to deliver Him.* (John vi. 68-72)

These words show us that Judas was one of the murmurers to whom the promise of Jesus to give His body to eat and His blood to drink was a scandal. If he were scandalized at the promise, he could not have been less so at the effect. Judas was precipitated from crime to crime. Blinded at first by his avarice, *because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein.* (John xii. 6) He formed the habit of mur-

muring against Our Lord. He began his murmurs on the occasion of the promise of the Eucharist, and continued them when Mary poured so much precious perfume on the head and feet of the Saviour, at which time he accused her of wasting the money which she used for that. (John xii. 5, 6) Afterwards, he left, unquestioned, to go and bargain with the Jews. (Matt. xxvi. 13, 14) His corrupt spirit turned into poison.

The sacred banquet of the Eucharist completed the doom of this traitorous disciple, and it was on leaving this sacred table that he went, first of all, to the betrayal, and, from there, to despair and to the rope. (Mark xiv. 10)

Jesus, Who does all He can for our salvation, permitted Judas to receive the sacred gift with the others, in order that we might see the deadly effects of an unworthy communion. See the dearly beloved disciple at the Saviour's table, leaning on His bosom; behold the image of those who receive communion worthily. These rest on the bosom of Jesus, and, following the example of Saint John, learn the celestial secrets from this source: like him, they are honored by the familiarity and the caresses of their Master; and, faithful imitators of his charity, of his goodness, of his gentleness, which are the real characteristics of Saint John, they are worthy of being, like the Evangelist, His beloved disciples. On the other hand, observe a Judas at Communion: the disposition which he is in, the one in which he receives. Oh God, what a comparison! What frightful contrast! Who would not tremble at this sight?

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY

The new Capharnamite murmurers (John vii. 64).

Let us listen to our murmurers a little. I do not mean those murmurers among the Jewish people, the Capharnamites, and the others of whom Saint John speaks. Let us listen instead to the Christian murmurers who pretend to be far removed from the sentiment of the murmurers of Capharnaum, and who would deny resembling them. If the Jews had understood that this eating and drinking of which the Saviour spoke to them was faith, they would not have murmured; they would not in the end have abandoned Jesus Christ. The whole issue appears to these modern Capharnaumites then that one must have faith, and that all the rest is of no avail—conformably, they say, to this last explanation of the Saviour: *It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you, are spirit and life.* (John vi. 64)

My Saviour, I am not wrapped in meditation here before You to dispute, or to start a controversy. However, since You do not permit heresies in vain, and wish us to draw from adversaries a greater enlightenment of Your truths, I shall listen to the murmurings of heretics, to better savor Your truth. I believe, Lord, that these murmurers, regardless of what they say, are truly new Capharnaumites, who come to astound Your Church and Your faithful children, who are not disputers, concerning the debate of this question: *How can this Man give us His*

flesh to eat? (John vi. 53) And they answer boldly: He cannot do it in a literal sense. Therefore, they surmise, it must mean that the whole discourse should be taken figuratively. How uncivilized, they continue, to interpret this passage in any but a figurative manner! Let us listen to these men seemingly so religious, so proud, who look with disdain upon Your humble flock, because it believes simply in Your word, and does not seek to dissect the sense or the strength of it to satisfy its reason. Give me grace, Oh Lord, to detect their vain subtleties, and the traps which they set for the ignorant, who, at the same time, are proud. These murmurers go to the extent of taking us for real Capharnaumites, because we do not wish to interpret Your words as they do; that *it is the spirit which vivifies*, and that we do not eat Your flesh or drink Your blood except by faith. This then is their explanation: *The flesh profiteth nothing*; that is, that it profits a man nothing to really eat Your flesh: *My words are spirit and life*; that is, according to them all that You have said of Your flesh and Your blood is only a figure.

Behold, Lord, this is what they say, but I do not see it in Your Gospel. I shall reread it, Lord, and reflect again on all the words. I hope then not only always to believe with a firm faith, and I do believe, but again to understand clearly, if You wish it, that these murmurers are mistaken, and that they interpret Your words incorrectly. But, Lord, I shall postpone this humble reading for another time. Today, I have been enriched by having humbled myself, and by having submitted my spirit to the faith of Your Catholic Church.

THE NINETEENTH DAY

Spiritual rebirth is explained by Our Saviour to Nicodemus (John iii. 1, 2, 3, et seq.).

We come, finally, to Nicodemus, and to the discourse addressed to him by the Son of God on the subject of baptism. Nicodemus understood too literally what had been said to him: *that he had to be born again*, and in his ignorance he went so far as to ask: *how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again?* (John iii. 4) to leave it once more, and return in his old age a newborn babe? Jesus Christ could have repeated: Yes, I tell you: You must be reborn. Again I say, you must be reborn. If one is not reborn, one has no part in My kingdom. He could, I say, have repeated His first discourse without explaining further, and so leave Nicodemus to his foolish ideas. He did not do so, however, and as soon as the Pharisee made the difficulty apparent, He solved it by these words: *Amen. Amen I say to you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God* (John iii. 5); that is, it is not by means of the mother's womb that one must enter, but by that of water. There one does not receive a new life through carnal rebirth. Rather, one is renewed through the Holy Spirit. He needed to say no more, and the whole difficulty was solved. But the Saviour did not stop there. Instead, He continued and tried to remove all idea of a carnal rebirth: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that*

which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Wonder not, that I said to thee, that being born of the flesh, you must be born again (John iii. 6, 7), according to the spirit. What better explanation could one desire concerning this proposed difficulty? To be baptized, that is to say, to be plunged into the water to be purified, was a thing well-known to the Jews. All that had to be explained to them then was that there would be a baptism where water and the Holy Spirit would renew the spirit of man. Christ presented His explanation clearly, and Nicodemus no longer questioned Him about this difficulty.

It is true that Nicodemus did not understand the operation of the Holy Spirit, of which Jesus Christ spoke to him in such an admirable manner, but there is no question of this difficulty here. Rather, since his difficulty about carnal rebirth was settled, it was not necessary to enlighten him further on the manner in which the Holy Spirit acts within us and forms His thoughts there, of which the purpose, like the principle, far exceeds our intelligence. On the contrary, Jesus Christ spoke to him only about those things essential to faith: *Amen, amen, I say to thee that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony* (John iii. 11); the rest would be easy to explain, if there was any question. However, we know that there were no longer any doubts in the mind of Nicodemus: he was not tempted to leave the Son of God. Also, the doctrine of the rebirth of the body caused no dispute among His disciples.

Why did He not speak then with the same clarity to the great people, who believed in Him, and who said: *this is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the*

world (John vi. 14); that is to say, that He was the Christ? Why did He not remove from them the doubts that troubled them so much; that is, that they would have to eat His physical body and drink His physical blood. Why did he not tell them that this was not so and that He only spoke of the representation and application that one must make to one's self, through faith, of the death and of the wounds of the Saviour of souls?

THE TWENTIETH DAY

Reception of the Eucharist is real participation in the Body and Blood of Our Lord, in memory of the death He suffered for us (John iii. 1, 2, 3, et seq.).

We shall say: but is it not true that we must remember this death, meditate upon it with faith, believe in this pierced flesh and this bloodshed, and, through this means, gain eternal life? It is true; but this is not what caused the difficulty. It is not what caused men to say: *How can this man give us His flesh to eat? and, this saying is hard, and who can hear it?* (John vi. 53, 61)

It was quite enough for men to oblige them to believe that the Son of God had taken on human flesh and that He was to deliver it to death, without adding to the pain of seeing this flesh pierced, and seeing this blood inhumanly shed, the physical difficulty of eating and drinking it. This is precisely what obliged them to say: That is just talk; it is unbelievable; if you wish that, it is impossible; *this saying is hard*. We could not possibly eat the

flesh and blood of a man! And if this difficulty were not in fact a declared mystery of the Saviour, we too could not explain such a discourse.

But this is not so. My Saviour, I listen untroubled. I remember Your death. I must contemplate, through faith, Your wounded flesh, and Your bloodshed. I recall that through these sufferings, You have ransomed me. This is, in fact, what I do whenever I receive the Eucharist, the fruit of which encourages me to impress the memory of Your death on my mind so that I may place my hope there and conform my life to Yours through the mortification of my senses. There is no particular difficulty there, and if You had explained it thus, we should not have found it so difficult to understand Your discourse. I understand, then, that You mean something else. You mean that it is truly necessary that we remember Your death, but that we remember it primarily as a sacrifice offered for us, of which the flesh must be eaten, even physically, as the sacrifices of the ancient Pasch, and that of the other victims which symbolized You, were eaten in order to be a certain testimony, and that it is for us that this immolation was performed, to impress a more vivid and more efficacious reminder upon our hearts. I believe that it is so, my Saviour; this remembrance, which unbelievers wish to misrepresent, is too human.

It is not uncommon that a man sacrifices himself for his country, and books are filled with examples of this type of heroism. It is not difficult, therefore, for men who would immolate themselves in this way to recommend the remembrance of their death by some sign to perpetuate the memory of it. But only God would leave,

in perpetuity, His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, in order that, in appropriating this thing to Himself in this way, He would be remembered more tenderly for having been immolated for us. In this, there is as much power as love. It is true that our senses find this difficult to comprehend; it is unnatural, beyond human reason. But Your word, dear Lord, is truth itself: I shall believe this because You have said it. I shall accept this difficulty, if You will not remove it by explanation, for I know that *that which is folly according to men, is wisdom according to God.* (I Cor. i. 25) By the same reasoning, I know that what men consider difficult, God rewards with consolation and truth.

I believe it, my Saviour; I believe it. Behold, I am ready to accept literally all the difficult things You reveal, unless You teach me their correct interpretation. My senses would be gratified by a more comprehensible interpretation, but if I seek to relieve them in this way where am I going, my Saviour; where can I not be carried away? Into what unbelief? Into what estrangement from Your mysteries? I repeat again that I do wish to believe, and not to reason as man does. And if I have difficulty understanding the precise truth of Your word, You Yourself will have to teach it to me.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY

The disciples are scandalized (John vi. 60, 61, 62, et seq.).

These things Jesus said, teaching in the synagogue in Capharnaum. Many therefore of His disciples hearing it

said: this saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life: But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him. And He said: therefore did I say to you that no man can come to me unless it be given him by My Father. (John vi. 60-66)

Behold these are the words wherein it is claimed that Jesus tempered His discourse. You believe that you will eat me, but it will not be so. If you did so, then I could not return entire and alive to heaven, whence I have come. You reason too literally; you believe that to have life it is necessary to eat, and to drink; but, *it is the spirit that quickeneth, it is not the flesh: on the contrary, it profiteth nothing. The words which I say to you are spirit and life; I speak to you, therefore, not of physical flesh and blood, as you think, for all is figure and allegory in My discourse. Do not take me literally. Thus, all anxiety is resolved, and the scandal has vanished; the murmurs cease. And yet. Let us read the following and see.*

After this, many of His disciples went back; and walked no more with Him. (John vi. 67) After this: after these words which removed, as we thought, the difficulty, and which took away the occasion of scandal, several of the disciples retired, and no longer followed Jesus. Behold they are lost. What forced them to retire? Was it because Our Lord told them that: No man can come to Me unless it be given him by My Father? (John vi. 66)

But He had already said this, without anyone having gone away; and He Himself remarked that He was only repeating. Was it then because He had said: *There are some among you who do not believe?* (John vi. 65) That was no reason for going away either, since the statement contained nothing either so unbelievable or so forbidding. Actually, He only blamed some of them, and so there was no reason for the others to feel rejected. It must be, therefore, that that which does rebuff them is precisely that which precedes: *How could I thus return to heaven?* And: *It is the spirit that quickeneth.* Behold, I say, this is what rebuffs them. What they wished that He had said to forestall the rebuff is precisely what causes it; so well has Jesus explained; so well did He explain the scandal. It is not You, my Saviour; it is not You Who express Yourself badly. God forbid. It is those murmurers and our unbelievers who misinterpret Your words.

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY

What caused the incredulity of the Capharnaumites (John vi. 41, 43, 50, 51, et seq.)?

It is the spirit which quickeneth; then, the flesh does not quicken. If that is so, Jesus ought not to have said: The bread which I shall give is My flesh which I shall give for the life of the world; or: He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood will have eternal life. (John vii. 52, 55) The flesh profiteth nothing: if that means that the flesh of Jesus Christ profiteth nothing, He ought not to

have spoken of it so often. *The words that I tell you are spirit and life*: if by this Jesus meant that His disciples must not attach themselves to the flesh and to the blood, there was no need to speak of it so often, nor to insist that they eat and drink of them. If all He meant was that they should only eat them and drink them in spirit, ought He to have spoken to them so often in terms that visibly conveyed so many contradictory ideas? There is here, then, another meaning which struck the Capharnaumites—if the flesh of Jesus Christ gives life, and the spirit quickeneth also; the truth is, therefore, that this flesh is filled with a vivifying spirit, and if this is true, then when Jesus Christ says *that the flesh profiteth nothing*, He does not mean it of His flesh, or if it is of His flesh that He wishes to speak, He means that His flesh profiteth nothing in taking it alone, but that it will have to be taken with the spirit with which it is filled. And then He concludes from that, after having spoken so much of flesh and of blood, that His words are spirit and life; that is, that this flesh and blood are themselves spirit and life, filled with the spirit of God, and with the life of grace, and furthermore, that they must be partaken of in a manner which surpasses the senses; in a divine manner which neither consumes nor changes them, but which leaves them entirely complete for heaven.

Finally, no mention is made of a figurative eating or of an allegorical drinking, which is what these disciples hoped to find, or anything consequently, which would oblige us to renounce eating and drinking literally. Rather, all there is to understand in this discourse is that it is absolutely necessary to eat this flesh, and drink this blood, which is filled with spirit and with life, in a man-

ner so elevated and so divine that it follows that the Son of God has not softened, but rather strengthened what He had previously said. As a result of this hard blow, the Capharnaumites abandoned Him, and no longer wished to belong to His company.

Who would not be astonished at their progress toward unbelief, and who would not look upon it with fear? When Jesus Christ told them that He had come down from heaven, they began to murmur, and said: *Is this not Jesus, son of Joseph? How then saith he, I came down from heaven?* (John vi. 42) When He continued to insist that the nourishment which He wished to give them was His flesh, which He was to give for the life of the world, they argued among themselves, saying: *How can this man give his flesh to eat?* (John vi. 53) This passage shows the murmurers as people who are irresolute and confused, rather than determined to leave Him. He continued then, and told them so affirmatively and so often that they would have to eat and drink His body and His blood that they saw no way of excusing themselves from it. Therefore, they said: *This saying is hard, and who can hear it?* (John vi. 61) By this declaration, they precipitated themselves into a formal scandal, and into a declared unbelief. However, they did not leave immediately. Rather, they waited to see whether Our Lord would give some acceptable explanation for His words. But Jesus Christ, having said this, gave no further explanation but that they were mistaken in believing that they would eat His flesh and drink His blood in a physical manner, one which would consume; and that, besides, they did not understand with what spirit it was filled, or the incomprehensible manner, with which He wished to

give Himself to them. Provoked beyond endurance, they saw only the difficulty which troubled their senses and scandalized their spirits. Not being able to bear it, they renounced completely the company of Jesus Christ, and no longer wished to be numbered among His disciples.

After having explained all that He wished them to know of His mystery, Our Lord addressed Himself to His apostles, asking them: *And you, will you also go away?* (John vi. 68) It was as though He had said: I have nothing to add or to take away from My discourse; I wish to add nothing to it, nor can I change any of it: Now take yourselves to task: I do not want disciples who will not listen to Me, and I put this price on your faith.

The Capharnaumites found it strange that He should tell them that He had come down from heaven and His only explanation was to repeat that He had come down from heaven (John vi. 42, 50, 51, 53), because it was true literally. They began to murmur, asking how He could give them His flesh to eat, and the only answer they received was that He would give them His flesh to eat, and, He added, His blood to drink. (John vi. 54, 61) In order that they might not miss anything of what He had to say to them, He repeated it; He impressed it upon them: another blow, because it was literally so. They said that it was hard and unbearable; and it was so in fact, because of the manner in which they understood it. They believed that He prophesized the dismemberment of His body and the consuming of His blood: He removed this doubt, however, when He told them that, with all that, He would return to heaven in all His integrity, and that, besides, what He had told them of His flesh and His blood was a thing beyond the senses, and full of spirit and of life,

which although not deviating from the literal, added the spiritual and the divine. At this final blow they left; their submissiveness had reached the limit; and they no longer wished for a Master Who placed their reason on such a trial.

Go, wretched ones; follow Judas. As for us, we shall follow Saint Peter, and say: *Master, where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.* (John vi. 69) Where would we go, Lord, where would we go? To the world's sensible pleasures? To reason? To philosophy? To the wise of the world? To the murmurers? To the unbelievers? To those who continue to ask us daily: How can He give His flesh to eat? How can He be in heaven, if at the same time we eat Him on earth? No, Lord! we do not wish to go to them, or to follow those who have left You. *You alone have the words of eternal life.*

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY

The discernment of the faithful and the unbelieving disciples (John vi. 14, 15, 24, 25, et seq.).

My Saviour, in silence and with trembling I consider the prodigious difference manifested this day among Your disciples. Some remained with You, while others abandoned You. And who are those who abandoned You? Those who said: *This Man is truly the Messiah*; those who looked for You to make You King against Your will (John vi. 14, 15); those who, after Your retreat beyond the water, crossed over in order to join You at Caphar-

naum. (John vi. 24, 25) These men would seem to have been disposed to profit by Your words. Nevertheless, these are they who left You, who murmured against You, and who could not accept Your doctrine.

How many there are who appear to believe in the Saviour, and who, in reality, do not believe in Him, because they do not believe properly and seek Jesus Christ through curiosity, like those to whom He said: *Amen, amen, I say to you; you seek me because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled!* (John vi. 26) To how many others could He say: You search for Me, in order that I may satisfy your ambition, your avarice. In reality, it is for these reasons that you seek Me through so many promises and the many prayers that you utter! It is not My will that you seek, but yours; therefore, you are not happy with Me, because I do not remove all that troubles your spirit and your body. Read your hearts. Recognize your works for what they are. Examine yourselves thoroughly; you will find nothing but carnality in your thoughts: *work not for the meat that perisheth.* (John vi. 27) Instead, fill yourselves with spiritual riches.

But, Lord, if these murmurers were worldly, Your apostles were even more so; nevertheless, they remained with You, while these murmurers were scandalized and left You. At this time, You reveal a terrible secret to us. As soon as You saw the spirit of murmuring growing in these unbelievers, You said to them: *Murmur not among yourselves; No man can come to Me, except the Father Who sent Me, draw him* (John vi. 43, 44); and when You saw them determined to leave You, You repeated again: *But there are some of you that believe not;* and He said: *Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to Me,*

unless it be given him by My Father. (John vi. 65, 66) When, therefore, Saint Peter said to You, and the other faithful with him: *Lord, to whom would we go? You are the Christ, the Son of God* (John vi. 69, 70), it was because Your Father had drawn them from within. He had made it possible for them to come to You, and not only to come, but also to remain. They were of this happy number, of whom it is written, as You Yourself have reported: *And they shall be taught of God* (John vi. 45); of the blessed of whom You have said: *All that My Father gives Me, comes to Me*; that is, all those whom He draws in this secret manner, which causes us to come; all those to whom He gives permission to come: Behold these blessed that are given to You by Your Father; all these come to You; and to these You promised: *him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out.* (John vi. 37) You admit them to Your intimacy, to Your intimate harmony. You tell them secretly, as You did formerly to Saint Peter: *Blessed art Thou, Simon Bar Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven.* (Matt. xvi. 17) Rejoice, blessed people. *Fear not, little flock: because it hath pleased our Father to give you a kingdom* (Luke xii. 32), to reveal to you His secrets, and to draw you to His Son. And how do You treat the others? Oh, Lord, I tremble on reading it! You deliver them up to themselves through a just judgement: they have shown that they are intent upon themselves, and so You deliver them to themselves, to their pride, to their carnality, to their murmuring, to their scandal, and they remain there voluntarily; they choose this evil which You have abandoned them to by a hidden but just judgement. *Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to me, unless it be given him by My*

Father: (John vi. 66) no one can free himself of self, the attraction of the senses or the bondage of pride unless Your Father draws him from these in order to give him to You. Lord, draw me; I offer myself to You.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

The Eucharist is the strength of the soul and of the body.

But, one may ask, why do we need to possess Jesus Christ in our bodies? Say, rather, why must we possess His body in truth and in substance? Why do we need the flesh of this sacrifice? This blood as a sign of the remission of sins? Why do we need to be united to Jesus Christ as a chaste spouse is one with her cherished husband? Why must we control our bodies in order to enjoy, at the same time, the freedom of our spirit?

To speak of the body in particular, is there nothing that we can achieve with it? If it is true that the flesh combats the spirit we may well ask: Who can better mollify this struggle than Jesus Christ, through the agency of His own body? If there is a mortal combat between the desires of the flesh and those of the spirit, Who can better show us how to weaken the power of the flesh and place our mortal members under the yoke of the spirit than Jesus? Must we not carry in our bodies the humiliation of Jesus? Who then can better sanctify the pains of an afflicted body? This mortal body will some day leave the tomb and corruption. Who can better extricate us from this evil than the One Whose body never felt the domina-

tion of death? Let us become one with Jesus Christ, a *spiritual body*, as Saint Paul calls it. (I Cor. xv. 44) What could be more efficacious than union with This Body, impressed with such divine qualities My Saviour, if You touch my body, there will come from it a force: and it will have to become like Yours. The force which will come from it will not give me a weak and fragile constitution, but the veritable health which is immortality.

But what of the children who have not received the Sacrament? Will they not be reborn? The vulgar and the carnal do not understand that this Body is given to the entire Church, and that this mysterious leaven is capable of vivifying the masses. These children of whom we speak have, through baptism, received a right to this body. It belongs to them, even though they do not receive it, for that which is received by some, is for all the same pledge of immortality. Console yourselves in Our Lord, and enjoy this pleasant hope.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

The Eucharist is the Viaticum of the dying.

Let us consider the body of the Saviour here, as the sweet Viaticum of the dying.

I am dying; my senses are extinguished; my life is going: What can I desire in this state? I desire to be removed from the fear of death, to be drawn out of the slavery in which apprehension has held me during all the days of my life? My Saviour, Your body—this immortal body, this

spiritualized body—is brought to me and I receive It into mine: *I shall not die; but live; and declare the works of the Lord.* (Ps. cxvii. 17) *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I shall raise him up in the last day.* (John vi. 55) This body, when dead, will retain a germ of life which decomposition will not be able to alter; it will contain an impression of life which nothing can efface. Every day of my life I wish to receive the Sacrament in this hope; I wish to consider myself as dying, and, indeed, I am dying; I wish to receive You in Viaticum. I shall not fear death: You set me free from the servitude that this fear imposed upon me. Why should I fear any evil if I always have the antidote for it? Without You, death is an insupportable yoke; with You it is a remedy, and a bridge to eternal life.

How happy I am! Your precious body is brought to me: You come to my home, celestial Host! Now I can say: *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof.* (Matt. viii. 8) Nevertheless, You come. You enter. You are here; and this is still not enough for Your love: the house which You wish to enter is my body.

This is the time to remember Your death; Your death through which death was conquered; this death which makes us say with confidence: *Oh death, where is thy victory? Oh death, where is thy sting?* (I Cor. xv. 55) This death through which You fulfilled this promise: *He shall cast death down headlong for ever.* (Isai. xxv. 8) And again: *Do this in commemoration of Me: Remember My death: announce it.* (I Cor. xi. 24)

Ah Lord, they have announced mine to me, but let them announce Yours, and I shall no longer fear anything. Yes, now I am able to chant with the Psalmist: *For*

though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. (Ps. xxii. 4) Ah! gentle remembrance of Your death, which has effaced my sins, and which has assured me of Your Kingdom! My Saviour, I invite myself to Your agony: I say with You: *Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.* (Luke xxiii. 46) *Lord Jesus receive my spiirt.* (Acts vii. 58)

What, You come to fetch it Yourself to present it to Your Father! It is done: *It is consummated.* (John xix. 30) I wish to die like You, saying these words: *All is consummated:* I no longer possess anything on earth: Your Kingdom will be mine. *All is consummated;* I see Your celestial Kingdom, this eternal sanctuary, opening to receive me through grace, through mercy, in Your name. Oh Jesus! At this moment Your promise will be fulfilled: *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.* (John vi. 57) I shall never leave You. Cursed be my unhappy and criminal inconstancy, which made me neglect, so many times, such a good Master! And now, my Saviour, I shall be with You always. You will mark me with Your seal. Ah, Lord, remain with me to the last sigh, and then receive me into Your arms.

What will become of my body? Behold, it will be united to Yours. Through Your resuscitated body, mine shall be resuscitated wholly new. I shall leave to earth only my mortality. I live in this hope, but I am also dying in it. I die every day, since every day brings me closer to death. My days evaporate like smoke; they move away like a waterfall, whose course we cannot stop. In a moment I shall pass away and I shall no longer be found. There is his room; there is his bed, people will say, and of all that, all that remains to me is my tomb, where they

will say that I am laid away. But, I shall not be there: there will be only the remains of myself, and these remains, such as they are, will grow smaller at every moment, and will finally be lost in time.

How sad this is! Yes, it would be, if I did not have Your body to restore my life. This hope sustains me. May I always see myself in a state of death that I may confess like a dying person, and be disposed as though I were about to die. I am dying: close my eyes: Oh, that I might no longer see the vanities of this world. Wrap me in this sheet; I need nothing more. Give me back my natural poverty: place me in the ground. I came from there according to the body, and it is there that I must return: my mother who engendered me there, to die: she will beget me some day, to die no more. Let us then not speak of death: it is no longer anything but a name. There is no death but sin.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

The sacrifice of the Mass.

God forbid that we forget the holy action of the sacrifice, and the mystery of the consecration.

I see an altar; a sacrifice is about to be offered, the sacrifice of the Christians, the sacrifice and the pure oblation of which it is written: *that it was to be offered from the rising of the sun to the setting.* (Malach. i. 11) This is no longer the sacrifice which had to be offered only in the temple of Jerusalem, and in a particular place chosen by

God. Rather, it is a sacrifice which must be offered among the Gentiles and in all the nations of the world. Where then is the pomp of the sacrifice? Where is the fire? Where is the knife? Where are the victims? One hundred bulls and heifers would not be sufficient to express the grandeur of our God. Great hecatombs, hundreds of oxen, were offered to false gods; I see nothing of that here.

How simple the Christian sacrifice is! I see only some bread on the altar and a little wine in a chalice. And yet, there is no need for more, to make this sacrifice the holiest, the most august, the richest that was ever offered.

But, I ask, will there not be any flesh; will there be no blood in this sacrifice? Yes, there will be flesh, but not the flesh of slaughtered animals; there will be blood, but it will be the blood of Jesus Christ, and this flesh and this blood will be mystically separated. And whence will come this flesh; whence will come this blood? They will come from this bread and from this wine: an all-powerful word will be uttered, which will change this bread into the flesh of the Saviour, and this wine into His blood. All of this will take place at the very moment that this word is uttered; it is the same word that created heaven and earth. This word, spoken by the Son of God at the Last Supper, has made of this bread, His body, and of this wine, His blood. But Jesus said to His apostles: *Do this*; and His apostles have taught us that it would be done *until He came: Donec veniat* (I Cor. xi. 24–26), until the last day of judgement. Thus the same word, repeated through the ministers of Jesus Christ, will eternally have the same effect. The bread and the wine are changed and become the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. Oh God! There they are on the altar; this same body; this same blood; this

body that you sacrificed for us; this blood which you shed for us. What an astonishing marvel! Although this miracle is marvelous to us, it does not astonish the Son of God, Who is accustomed to create all things by His word. He says, *Thou art cured* (Mark v. 34) and we are cured: *Thou art living* (John xi. 43, 44), and we live; the life which was leaving is recalled.

He said: *This is My body*; it is no longer bread. He said: *This is My blood*: it is no longer wine in a chalice. This is what Our Lord said: there is My body; there is My blood. They are separated; yes, separated. The body lies on one side, the blood on the other, and the word was the sword, the trenchant knife, which made this mystical separation. The word does not unite the body and the blood: if one is present with the other, it is because they have been inseparable since the resurrection of Jesus, for since that time, He dies no more. But the word implants the character of the death, which He really suffered, on this Jesus, Who dies no more. It places the body on one side, the blood on the other, each one under different signs. Behold Him then assuming the character of His death, this Jesus, formerly our Victim through the shedding of His blood, and again today our Victim in a different manner through the mystical separation of His blood from His body.

But how can this body be separated from this blood? Can that be? Can a human body exist under such conditions? Who can doubt this if the word of God says it is so? His word is all-powerful; a sharp sword, which can cut into the smallest divisions; which is able, through its power, to remove from this body its most intimate properties, in order to leave us with only the bare and pure

substance of it. It is to this pure substance that the divine Word is united, for its union is made in the substance: the union that He wishes to have with me, will also take place through the substance of His body and of His blood; He said it, and so it is accomplished immediately.

And yet, I do not see any change on this altar! Nevertheless, I believe it absolutely; the word of God has the power to remove from the senses all that it wishes, when it wishes, to enliven faith. Jesus Christ, when He wished, rendered Himself invisible to men. He walked in the midst of them without their seeing Him: two disciples, to whom He spoke, did not recognize Him until He wished them to. Mary took Him for the gardener until He roused her, and opened her eyes by His words. He entered; He went out; and no one saw Him either enter or leave: He appeared; He disappeared as He pleased. The word of God, this sharp sword, has come and has separated this body from this blood, not only in all that could render them invisible, but also in all through which they could strike our other senses.

And yet, all that I see, I saw before. If I believe my senses, there is only bread and wine on this mystical table. Is the bread present? Is the wine there? No, all is consummated. An invisible fire has descended from heaven: the word of God has descended, has penetrated within this bread and this wine, so that the only substance left on the sacred table is the one mentioned; Our Lord's flesh and blood. How? The word of God is all powerful; everything yields to it, and all that has remained here is that which it uttered: this fire has changed all within itself: the word has changed this bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

And yet, do I see the same exterior? Yes, because the word of God has not changed the external appearances in order to indicate to us the form under which we should take this body and this blood. Angels have appeared in human form; the Holy Spirit Itself manifested Itself under the form of a dove. In this instance, the word of God desired that the body of Jesus Christ appear to us under the species of bread, because we needed a sign to announce to us in what form we were to receive, and that which God wished was accomplished. The entire substance of the bread has been consummated, and that which you see is like the ashes which the divine fire has left. The remains are not ashes, however, since ashes are a substance, and what remains of this holocaust is merely a sacred envelope for Our Lord's body and blood. Finally, this residue which the word of God allowed to remain, was left in order to point out the hidden although actual presence of this body and blood of Jesus Christ, which existed there in truth and in substance, but only sensibly enough to enliven our faith. Let us say no more. All the rest is incomprehensible, can be understood only by the One Who has created it.

Behold the sign that Jesus Christ has left us; a sign whereby we recognize that He is truly present. For the word tells us so, and we must not be concerned about the manner in which God executes what He pronounces: we must think only of what it signifies. For the word of God has in itself the power to carry out all the wishes of the One Who sends it: *He has sent His word, and healed them: and delivered them from their destructions.* (Ps. cvi. 20) *My word shall not return to me void; but it shall do whatsoever I please.* (Isai. lv. 11) Understand then

again this word: *This is My body*. If He had wished to leave a simple sign, Our Lord would have said: This is a sign. If He had wished that His body be associated with the bread, He would have said: My body is here. He does not say this, however, but: *This is it*. Through these words, He defines for us that which the bread was, and that which it has become. When someone asks you: What is this? there is but one answer: It is His body; the word of God has created this marvel.

But the power of the word does not stop there. Coming from the mouth of the priest as from that of the Son of God, it causes this prodigious change on the sacred altar. It then turns its power upon all of us who are assisting at the sacrifice! It overwhelms our senses: we no longer see; we can taste nothing, on account of this mystery. That which appears as bread to us, is no longer bread, and what appears to be wine is wine no longer: it is the body, it is the blood of Jesus Christ. We no longer believe the judgement of our senses. Rather, we believe the word of God which has changed everything; we ourselves are not what we were, men enslaved by their senses, but are now men subject to the word. In this state we approach the holy altar: Come, the desire of my heart: *For thee my soul hath thirsted: for Thee my flesh, Oh, how many ways!* (Ps. lxii. 2) Yes, my flesh takes part in the desire of the soul, for it is within the body that these transports in the soul are accomplished. *My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.* (Ps. lxxxiii. 3) *All my bones will say: Lord who is like to Thee?* (Ps. xxxiv. 10) Who is like You in power? Who resembles You in kindness and in love?

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

The simplicity and the grandeur of this sacrifice.

How magnificent is the Christian sacrifice! How august! And yet how simple! How humble it is! A little bread, a little wine, and four words compose it! I recognize the character of the Lord Jesus. Whom do you believe? A man: What do you believe Him to be? A God. Saint Paul says: *He who eats of this bread.* (I Cor. xi. 27) You will say: He speaks only of bread. In truth, he speaks of the appearances and is content to point out what there is of humility, of the ordinary, of the familiar in this sacrifice; but penetrate the simplicity of these words: see what follows; see what precedes. Only then will you understand what force, what grandeur there are in these words: *He who eats this bread.* For this bread has become a body: this bread is bread in appearance only; it is the bread by which another bread, the real bread of eternal life, is given us. Ponder the meaning of this bread. One must understand the same about *the Chalice of the Lord.*

From the foundations of Christianity, the chalices which have served for the Eucharist have been of the most precious materials. Even during the time of persecutions and of the poverty of the Church this was so. I am not astonished: Jesus Christ made us understand the respect due to His body when He permitted and approved that so many exquisite perfumes be used, not only to honor Him during His life, but also to anoint Him after His death.

However, although Our Lord approved of these things, and His Church imitates them, She is not overly attached to this exterior magnificence. She realizes that persecution can take from Her the gold and the silver through which She serves the Son of God, but that it cannot cause her to lose the richness of Her sacrifice. For a little bread, a little wine can furnish Her with all She needs to offer God this most august sacrifice, and to give to all the faithful the most magnificent meal. Behold, these are the real riches of the Church: the others not only can be taken from Her, but She Herself has often done away with them. She has praised Her bishops who, to help the poor, reduced themselves to carrying the body of Jesus Christ in a basket, and His blood in a simple glass. Likewise, she praised those who used the sacred vessels to ransom prisoners, or to purchase a place to bury the dead. It is necessary, therefore, to be zealous in honoring the mysteries, and neither gold nor precious stones must be spared to excite the reverence of the faithful. However, let us never forget that that which is really valuable in this sacrifice is that which is the most hidden, the most humble.

But what is Our Lord Jesus Christ doing there? I do not see that He is doing anything worthy of Him. It is that in itself which is so magnificent: for it is through that, that He makes us see that all His grandeur, as well as all our happiness, is in His death. The more He is annihilated and the more certain His death, the more He transports to us His life. Worthy memorial of a God Who has annihilated Himself.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

The Lamb stands before the throne of God (Apoc. v. 6).

The heavens are opening: I am piercing through a veil; I am entering into the eternal sanctuary and I see there with Saint John before the throne, *a Lamb standing as it were slain.* (Apoc. v. 6) This is what I see in heaven; it is also what I see on earth. There, with the scars of His wounds Jesus stands in the midst of His saints: here the same crucified Christ, clothed with the sacred signs of the violent death which He suffered, is surrounded by the assembly of His priests. Saint Paul tells us of this entrance: *For Jesus is not entered into the Holies made with hands, the patterns of the true; but into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us* (Hebr. ix. 24); that He may intercede for us by His presence. And what shall we say of this Jesus placed on the holy altar, if not that His mere presence, and the representation of His death, is a perpetual intercession for mankind.

Let us accompany this action with holy prayer. Let us entrust Jesus, present on this altar, with our vows. We pray only through Jesus Christ. Behold Him present: let us pray then through Him. O Lamb without stain, Lamb Who takes away the sins of the world, avert the eyes of Your Father from my sins. I appear before His tribunal, and I am aware of *lightnings, and thunders and voices* (Apoc. iv. 5), of terrible weapons and explosives coming against me, against my crimes. Where shall I hide? I am

lost; I am battered by cannon and mortars. But I see You between two others, O Lamb without stain! You quiet these storms, and extinguish the fire of divine justice. I can breathe; I hope; I live. Standing before the throne of God, this gentle and peaceful Lamb tells me: *Go and sin no more.* (John viii. 11) He pardons on this condition only.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY

The Eucharist is the blood of the new testament (Matt. xxvi. 28).

I return to the words of the institution of this sacrament with a new appreciation, and I find there this touching phrase: *This is My blood of the new testament.* (Matt. xxvi. 28) I find, in this word *testament*, something that both strikes and touches me. This testament is the assurance of my heritage, but its price is the death of the One Who makes it: *For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must of necessity come in; For a testament is of force, after men are dead; otherwise it is as yet of no strength whilst the testator liveth; Whereupon neither was the first indeed dedicated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you.* (Hebr. ix. 16–20)

I understand, therefore, that the celestial heritage is given by testament to the children of God. Jesus Christ is the testator: it is necessary, therefore, that He die, since the testament is validated and receives its final authority only through the death of the testator. Before that time it is without effect; one cannot even change it. Only his death renders it sacred and inviolable: it is also that which gives it its full and entire effect, and which leaves the heir with all the goods left by the testator.

All this is accomplished perfectly in Jesus Christ, Who dies for us to assure our heritage. For this reason the Old Testament, which was to prefigure the New, was consecrated with blood. All its people, and the book of the law itself, wherein the promise of the heritage was written, were sanctified by the aspersion of this blood. Everything was stained with blood, and the character of death appeared everywhere. In spattering this blood on the book of the Covenant, Moses gave it the character of a testament. According to Saint Paul: *This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you.* (Hebr. ix. 20) This is also what Jesus accomplished by saying: *This is the blood*, not of the *Old Testament*, but of the *New*.

The meaning of these words, and the bearing that they have on the ancient forms, is that the blood of Jesus Christ shed at the cross, and shed in a very real and veritable manner, although in a different manner than it was in the Old Testament, *is the blood of the New Testament*; that is, Christ's blood was shed to give it validity.

There are some testaments which require that they be written in the testator's own handwriting; the law of the testament of Jesus Christ, however, had to be ratified by His blood. The instrument of this testament and the

document on which it is written is the Eucharist. The promises of Jesus Christ and of the new heritage are validated by the death of Jesus Christ, Who, through that way, saves us from hell, and assures us of heaven; and the document wherein this promise is contained, the instrument whereby the will and disposition of our Father is made known is written in His blood: His testament, in one word, is the Eucharist.

Who then would not be moved on hearing these words of the Saviour: *This is my blood of the new testament*; or, as Saint Luke states: *This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood* (Luke xxii. 20) which it contains. This is the nature of this Testament; it must be written entirely in the blood of the Testator. Come and read, Christians; come and read this admirable testament. Come and hear the solemn publication of it in the celebration of the sacred mysteries. Come and rejoice in the goodness of your Saviour, of your Father, of this divine Testator Who purchases your heritage for you with His blood, and Who uses this blood to write the testament through which He leaves it to you. Come and read this testament; come and possess it; come and enjoy it. This celestial heritage is yours.

THE THIRTIETH DAY

This is the new Testament through the blood of Our Lord.

This chalice is the new Testament in My blood. It is thus that Saint Luke and Saint Paul (I Cor. xi. 25) trans-

late what Saint Matthew and Saint Mark state: *This is the blood of the new Testament.*

There is no reason to doubt that the words pronounced by Jesus Christ in giving us His body are these: *This is My body*; all those who have written on this institution—Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke and Saint Paul—relate it in the same terms.

Neither is there any reason to doubt that Jesus Christ consecrated His blood in the same way in which He consecrated His body; that is, as related by Saint Matthew and Saint Mark: *This is My blood of the new Testament.* (Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24)

But there is something particular to consider in this blood of the new Testament; it is necessary that we understand that this blood shed for us on the cross, and again transformed into a liquid in the Eucharist, is the confirmation and the positive testimony of the last disposition of our Father. Saint Luke and Saint Paul explain it thus: *This chalice is the new Testament in my blood.* Just as a will, a man's last testament, is validated by his signature, so too the last testament of Jesus Christ is written in the blood of this sacred chalice.

Nothing could be simpler than the words which Jesus used: *This is my body; This is my blood of the new Testament.* These words conceal no subtlety of expression; they are literally true. In these words of Saint Luke and of Saint Paul, or rather in the words of Jesus Christ: *This chalice is the new Testament in my blood.* This is a way of speaking which although not an exact interpretation of the thought to be expressed, is nevertheless common in everyday conversation, in which one may call by the name of testament the instrument whereby the will of the testator is declared.

But at the same time, the truth of the blood is marked with a particular force; for it is expressly stated that if the chalice which is presented to us is the testament of Jesus Christ; if it is the sacred instrument whereby His last disposition is noted, it is through the blood of Jesus Christ which it contains; because this testament, as we have just seen, was of a nature to be written, not by hand, but by the very blood of the testator. And the words of Saint Luke point out this meaning clearly. For translating them word for word, according to what we find in the original, we must recall these words *shed for you*, not of the blood, but of the chalice; and we must translate them thus: *This chalice shed for you, is the new Testament in my blood*; thus not only is the blood shed for you, but the chalice also, in the same sense that we speak of a liquid that is poured, as one with the glass from which it is poured. Let us understand then that this chalice is also poured for us; that is, that the blood which it contains is not only poured for us at the cross, but that, just as it flows again in this chalice and some of it trickles over us, it is still an effusion which is done for our salvation, and a veritable oblation.

Let us give thanks to Jesus Christ, Who has explained in so many ways and in such a descriptive manner the sacrifice which He continues to offer for us in the Eucharist. Let us recognize that the blood of the redemption in truth flows for us again as on the cross, though in a mysterious manner. Jesus is powerful enough to accomplish all that He has said: His blood is here; this chalice is filled with it; it is shed for us every day; it is in this blood that is written the testament of our Father. And what is this testament if not the one of which it is written:

And this is the testament which I will make unto them; I will give my laws in their hearts, and on their minds will I write them: and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. (Hebr. x. 16, 17)

And why does God bequeath to us, through testament, the remission of sins, if it is not to remove the obstacle which prevents us from entering into heaven, which is our veritable heritage? And why does He do that through a testament, if it is not to make us recall that in order to have bequeathed this celestial heritage to us, it was necessary that the one who bequeathed it offer His life to validate this testament.

And why give us the blood of the New Testament? Or, as Saint Luke and Saint Paul state, why did God give us this testament sealed, confirmed, and written in the blood of the testator, if not to strengthen our faith and inflame our love? Who would not be touched, seeing a testament written in this way? How great is the heritage which is bequeathed to us by a testament so admirable, and so precious? Seeing again the gushing from this sacred chalice of the blood of this testament, through which our sins are washed away, who would not be horrified; who would not uproot their sins even to the least fault, at the sight and the power of this blood?

THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY

An act of thanksgiving (Matt. xxvi. 30).

And, a hymn being said, they went out unto Mount Olivet. (Matt. xxvi. 30) They went there indeed, and be-

fore Jesus Christ left, several things hapened which we shall note in greater detail later. Now, let us pause a moment to reflect on this hymn, this canticle of thanksgiving and joy, which Jesus and His apostles sang at the completion of the sacred mystery. Refreshed by Jesus Christ and intoxicated by the wine of His chalice, of what could they sing if not of the One with Whom they were filled? *The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and strength, and wisdom, and honor, and glory, and benediction. And every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them. I heard all saying: to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, for ever and ever.* (Apoc. v. 12, 13)

The world sings of the joys of the world; and we, of what shall we sing after having received the celestial gift, if not of eternal joys?

The world sings of its passions, its foolish and criminal loves; and we, of what shall we sing, if not of the One Whom we love?

The world proclaims its dissolute joys universally; and we, what will be heard from our lips, after having drunk *this corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins* (Zach. ix. 17), if not the canticles of sobriety and of continence? Filled with the death of Jesus Christ, which has just been placed before our eyes, and of the flesh of His sacrifice, of what shall we sing, if not of Him: *by Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.* (Gal. vi. 14)

Do not leave without singing this hymn, without reciting this canticle of the redemption of the human race. Moses and the ancient peoples joyfully sang the canticle

of their deliverance when they came out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea! Sing also, you people who have been delivered from the bondage of sin! Sing the canticle of Moses, and the canticle of the Lamb, saying: *Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty. Just and true are thy ways, O King of ages! Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come, and shall adore in Thy sight, because Thy judgements are magnified.* (Apoc. xv. 3, 4) *That through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil (Hebr. ii. 14); now shall the prince of the world be cast out. (John xii. 31) Despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in himself. (Coloss. ii. 15)*

And now, in memory of so great a victory, we offer through You and in You, to Your celestial Father, this sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving, which in reality is nothing else but Yourself, because we have only You to offer for all the graces which we have received through Your mediation.

THE THIRTY-SECOND DAY

The treachery of Judas is discovered (John xiii. 26–30).

After Jesus had given Judas the dipped morsel, which was the signal given to Saint Peter and to Saint John to recognize the traitor, the unhappy wretch *left immediately; and it was night.* (John xiii. 30)

For the sake of continuity, we can observe here what

has already been stated in the Gospel of Saint Luke; that is, that after the supper Jesus spoke again to His disciples of the one who was to betray Him, and His words multiplied their anxieties concerning the author of the betrayal. It was then that Saint Peter signaled to Saint John that Jesus had given them the sign of the dipped morsel.

We know that He did not divulge it to all the disciples because Saint John says expressly: *Now no man at the table knew to what purpose He said this unto him.* (John xiii. 28) This revelation would have caused much confusion among them, and they might have been prompted to violence, to which, through His kindness, Our Lord did not wish to expose the traitor, or to make his betrayal more public than necessary. But since He wished that His disciples might know that He knew all things perfectly, He chose two from among them, whose discretion He was sure of, to be witnesses to the others when the occasion demanded it.

He whispered this revelation to Saint John, to be heard by him alone, or at most, also by Saint Peter who was very attentive; the others understood nothing of this signal, and according to Saint John, Judas, after having taken a morsel, left immediately.

This precipitous exit of the traitorous disciple would have astonished the other disciples, if they had not heard Jesus Christ say to him: *That which thou dost, do quickly* (John xiii. 27), and they understood this as some order which He was giving him for the festival, or for the poor, for the apostles knew the tenderness of their Master for the latter. He often gave such orders for them, and they judged correctly that He would not forget them even in the midst of His greatest perils. Let us then love the poor,

and take such good care of them that they may feel we have a genuine regard for them.

Some have believed that this morsel, after which Satan entered into Judas, was the sacred bread of the Eucharist, but this is unlikely. Visibly, it was a morsel that Jesus Christ dipped into some kind of a dish, and such an action would not have been a suitable use of the sacred bread.

It is necessary to understand that this morsel was the sign that Saint John had asked for, and was also, for Judas, the last mark of familiarity and of communication which he would have with Jesus. Afterwards, this ungrateful heart, which nothing could soften, was given over to Satan.

As to that which Saint John says; that is, that *Judas left immediately afterwards*, one can take the word *immediately* in two ways. First of all, since this dipped morsel was given to the traitor during the supper, *immediately* in this instance would not mean the moment immediately following, since the supper was followed by the consecration of the blood at which, according to Saint Luke, Judas assisted. The *immediately*, in this case, would mean a short time after, and that there had not been any other act between leaving the table, which was to take place a moment later, and the retreat of Judas.

The other manner of interpreting this phrase is that the dipped morsel was given to Judas after the consecration of the sacred Chalice, for even though the supper was ended, we note, through Saint Luke, that Jesus and the apostles remained at table for some time, since Jesus continued to speak of the traitor. It could well be, therefore, that it was at this time that He gave this morsel to Judas, oddly enough, after supper. Moreover, He could

possibly have done this to make this act even more evident to the two disciples, to whom He was anxious to make him known. Besides, there is no need to be curious concerning these circumstances. When we see some obscurities in the Gospels, as in this instance, we must believe that they are not too important, or at least that they are not so for everybody.

However this may be, after the last supper Judas went out, and it is not without reason that Saint John remarks that it was night in order to make us understand that all this, and that which followed, happened a few hours before the Saviour was betrayed. For He was delivered the same night. This circumstance at the time Jesus speaks of it serves to make us attentive to His last words, which contain His last farewell and His final instructions, those consequently which He wishes to leave the most profoundly engraved in the hearts of His disciples.

THE THIRTY-THIRD DAY

Who are destined for the kingdom of God (Luke xiii. 28-30).

You are they who have continued with me in my temptations (Luke xxii. 28), in my troubles. He spoke as though He were saying: The desire for glory torments you; behold in What you must place your glory; it is in the fact that you have not abandoned Me in the midst of My perils and My troubles. And I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom (Luke xxii. 29),

the same that He has prepared for Me; that is, an eternal and unshaken kingdom. Is there not enough there to satisfy your ambition? Do not amuse yourselves by quarreling over temporal preferences. *That you may eat and drink at My table, in My kingdom.* (Luke xxii. 30) You will eat there of the same meats; you will all be satiated equally with the delights and the abundance of My house: no one will be envious of others, because all together you will be happy. You dispute for the advantages of the earth because those who possess them, share them, and cannot leave them to others in their entirety. But at My table and in My kingdom, the plenitude of all good things is so great that everyone can possess it without abatement.

You ask for thrones and for the first places: here is the throne that I am preparing for you: *You may sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* (Luke xxii. 30) You will judge them, with Me, and you shall all be My judges; and yet, you dream of petty advantages and petty honors that you may hope for on earth! Raise your eyes to the grandeurs, to the power, and to the thrones which I prepare for you at the final judgement when the entire universe will be judged by a last and irrevocable sentence.

What! Your ambition will not die at these words! Then dream of this promised glory. It is for those who persevere with Jesus Christ in His temptations; who follow Him to the cross; who carry His cross with Him every day; who have renounced everything for Him. *You, says He, who have left all to follow Me in the regeneration, you shall sit on twelve seats, judging the tribes of Israel.* (Matt. xix. 27, 28)

THE THIRTY-FOURTH DAY

The power of Satan.

And the Lord said: *Simon, Simon; I have called you twice: be more attentive. Behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.* (Luke xxii. 31)

What power Satan has! He can tear men apart, even the apostles themselves. He can excite them, throw them around, knock them down; in one word, he can do with them all that he wishes. Who or what has given this right to Satan, if not sin? Through sin he has conquered man, who, after Satan's victory, was delivered to him as his slave. For this reason he is able to make use of sin and of sinners with tyrannical power; nevertheless, he does nothing of himself. His is a malignant power, malevolent, tyrannical; but it is a power submissive to the power and the supreme justice of God.

Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with a very grievous ulcer (Job ii. 7): *he is called the accuser of our brothers.* (Apoc. xii. 10) And God delivers to him whomever He pleases, according to the rules of His justice, according to those that the demon has a right to ask of Him; that is, those in whom he finds his own: those wherein he finds sin. This is the reason Jesus said: *The prince of the world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything* (John xiv. 30); but, with regard to the rest of men, he has too much in them. He had too much power over the apostles, who were still possessed with vain glory, one of the worst characteristics of Satan,

who became a devil through ambition and through pride. For this reason Jesus Christ took this opportunity to speak to them of Satan's demand on the occasion of their ambitious quarrel when vainglory appeared in them.

You worry about who will have the first place when you have so many other things which ought to concern you more. Satan entered into the midst of you through your quarrels: you have given him good reason, and you have made him a very great proposal to dissipate you, to tear you to pieces. All that are possessed of inordinate pride are swept away with vainglory and Satan will tear them to pieces. Therefore, instead of arguing over these ridiculous questions of rank, and so becoming thereby the laughing stock and the prey to hell, unite against such a redoubtable power.

THE THIRTY-FIFTH DAY

Jesus cares for the apostles. He is placed in the rank of scoundrels (Luke xxiii. 35, 36; Mark xv. 28).

Jesus said to His apostles: *When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want anything? But they said: Nothing. Then said He unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip: and he that hath not, let him sell his coat, and buy a sword. (Luke xxii. 35, 36)*

You have lacked nothing. Such was the care of the Saviour that He did not wish that His disciples suffer from want. But what, were they never in need? How is it

then that on one occasion they were reduced to breaking ears of corn with their bare hands to nourish themselves? Was not that enough of a pressing necessity? But, Jesus Christ did not say that they never suffered; never were in want. He did say, however, that they never lacked absolutely, and were not soon relieved. And this was not because Jesus Christ performed miracles for them: we do not read that He multiplied the loaves more than twice in favor of a great crowd of people, and the conduct of His family followed along more natural ways. Let us learn then to have confidence in this gentle and imperceptible conduct of Jesus Christ, through which, in the midst of need and suffering, He provides the necessary provisions for His own.

The sequel to this discourse shows us the attention that the Saviour paid to the accomplishment of the prophecies. One in particular—that the Christ was to be placed in the rank of the scoundrels (Mark xv. 28)—was accomplished perfectly when He was crucified between two thieves. But this was only in the nature of a preparation that He might appear as a thief defending Himself against the ministers of justice: *You are come out as it were to a robber with swords and clubs to apprehend Me.* (Matt. xxvi. 55) He was represented as a man whose violence was to be feared, and Who was to be attacked with arms. It was in God's plan, and in the order of the prophecies, that He was to be surrounded by people of authority, who might make use of the sword to save Him. It suffices for us to consider that it was necessary that there be some sort of foundation for the calumny that was to be brought against Him.

Let us not be astonished then, if through the secret disposition of divine providence, there should be something

in our lives which might weaken our glory, and give cause for detraction. God will know how to have it work toward His glory, provided that we are without fault, and surrender with submission to that which He commands: *For I say to you, that this that is written, must yet be fulfilled in Me.* (Luke xxii. 37) Thus those things that had been foretold of the events surrounding Our Saviour were accomplished little by little, and one after another.

He was told that there were two swords in the company; He knew it well, but He wished that this fact be noted so that nothing could be said to have happened by chance in His passion. *He said to them: It is enough.* (Luke xxii. 38) And so, after all these things were accomplished, and before leaving the Garden of Olives, He gave His orders, as was His custom, and began His last farewell.

THE THIRTY-SIXTH DAY

The glorification of Jesus (John xiii. 31, 32).

Now that the end approaches, let us notice the circumstances; the treacherous disciple who had plotted His death left to execute this conspiracy, concluded it, and delivered Jesus to His enemies to suffer from their violence unto death: *Now the Son of Man is to be glorified* (John xiii. 31); but it is not upon this that Our Lord wishes us to dwell. Indeed, the glory of God is His only concern; *and God will be glorified* in Himself, through His obedience, through the most perfect sacrifice ever made, and through

His infinite merit. His justice, His truth, His mercy will gush forth for the remission of sins; in the pain which He shall bear from it; in the expiation which He shall make of it through His blood. His doctrine will be confirmed by His death; He shall draw all things to Himself and shall return to the glory which He had with My Father from all eternity.

If God be glorified in Him, God also will glorify Him in Himself; and immediately will He glorify Him (John xiii. 32): for those in whom God is glorified by their obedience and by their humiliations, He does not fail to glorify, and to glorify them in Himself. Moreover, He will not delay to glorify them: for all the more reason will He glorify His well beloved Son, Who breathes only for the glory of His Father, and through that has merited that His Father think only of His glory, and that, without delay.

What a glory! But let us consider whence it comes, and under what circumstances Jesus Christ spoke of it. He spoke of it at the moment that Judas left to perpetrate his crime and to deliver his Master to His last agony. From this greatest of all crimes, then, will be born this glory of God, the greatest of all time. Jesus had to be driven to the greatest extremities in order that He might emerge with His greatest glory.

Christian, do not lose courage when crime and injustices abound: God would never permit evil, if He were not powerful enough to draw good from it, and a far greater good. When iniquity is most evident, it is then that He finds the greatest means to amplify His glory. Do not lose courage either, when you are delivered to your enemies and to the most terrible agonies; for again, it is

from this source that your great glory must be born, and also the great glory of God, to which you must be more sensitive than to your own.

Christians, members of Jesus, learn from whence glory comes to your Master; it is thus that it must spread over the members. *When I am weak, says Saint Paul, then I am powerful* (II Cor. xii. 1); when I am despised, it is then that I must be glorified, and glorified in God; not in men, nor in the world, which is nothing, but in God where all glory is, because within Him is truth.

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH DAY

Jesus prepares our intellects for the greatest truths through submission, and through a holy fear.

Read chapter fourteen of the Gospel of Saint John. You will find there depths of meaning to make one tremble.

Dear Lord, I fear them; I fear those who do not feel them, who do not understand. Profit by what you do understand: adore that which you do not understand; it is a great lesson. Do you wish to be helped by some pious explanation of the words of Jesus Christ? Rather, help yourselves; look into yourselves; ask the great Father of the family to give you bread; always take what He gives you through Himself, and be disposed to receive that which He gives you through His ministers. Accustom yourselves to this exercise; it is thus that one succeeds in understanding. The difficulties will disappear little by little. When difficulties remain, why do you worry? It is not curiosity

that you wish to satisfy; you will find clear all that Jesus wishes to tell you, and when you do not understand, He speaks to you in another way: He asks you to believe, to adore, to humble yourself, to desire, and to search. Rejoice whether you find understanding or whether God reserves this grace for another time, since, in the meantime, you have humbly submitted to Him, which is more than having found and understood, since it is already the principle of understanding, which is understanding the very best that there is to understand.

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH DAY

Jesus Christ is our assurance and our rest (John xiv. 3-6).

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself; that where I am, you also may be. (John xiv. 3)

Here is the final assurance and comfort that Jesus could give to His faithful. When He returns on the last day: *Men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the power of heaven shall be moved: Then, said He, lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. (Luke xxi. 26, 28)* I do not come to judge you; I come to fetch you, and to take you with Me. Judgement is only for the world, and for those who love the world: *He that believeth in me, of this living and veritable faith that you being fruitful in all good things, are not judged; they are not judged, but passed from death to life. (John iii. 18; Coloss. i. 10)*

Without waiting for this last day, Jesus Christ comes to visit us every day, when He calls us to His eternal life; He visits us through sickness; He is the great Father of the family Who knocks at the door. He comes to fetch us, in order that where He is, we may be there with Him.

This, therefore, is the great word: it is the word of consolation and of tenderness which Jesus Christ uses to make us see that He does not wish that we be separated from Him for any length of time. Therefore, far from being afraid, we must raise our heads, because the moment has arrived when we are going to be where Jesus Christ is, in His kingdom, on His throne. This realization is what caused Saint Paul to say that this his mortal body was a burden to him and that he desired to be rid of it, *to be with Jesus Christ (Philip. i. 23) from this terrestrial dwelling*, and to leave this sojourn, where he is *so far away from the Lord (II Cor. v. 6)* to go and live where He is.

If we love Jesus Christ, nothing should be dearer to us than these words: *I am going away, and I shall return to fetch you, in order that you may be where I am*. To be far from Jesus Christ is to be in trouble, in death, in temptation, in sin. To be with Jesus Christ is to be in glory, in peace, in perfect justice. That is what He promised us; that is what He called the apostles to on bidding them a final farewell. This farewell then, is only for a short time. Jesus Christ promised them that He would return to take them back with Him. This promise was the last sign of His love and the most powerful means of reassuring them.

And finally, to remove all uncertainty from them, He added: *And whither I go, you know; and the way you know. (John xiv. 4)* In this statement lies the difference

between the apostles and the Jews. For the Jews knew neither where He was going, nor what road to follow. Their faithlessness, their blindness prevented them from following Him. But He told His apostles: *You know where I am going, and you know the road that you must follow, and this road it is Myself: I am the way, the truth and the life.* (John xiv. 6) Why then should you be troubled about My departure, since I show you the way to follow Me?

Lord, Saint Thomas said to Him: *We do not know where You are going; and how can we know the way?* (John xiv. 5) And Jesus replied: *I am the way, the truth and the life: I am the One to Whom you must go: for it is with Me that you must be; I am the way which you must follow.* This is a profound statement and one not capable of being arrived at by human reason. What is the end of all these desires, if it isn't *the truth and life*? It is, Jesus said, that which I am, and when one has discovered the road, what is there to seek? *I am still this road, I am the way.* How can we be all together at one time, be where we are going, and not know the road to get there? My Saviour unites both in these few words: *I am the way, the truth and the life.* In this statement He includes His entire doctrine and His mystery of godliness. Ah Lord, give me the grace to savor these words, to find You within them, and to delight in You entirely.

THE THIRTY-NINTH DAY

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life (John xiv. 6).

I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the Word

Who was in the beginning, the Word of the eternal Father, His conception, His wisdom, the veritable light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. (John i. 9) I am truth itself; consequently, I am the sustenance, the nourishment, and the life of all who understand. I am the One in Whom life is, and the same life which is in the Father. One must accept all these things through faith, for if they were not necessary for our salvation, Jesus Christ would not have revealed them to us.

I am then, said He, the truth and the life, because I am God; but at the same time I am Man. I have come to teach mankind, and bring it the words of eternal life. Through My doctrine, I have given men an example of good living. But since all this was only on the exterior, and it was also necessary to bring grace to men, I have made Myself their Victim, in order to merit this grace for them. I am therefore the way: one cannot approach God, or eternal life except through Me. It is necessary to come through My doctrine; it is necessary to arrive there through My example; it is necessary to come there through My merits, and through the grace that I bring into the world. The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ . . . (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. (John i. 14, 17) Let us enter by this way then, and we shall find the truth and the life.

This is what the Church teaches us every day through the perpetual formula with which It ends all Its prayers. Let us adore God; let us praise Him; let us sacrifice to Him; let us consecrate ourselves to Him; let us pray to Him; let us ask Him: all is done through Jesus Christ.

Behold the way. At the same time, however, we add that being God, He lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He lives of the same life; He reigns with the same sovereignty. Behold then all the mystery of Jesus Christ: *And we know that the Son of God is come: and He hath given His understanding that we may know the true God, and may be in His true Son. This is the true God and life eternal.* (I John v. 20) It is He Who has come to make known to us the true God; it is through Him that we shall go to Him. He Himself is the true God, the truth Itself and eternal life. *He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.*

THE FORTIETH DAY

No man cometh to the Father, but through Jesus Christ (John xiv 6).

No man cometh to the Father, but by Me. (John xiv. 6) Here Jesus admits His apostles into a more profound secret; and, in order to render them absolutely imperturbable, He reveals to them all the good that they will find in Him. This good will be that in finding Him, through Him, they will possess the Father Himself, Who was to be the whole object of their desires.

No man cometh to My Father, but by Me. If the Saviour is *the way, the truth and the life*, He must not lead us to any other but to Himself, in order to be happy. How is it then that He is the way to lead us to His Father?

What more do we want than the truth and the life that we shall find in Him? He Himself explains this profound secret to us when He says: *If you had known Me, you would without doubt have known My Father also: and from henceforth you shall know Him, and you have seen Him.* (John xiv. 7) Do not believe that in elevating you to the knowledge of My Father, I am leading you to something that is beyond Me: rather, it is through Me that the Father is known, and you have already seen Him.

What is this new mystery? How do we know the Father in knowing Jesus Christ? When did the apostles see the Father? Where did they see Him? He will tell us later; but first of all Jesus explains what Saint Philip said to Him: *Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.* (John xiv. 8)

At these words, to tell the truth at the very sound of these words, the Christian soul feels something magnificent, something tender, something intimate. *Lord, show us your Father, and it is enough for us.* Show Him to us, for it is through You that we wish to see Him. *It is enough for us.* You tell us to have neither fear nor trouble: In that case we need but one thing: *Your Father is enough for us.* Let us understand this complete satisfaction of our spirit in seeing God. It will be the remedy to all our troubles. For we have found a good which nothing can take from us; and this good alone being sufficient for us, nothing can ever disturb our peace, our rest.

THE FORTY-FIRST DAY

God alone is enough for us (John xiv. 8).

Show us the Father and it is enough for us. (John xiv. 8) God alone is enough for us, and it is necessary but to see Him to possess Him, because in seeing Him, *I will show you all good* (Exod. xxxiii. 19), as He explains it Himself to Moses: we see then all that can attract love; we love Him without end; and all that is to possess Him. Let us say then, with all our hearts, with Saint Philip: *Lord, show us Your Father, and it is enough for us:* He alone can fill the void. He alone can fulfill all our needs. He alone can eternally satisfy all our desires, and make us happy.

Let us then empty our hearts of everything else for if the Father alone is enough for us, we do not need the good things that our senses crave in themselves, and still less do we need the riches which are beyond us, or the honors which consist in mere opinion. We do not even need this mortal life: still less do we need that which is necessary to preserve it. Rather, we need only God. He is enough for us. Possessing Him, we are content.

How courageous are these words of Saint Philip! To tell the truth, one must also be able to say with the apostle: *Behold, we have left all things and we have followed Thee.* (Matt. xix. 27) We must at least leave all things through affection, through desire, through resolution; through an invincible resolution not to attach ourselves to anything, to seek no support in anything except

in God alone. Then we too can say with Saint Philip: *Show us the Father, it is enough for us.* All is contentment. Happy are those who pursue this desire to the end, who pursue it to the very last; that is, actual and perfect renunciation. But they must keep nothing at all. Let them not say: This little that I am still attached to is nothing. Do you not know the nature of the human heart? No matter how little we may possess, all our desires are centered there. Tear out everything; detach yourselves from everything; keep nothing.

Again happy are those to whom it is given to pursue this desire, to pursue it in fact to the very end. However, not only these but all Christians are obliged to pursue this desire to the end, at least in their hearts, in truth, under the very eyes of God. We are obliged to own goods as though not owning them; to be married as though not being married; to make use of the things of this world as though not using them. We must all aim for this real good, and we are not Christians if we do not say sincerely with Saint Philip: *Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.*

This then is the foundation of the faith which utters this word. It is, in some way, the very foundation of nature. For there is something in the depths of our nature which feels that it needs to possess God, and that, He alone being able to refresh it, it can only worry and torment itself when it is far from Him. When then, in the midst of other good things, we feel this inevitable void, and something tells us we are unhappy, it is this voice in the depths of our nature which cries out in some way: *Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.* But how can the sick desire be cured, while all remedies are lacking,

and death itself is often unnoticed in the body seeking it? Such is the state of all human nature. Man abandoned to himself does not know what to do, or what to become. His pleasures carry him away and these same pleasures kill him. Indeed, he kills himself by as many blows as the attraction of the senses causes him to commit sins, and he not only kills his soul by his intemperance, but also inflicts death on the body which he wishes to flatter. So blind is he that he knows little of what he needs! Since Adam committed the first sin, man is born to be unhappy. He is miserable because of all the infirmities which plague the body, wherein he places his happiness. How much more unhappy he is as a result of such a number of errors, of irregularities, and of vicious inclinations which are the maladies and the death of the soul! We do not even know how to desire or ask for what we must have. But Saint Philip tells us saying: *Lord, show us our Father, and it is enough.* For Jesus Christ has taught us what is the only necessary thing. Lord, You are the way; I come to You to find myself again, and to say finally with Your apostle: *Show us the Father, and it is enough.*

THE FORTY-SECOND DAY

The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father (John xiv. 10).

Let us enter once more with humility and trembling into the depths of the words of Jesus Christ. He tells us all that He is through these words. The same One Whom we

see with the eyes of the body, and Who in that way appears as man, is the same One in Whom we believe, and Whom we see with the eyes of the spirit as the Son of God, and God Himself, the same God as His Father; because, *hear, Oh Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord* (Deut. vi. 4): perfectly one, unity itself: not another God than His Father.

His Father and He are inseparable: The One is in the Other: the Father in His manner is in the Son; the Son in another manner is in the Father. He who sees the Father, sees the Son; he who sees the Son, sees the Father; we do not separate them in our mind, neither must we separate them in our faith, thus conforming to that which He has said: *You believe in God, believe also in Me.* (John xiv. 1)

A little while, and now you shall not see Me. (John xvi. 16) That is what He will say to us soon. You will no longer see Me with the eyes of the body: but shall we no longer see Him with the eyes of the spirit? God forbid. Where then would our faith and our hope be? But is He going in such a way that He will no longer remain with us? Again, God forbid. For where then would we find the truth of these words, which we expect to hear soon: *and we will come to Him and make our abode with Him.* (John xiv. 23) He really is going away then, and yet He remains: just as when He descended from the bosom of His Father, and yet remained there. Thus when He returns to the Father, He does not remain less with us. In this way, the Man Who disappears is the same as the God Who remains; the One Whom we see, is the same as the One Whom we do not see; and He Himself is the same with the Father, in order that we may understand that all belongs to us. In the One Whom we see, and Who

has given Himself to us in making Himself Man, we can possess the One Who is eternally with the Father, Who is in the Father, in Whom the Father is, Whom we shall see, Whom we shall love, Whom we shall possess in His Son.

This is the perfect explanation of these: *I am the way*, as man: as Son of God, *I am*, as is My Father, *the truth and the life*: the same truth, the same life. Behold the mystery. Behold the hope. Behold the faith of Christians: to possess the Son Who has made Himself visible, in order to elevate one's self through Him, and find in Him the invisible truth of God. Ah! how close God is to us! How God is within us through Jesus Christ! Truly He is our Emmanuel: *God with us!* Let us sit at His table; let us eat; let us refresh ourselves. There is our nourishment. There is our life.

THE FORTY-THIRD DAY

Jesus Christ, operating through His miracles, shows us the Father in His works (John xiv. 10).

The Father Who abideth in Me, He doth the works. (John xiv. 10) This is the second way through which Jesus Christ wishes that we see His Father through Him: We see the Father in His words; we must also see the Father in His works.

My Father acts, and I act also: *My Father worketh until now; and I work.* (John v. 17) If the world has existed, it is My Father Who has made it, and I also; if the world

continues to be, it is My Father Who is keeping it in existence, and I also. He made it, and He made everything through His Son: *Amen, Amen I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing.* (John v. 19) Is the Son an apprentice then, always doing the manual labor of His Master? Is He always an apprentice; never a master?

This is not true even among the apprentices of men. What are you imagining here, vulgar man? That the Father does something, and then the Son Who is imitating Him, also does something? What folly! Has the Father made a world other than that which the Son has made? Is there a world made exclusively by the Father? Is there a world that the Father has made, and another world that the Son has made, in imitation of His Father? God forbid! The Father does all that He does through His Son, and the Son does nothing except what He sees being done; just as He says nothing but what He hears being said. But how do we speak to Him? For to the eternal Father, to speak is to engender: to pronounce His Word, His saying, this is to give Him being. In the same way, since God the Father shows the Son all that He does, shows Him the depths of His being and of His power, in one word, opens His bosom to Him, He engenders Him: He makes Him come out of His fertile bosom, and at the same time keeps Him there where He sees everything, the whole secret of His Father, and whence He comes to teach it to men, to the degree that they are able to accept it and that it is beneficial for them.

The Son then says nothing but what He understands, and He does nothing except that which He sees being done, but He understands His Father, and sees what He

does and that which He is; this is born of Him. He has this ability through His birth. It is as natural for Him to act, as it is for His Father, and for this reason He adds: *For what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner.* (John v. 19)

Listen: He not only does it, but *He does it also in like manner*, as perfectly and with the same dignity. The Father does it indefatigably, and the Son the same way; the Father is drawn from nothingness, and so is it with the Son; the Father works without ceasing, and so also does the Son. *For, as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom He will* (John v. 21), and with the same authority, because His authority, like His nature, is that of His Father. *For, as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself.* (John v. 26) It is given to Him; and nevertheless He has it within Himself, because it is all given to Him without reserve. Thus life is in Him, as it is in His Father; and He, like Him, has this life by nature.

Thus the Father Who lives in Me, performs all the miraculous works which you see; all the works of Jesus Christ are perfect; all possess a celestial authority and origin. For this reason Saint John said: and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. (John i. 14) How then do you not see, said He to Philip, *that My Father is in Me, and I in Him.* (John xiv. 10) See it in the works that I perform, in order to show that it is My Father Who has sent Me. *Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard me* (John xi. 41); He wishes all that I wish; I wish all that pleases Him. All that is His is Mine; all that is Mine is His. *Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the*

*Father in Me. Otherwise believe for the very works' sake.
(John xiv. 11, 12)*

*Believe it at least, He says, as though He were saying: there is another way of seeing that My Father is in Me, and I in Him; that is, to see the substance of the One and of the Other: this is what will make your happiness perfect. But in the meantime, see it at least through My works; I do what My Father wishes, that which He shows Me; It is He Who does all in Me. Does He not also do all in the others, whom He calls to carry out His work? Yes without doubt; but he does not do it as being in them, that is to say, as being there fully, as being there reciprocally and in perfect equality, because no other but the Son can say: *He who sees Me, sees My Father, because My Father is in Me, and I in Him.**

Ah affinity! Ah equality! Ah unity, I believe You; I adore You. I give You thanks, My Saviour, that You have so elevated us through faith: this is a pledge to me that You wish to elevate me still higher in the sight of the whole world. What therefore do I have to fear? Why do I worry? In order to free myself from trouble, I should desire with Saint Philip only to see Your Father. You show me where I can see Him; You show Him to me in something that is very close to me, since it is a man, and who is very close to You, since it is another Yourself. I see, I shall see: who can take my happiness from me?

THE FORTY-FOURTH DAY

The miracles of the apostles are greater than those of Jesus Christ (John xiv. 12).

Amen, Amen I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do: because I go to the Father. (John xiv. 12) You think that you will lose all by My retreat, but you will gain by it, and the power which shall be given to you from above will be such that not only will you do the things that I do, but you will perform even greater ones. Therefore, do not worry. Fear nothing. On the contrary, steep yourselves in faith and in confidence, so that what you will do after My retreat will be beyond all that which has been done.

This is the marvel of God in the disciples of Jesus Christ. They have done all that He has done; they, like Him, have healed all the sick who came to them, and, like Him, they have even gone so far as to bring the dead to life.

They have also done things that He did not do. At a word from Saint Peter, *Ananias and Saphira dropped dead* (Acts v. 1-10): and at one from Saint Paul, *Elymas the magician was struck with blindness.* (Act. xiii. 8, 10, 11) They delivered to Satan, and to unforeseen evils, those who had to be struck down manifestly to inspire fear in others. These are some of the miracles which Jesus did not perform, but they are also those that He did not perform because they were repugnant to His characteristic gentleness. Only at the fig tree did He display the power to lose and destroy; only the swine did He deliver to demons. As for men, He must be their Judge some day, but, in this, His first coming, He was to make felt only His quality of Saviour. Nevertheless, we can repeat that in these miracles which have come from a beneficent power, the apostles have done more than Jesus. In touch-

ing the garments which He actually wore, some received a beneficial strength (Luke viii. 44, 46), but, with the apostles, it was not apparent that the cure was effected by *the application of linens which had touched them at one time.* (Act. xix. 11, 12; Act. v. 15, 16)

But the greatest of all the miracles of the apostles, even greater than those of Jesus Himself, was the conversion of the world. At the first preaching of Saint Peter, three thousand persons were converted (Act. ii. 41); at the second, five thousand. (Act. iv. 4) After the death of Jesus, there were only about one hundred and twenty of His disciples in the cenacle (Act. i. 15), and a few hidden disciples were scattered far and wide. However, Saint James said to Saint Paul: *Thou seest brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews that have believed.* (Act. xxi. 20) And there were many more if we consider the converted Gentiles, and the Gospel received by the whole world, even by the most barbarous people! Behold the miracles of the apostolic preaching which were greater than those of Jesus Christ Himself.

Let us add to these miracles the secrets revealed by the apostles, secrets that Jesus Himself had not revealed, so that we can say, after a fashion, that not only did they do greater things than He did, but also that they proclaimed greater ones.

Jesus had spoken well of the reprobation of the Jews, and of the conversion of the Gentiles; but He did not reveal that this reprobation of the Jews was soon to appear, and was to give place to the almost total conversion of the Gentiles, and that Israel was to return, but only at the end, *and when the fullness of the Gentiles should come into* (Rom. xi. 25) the Church and that it pleased

God to conceal all in faithlessness, in order to show that nobody was saved except through mercy. These were secrets of which Jesus Christ had reserved the revelation for Saint Paul, who, since he was chosen to be the Doctor of the Gentiles, was also to announce to men more profoundly the incomprehensible mystery of their vocation.

It is this profound *mystery*, and this secret unknown to the world in the centuries and in the past races, which God revealed to him for the Gentiles, and through whom God also made known *the great science which He had given him of the mystery of Jesus Christ; this is the secret which has been revealed to the apostles and to the prophets of the new alliance through the Holy Spirit*, and particularly to him, Paul, prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. This secret was revealed by them and *by the Church*, not only to men, but also to *angels and to celestial powers; in order to make them admire the diverse counsels of the fertile wisdom of God.* (Eph. 1, 3–6, 8–11) For this reason, Paul glorifies himself in the third chapter to the Ephesians, because, in fact, it had been given to him, not only to explain clearly and fully that which Jesus Christ had enclosed in His parables, but also to propose this new secret of the return of the Jews after the Gentiles had filled the Church.

Oh God! be praised for the graces that You extend to men, and for the admirable lights which You have given to Your Church. Who would not admire the honor that Jesus Christ wished to grant to His disciples, allowing them to surpass, in some way, His own works.

And yet, He shows afterwards, that even though His disciples will perform greater miracles than He did while on earth, it is, after all, He Who performs them: *What-*

soever you shall ask in My name, that shall I do. (John xiv. 13) And that which I shall do through you, will be greater, in some way, than that which I shall do by myself. Why? *Because I go to My Father.* If I do such great things in coming from My Father, how much greater will I do, when I return to the place of glory?

My Saviour, I recognize this; You are eternal wisdom, and accomplish all things appropriately and in their own time. Men could not at first carry all the weight of Your secrets; therefore You dispensed this knowledge gradually. You reserved Your greatest works for the time when, after having returned to Your Father, the days of humiliation having ended, You could act with greater sovereignty, and could manifest Your power, in performing such great wonders through Your disciples. For it is You Who love all; You appeared to Your first martyr from on high (Act. vii. 55), and directed him through the help which You extended to all the others. You revealed Your truth to the Gentiles through a Saint Paul; but this Paul, through whom You operated the conversion of so many peoples, You converted Yourself, by speaking to him from the highest heaven (Act. vii. 1, 3-7), and showing him that he resisted You in vain.

You accomplished all that You wished through Yourself and through Your disciples; You did everything in such a way that men were able to bear it, and in conformity with the different conditions that prevailed.

Whatsoever You ask My Father in My name, that shall I do (John xiv. 13); Jesus does not say: My Father will do it; but *I shall do it.* This is always what He says: *My Father worketh until now: and I work* (John v. 17); all that He does; it is I Who do it. *All things were made by*

Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made. (John i. 3)

Whatsoever You ask My Father in My name, that I shall do. All that you shall ask, I shall do it. It is through Him that we must ask; we must ask in His name. When we ask Him, we obtain all, not only through Him, but from Him, and, He tells us: I shall do it in order that the Father be glorified in the Son. (John xiv. 13) He affirms our faith by making us see that He does us good through the interest of His glory. His interest is ours; His glory is our happiness. What do we fear? Consider, Christians, what a Mediator you have. How good He is; how powerful. All things are possible through His mediation; it is only a question of knowing what one must ask for and desire, and this He will show you.

THE FORTY-FIFTH DAY

Jesus Christ predicts all that must happen to Him. He goes voluntarily to his death (John xiv. 29).

And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe Me. (John xiv. 29) What does Jesus want us to believe? He wants us to believe two things. The first is that He sees all things; that He knows all things; that nothing can be hidden from Him; nothing plotted against Him in the shadows. He saw the traitor disciple who sold Him, who was going to betray Him, who placed himself at the head of His enemies to arrest Him.

Jesus knew all that they would do to Him, and that they would lead Him to death. He told these things to His apostles before they arrived, in order that they might believe in Him. For this reason, He also said: *He that eateth bread with Me, shall lift up his heel against Me* (John xiii. 18), that I am the Christ: and that He had said a few days previously: *Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead.* (John xi. 11, 14)

The second thing that Jesus wants us to believe is that the world cannot prevail over Him, and that no one could have the power to betray Him if He did not give Himself up first in order to obey His Father.

He confirmed this by the following words: *I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything.* (John xiv. 30) He excites the Jews, and I see them advancing as a result of his instigation. But he has no right over Me, because I am without sin; therefore he does not have the right to bring Me under his power, nor to cause My death. *But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I: Arise, let us go hence.* (John xiv. 31) It is thus that He finished His discourse.

In order that the world may know; Jesus does this in order to show the world that He loves His Father and that He does all that He commands Him to do.

This is the example that I wish to give, not only to obey, but to obey through love. I have said to you: *If you keep My commandments: He who loves Me keeps My word:* First of all, one must love, and then obey; but one must obey through love. That is what I command; that

is what I do. I love My Father, and I obey. I advance voluntarily to execute His orders: Judas knows the place where I am accustomed to pray; and he is making use of this knowledge in order to surprise Me; but he does not surprise Me. I know his plot; and no matter how far away he may be, all his words are known to Me (John xviii. 2-4).

How many plots of this kind have I crushed? How many times have I escaped from the Jews when they wished to seize Me? I could still thwart this plot by not going to the garden where they are coming to take Me, but it is time; My hour has come, and My Father shows Me that it is this time that I must die. It is the hour of My enemies, and of the powers of darkness: *Arise, let us go.* Let us go to meet those who are looking for Me.

Jesus repeats the same words going down from Mount Olivet as He did coming out of His agony: *Arise, let us go; he who is to betray me approaches.* (Matt. xxvi. 46) He does not retreat; He marches to death with a determined will, and He takes His disciples with Him: *Arise, let us go.* Although their hour had not yet come, He wished, nevertheless, that they follow Him, and He led them into combat in order to accustom them to war. This time they will flee, but little by little, they will accustom themselves to fight: *Let us then go, follow Me,* He says; *Arise.*

In this instance, He also speaks to us. Let us follow His example of resolution and of courage. Let us not be troubled; let us fear nothing. No matter what danger we shall be called on to face in His service, even though it may mean certain death, let us rise; let us go; and, when He knocks at the door for the last time to announce

to us that our death is near, let us reply freely and in a firm voice: *Arise, let us go.*

Having said this, Jesus arose: He left the cenacle, the Upper Room, *And going out, He went, according to His custom, to the Mount of Olives. And His disciples also followed Him.* (Matt. xxvi. 30)

THE SECOND PART

The continuation of Our Lord's discourse: what He said after leaving the Upper Room and until He reached the Mount of Olives.

THE FIRST DAY

There is strength in the word of the cross: bear the fruit of the cross (John xv. 8, 9, 13).

In this is my Father glorified: that you bring forth very much fruit, and become My true disciples. (John xv. 8) Jesus Christ returns the fruit which He had promised to those who would reside in Him, and He teaches us that we must desire this fruit for the glory of His Father, and not for our own. For we should not glorify ourselves in any other than God. While on earth, Jesus Christ desired glory only for His Father, and possessed it only in Him, as He will explain. Following His example, we must place all our glory in God.

And become My true disciples. What does Jesus mean here by *My true disciples*? He means that we must be His true imitators in the way of the cross and of mortification; this is where He wishes to lead us, but He desires to lead us there by the road of love.

I have loved you, as My Father has loved Me (John xv. 9), and not through artificial tenderness like that of natural parents. My Father has loved Me with a great love, and has sent Me great suffering; I have loved you in the same way: suffer and die with Me, and I shall live in you.

Jesus does not yet speak of death or of the cross here, but He prepares us for it through the intimation of the

love of His Father and of His own. See, says He, how My Father loves Me. I love you with the same love, and you will soon see how I shall declare it. For after a moment He will say: *Greater love than this, no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friends.* (John xv. 13) Before allowing us to enter into these courageous designs, however, He admits us into the sweetness and purity of His love. Let us, therefore, allow ourselves to be led down this pleasant road, no matter where it may end.

THE SECOND DAY

The commandment of the Cross through love (John xv. 10).

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love: as I keep the commandments of My Father, and I abide in His love. (John xv. 10) What a great commandment You keep, My Saviour! For You have often said: *I have the power to give My soul, and I have the power to take it back, and this is the commandment which I have received from My Father.* (John x. 18) What, You have the power to take it back, and not to give it? Both, and the former is the one to begin with. See how He gently hints at the commandment of the cross.

But before explaining this commandment to them, He tells them that true love is not just talk, promising great things, desiring them, and filling our minds with them; rather, it is entering through these things into a serious and genuine practice of the commandments. One must

begin by loving Jesus Christ, and through this means, His truth, His words, His maxims, His commandments. For it is thus that He has done; He began by loving His Father, and then to love what He commanded, no matter how rigorous it might appear to nature. For the love of the one who commands sweetens that which is hard and bitter. Let us, therefore, love Jesus Christ, and all His commandments will seem pleasant. Remember, dear Christian, that keeping the commandments exteriorly is meaningless unless they are also kept interiorly, through love. The whole commandment is comprised in love itself. Jesus Christ kept His Father's commandment because He loved him, and He sets us this example, declaring that this example is to be our law.

THE THIRD DAY

The full and perfect joy of obeying through love, and not through fear (John xv. 11; I John vi. 18).

I have told you all these things, in order that your joy remain in you, and that your joy be complete (John xv. 11); that is, that it be full and perfect. Notice here for what He is preparing you through this abundance of joy; He speaks here advisably of joy after having spoken of love. For it is only true love which can give joy. Fear hath pain (John iv. 18) said Saint John. Therefore, it has no joy. Whence comes joy then if it is not from loving? For he who loves wishes to please, and places his joy there. And when he has found the secret of pleasing, he

enjoys the sweet fruit of his love. You please when you obey through love, for this is what Jesus Christ wishes. When His Father declared that He was well pleased with Him, and that He gave Him all His affection, it was because He saw that loving Him, Jesus loved to obey Him, and that this was His great joy.

Dear Christian, do you also love in this way: *Delight in the Lord and He will give thee the requests of thy heart* (Ps. xxxvi. 4); love; seek to please Him, and place your joy in Him as your glory. Then will your joy be complete and as perfect as is your love.

In order that My joy remain with you. What is My joy? It is to obey and to obey through love. My joy will therefore be in you when you love and obey: *and your joy will be complete.* Who would not love a Saviour Who promises us a saintly and perfect joy through a holy and perfect love?

THE FOURTH DAY

Those to whom He discloses all His secrets serve Jesus Christ as friends (John xv. 15).

The servant does not know what his master does. He is told what he is to do, and no explanations are given him; but our good Master, Who is Jesus Christ, not wishing to exact from us a simple task, discloses to us all that He does; whence He comes, and where He goes; why He has come into the world; what gifts He has brought to men; the close union that He has come to contract with them;

the favor which He wished to grant them by uniting them to Himself, like the members of the body are to the head and the branches to the root; the divine secret of impetrating everything through the interposition of His Name; the secret motives of His precepts; and the other things which made Him say: *I have taught you what I have learned from My Father.* (John xv. 15) For I have pointed out to you, said He, the marvels of His obliging kindness, and the favor that He has extended to you in giving you His only Son, giving Him to you and for you, even unto death.

And in order that you might be capable of understanding the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, I have revealed them to you through parables and similes taken from human experience, condescendingly, to make them clear to you. And for fear that My words might prove to be enigmas, more apt to confuse than to enlighten you, as has happened to the Jews in punishment for their pride, I have explained them to you as to a friend, with a familiarity and a kindness which has left nothing to desire. Behold what Jesus Christ has done for us. He has wished that we keep His commandments, not as poor slaves, to whom orders are given without giving them the consolation of knowing why, but with knowledge, in order that we may accomplish them in a more perfect and agreeable manner, more proportioned to the dignity of a human being. For this reason He has taught us the counsels of God and of His own, to the degree that we could accept them. Let us enter, therefore, voluntarily and freely into the designs of Jesus Christ, and let us obey, not through force, but with pleasure, like educated persons who know the reasons for that which is

asked of them. Let us understand that all that is demanded of us is reason itself, because it is wisdom as well as infinite kindness, which has set in order all the precepts and counsels of which the observance is proposed to us. Oh most amiable of all Masters! Oh most holy, wisest and best of all laws! My God, I love Your truth, Your honesty, Your rectitude, and in all of these, I love Jesus Christ Who is all wisdom, justice, honesty. He is truth and kindness itself; the very great and good Son of a very great and kind Father, and, together with Him, the source of the Holy Spirit Who guides us to all good.

THE FIFTH DAY

We must and can ask for anything in the name of Jesus Christ (John xv. 16).

I have chosen you, that you should go, and bring forth fruit; and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it to you. (John xv. 16)

This then is the motive of this great fruit and of its lasting forever; that the Father will grant everything we ask of Him in the name of His Son.

God said of old: *I shall do it for love of Myself, and to glorify My Name.* Now He grants nothing except in the name of the Son. God has not changed, however, since what God does for the love of His Son, He does for the love of Himself, because the Father and the Son are

One. When we are warned so many times that we cannot hope for anything or ask for anything except in the Name of Jesus Christ, we are advised of the need that we have of a mediator to reunite us to God, from Whom sin had separated us.

Let us aim, therefore, at bearing fruit, and fruit that will last forever, but let us ask for the grace for it in the name of the Mediator, believing that it is through His grace that we begin to bear good fruit, and through the continuation of this very grace we shall persevere in bearing it. As He has told us, we cannot bear fruit except in Him only, and so He must abide in us, in order that we may abide in Him; it is in this that the mediation of Jesus Christ, and the true invocation of God in the Name of the Saviour, consists.

THE SIXTH DAY

Jesus and His disciples are despised by the world. The injustice of the world's hatred (John xv. 16-26).

After having pointed out to His disciples how they must love one another, He taught them that they must love everyone else also, because everyone belongs to us through the grace that God gives to all to call everybody to our unity. Moreover, they were not to love others in the hope of being loved themselves, since, on the contrary, they were to be hated by the entire world. And it is this truth that Jesus points out to them in the following verses.

Jesus began by showing His apostles the source of this hatred; that is: *If the world hates you, know that it hath hated Me before you.* (John xv. 18) Here, one cannot admire enough the kindness of Our Saviour. There is nothing so vexing to kind hearts, nor anything so sorrowful to nature as to be hated. We need to be fortified against an evil which in itself is so hard, and whose effects are so strange. For the apostles, however, it was the greatest of all consolations that this aversion of the entire human race was something they had in common with Jesus Christ. *If the world hates you,* said He, *it has hated Me before you.* The cause of this hatred is also explained to us: *Every one who doth evil, hateth the light.* (John iii. 20) The world hates Me because I show it its evil works. The apostles, united to the teachings of the Saviour, were also to incur the hatred of the world whose crimes and ignorance they shouldered.

If you were of the world, the world would love what belongs to it. (John xv. 19) The men of the world do not love one another; on the contrary, the earth is filled with hatred and jealousy; but the interests and pleasures of the world contribute to the forming of agreeable ties. The disciples of Jesus Christ had nothing that might please the world. The world wants to be flattered. What good is a Christian? He is useless; he does not enter into our lives of pleasure, or into our affairs. He is merely an imposition. *Let us get rid of him,* say the impious in the Book of Wisdom: *for he is useless to us.* (Book of Wisdom ii. 12, 15, 16, 20) His simple and innocent life is a reproof of ours: he must be put to death, since he does nothing but trouble our joys.

Dear Christians, innocent flock, this is what brings the

hatred of the world upon you! You do not know how to make yourselves feared, or to render evil for evil, and so you will soon be crushed. No matter how peaceful you may be, the world will not cease to reproach you. It will accuse you of plotting against the State. You will be called public enemies.

Because I have chosen you in the midst of the world, the world hates you. (John xv. 19) In your separation, you are not even believed to be of the same species as others. You are accused of wishing to be different, and for that, you are persecuted.

The servant is not greater than his master. (John xv. 20) What consolation for a Christian, for a pastor, or for a preacher, if he is not believed, if he is despised, if he is crucified, he and his preachings! Jesus Christ was treated thus. His sufferings are a sequel to the mystery of the cross; and it is by such contradictions that the work of the redemption has followed its course. For, through these contradictions, the Gospel moves where it must move, and the good examples of Christians win over those whom they must win, and the Hand of God makes itself felt in the resistance of men.

There is an alien world in the Church Itself; there are strangers among us. We displease these men when we live, and when we preach Christianity. This world is more dangerous than would be a world manifestly unfaithful. Listen to Saint Paul: *There are perils from my own nation, perils from the Gentiles.* (II Cor. xi. 26) *At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all forsook me; may it not be laid to their charge.* (II Tim. iv. 16)

The abuse that is done to a man who thinks only of the commands of God, and in so doing is ridiculed for

being a poor businessman, is a sort of persecution. Help me, dear Lord, to tend well to Your affairs. If I am blamed, if I am despised, if I am contradicted, if I am falsely accused, I shall suffer it for the Name of my Saviour; He is not known, nor is His Father.

After having shown the hatred of the world, Jesus Christ points out its injustice, and He proves it through His miracles.

No one else ever performed so many miracles or of such a nature as Jesus did. He went about curing the sick and the crippled. Never once did He perform a miracle to punish anyone. Everything He did was filled with mercy and indulgence. Thus are men convinced, and the kindness of Jesus, so hated, appears not only through the quality but also through the nature of His miracles.

In order to be hated, as the Saviour is hated, it is not enough to conform to the ways of the Saviour; one must also be hated by those who do not give any reason for hating you. *They hated Me without cause*, said He. (John xv. 25)

Take great care. To give reason for hatred is not only to do injury to someone, but it is also to be proud, haughty, disdainful, envious; these things offend everybody. But Jesus Christ—so gentle, so humble of heart, so poor, so patient—whom could He have offended? He was hated, nevertheless, and His apostles with Him.

Who would not be consoled by this example? Who would not prefer to be hated with Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, than to be loved like those who have been designated, be it truthfully or not, as the "cream" of humanity? I do not wish to be loved by men who have despised Jesus Christ. I prefer to hear these cries: *Away*

with Him, crucify Him (John xix. 15); or those against Saint Paul of a furious people, who cast his robe on the ground: *Away with such a man from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.* (Act. xxii. 22) *And the people made acclamations to Herod: This is the voice of a god, and not of a man.* For see what follows: *An angel of the Lord struck him because he had not given honor to God; and he died eaten by worms.* (Act. xii. 21-23)

It is thus that *God breaks the bones of those who wish to please men.* (Ps. lii. 6) And Saint Paul said to the Galatians: *If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ.* (Gal. i. 10)

All men, even the humblest, wish to be flattered, and cannot bear to be criticized. This is a vice which has entered into the very marrow of men's bones: *You will be as gods.* (Gen. iii. 5) Jealousy would naturally prevent words of praise, and so they are seldom given except in order to receive some; we flatter in order to be flattered. This is the spirit of the world, but the spirit of Jesus Christ is to prefer to be despised rather than to make one's self loved in this manner.

THE SEVENTH DAY

The testimony of the spirit of truth reassures (John xv. 26, 27).

After having pointed out the poisonous hatred of the world against Him, He added that, nevertheless, God would not leave it without testimony, and *that He would*

send His Holy Spirit Who would render testimony of Him. (John xv. 26) That, said He, is the evidence that I wish, for the spirits of hypocrisy and flattery do not rule the world, nor do the spirits of injustice and of partiality. Rather, it is the spirit of truth: the spirit of concord and of gentleness, the tie which will unite all hearts, and will make of all the faithful, but one. Behold the One Whom My Father will send to render Me testimony: *and you also who have always been with Me, animated by this spirit, you will render Me testimony.* (John xv. 27) It will be an irreproachable testimony, rendered by persons who have seen everything; a sincere testimony, confirmed by the effusion of your blood. Behold, said He, the testimony which I have reserved for Myself on the earth. It will make you hated; but your consolation is that, through that, you will share the hatred that is extended to me unjustly.

Yes, my Saviour, we consent willingly. If it is necessary, in order to glorify You, that we be hated and abused by the world, while telling it the truth, no matter what habit it might be wearing, amen; *Thy will be done.* One is not Your disciple, who has not deserved, for no matter what the reason, the hatred of the world.

THE EIGHTH DAY

Sadness at the absence of Jesus (John xvi. 5-8).

I have not told you these things which I have just pointed out to you concerning the hatred which will be

shown you: *because I was with you.* (John xvi. 5) I was in no hurry to tell you; *and, as I was with you I kept you Myself* (John xvii. 12), and I had no need to caution you against the persecutions that were awaiting you after My leaving you. But now I am leaving, and I must speak to you as much about these things as you can bear.

I am therefore going to Him Who sent Me: and you do not ask Me: Whither goest Thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. (John xvi. 5, 6) It was as though He said: You cannot imagine where I am going; to what place, to what glory, to what joy; but, without thinking about where I am going, and what I shall do there, you become sorrowful. He scolds them subtly for the slight attention they pay to what He does, and for the little love that they have for Him, since they think only of themselves, and are concerned only with their own sadness. He is, nevertheless, so kind that, without reprimanding them further, He consoles them in this discourse and speaks to them of the Holy Spirit Who was to come, advising them that He is not inferior to It, and proving it, first of all, by the effects of His mission, and finally, by His eternal origin.

THE NINTH DAY

The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the Jews and the world of their incredulity (John xvi. 8, 9, 10, etc.).

And when He is to come, He will convince the world

of sin, and of justice, and of judgement. (John xvi. 8, etc.)

He will convince the world of sin: Of what sin? Jesus Christ explains: it is that the world has not *believed in Him*. Let us explain the sin of the Jews, which is their lack of faith in Christ, Who had been sent to them. By this disbelief, the Jews belied their prophecies, and God Who confirmed the mission of Jesus Christ through so many miracles, and attributed them to the devil. This was the sin of the Jews, the Great Sin; *the sin against the Holy Spirit*, which shows so great a degree of malice that God recognizes that *He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come.* (Matt. xii. 32; Mark iii. 28, 29; Luke xii. 10) It is upon this sin and about this sin, that the Holy Spirit was to convince the incredulous world.

Jesus Christ had convinced the Jews of this sin in two ways: first, by accomplishing the prophecies, which was the most efficacious way of explaining them; secondly, by performing miracles that nobody had ever performed. This removed their every excuse, so that there was nothing lacking to impede their conviction. And nevertheless, the Holy Spirit extended it still further when He descended upon the disciples of the Saviour.

The conviction, I say, is extended further. First of all, that of the prophecies. For the Holy Spirit inspired Saint Peter with the proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ taken from David. This apostle, full of the light and fire of this Divine Spirit, pushed on to the last evidence; that is to say, to the final point of conviction, and with a vigor which had never been seen.

Secondly, as to the conviction of miracles, the Holy

Spirit placed therein the stamp of perfection. For if this source of these miracles was drained in Jesus Christ, one might have believed that it was short lived and deceiving even in Jesus Christ; but as it continued in the apostles, who healed publicly in testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Act. iii. 2, 6), the conviction is pushed way beyond mere competency, and the Holy Spirit carries it through the apostles to the very last evidence.

This continuation of miracles was the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ had said that He chased out devils through the Spirit of God, and all the other miracles were also to be singularly attributed to the Holy Spirit. Since the same Spirit of miracles continued through the apostles, one could see the designs of God, and the entire confirmation of truth.

And in order to understand this action of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary to know that the Jews, although convinced by so many miracles of Jesus Christ, could have said that He had been possessed of the spell of the false prophets, whom the devil arouses and to whom he gives deceiving signs, since He had been condemned and put to death by the judgement of the synagogue, according to the law of Moses. (Deut. xiii. 1-5; xviii, 20-22)

If then Jesus had remained in death, and His resurrection had not been confirmed in a manner that would leave no doubt, the Jews would not have been convinced and would have been confused by this vain pretext for their disbelief. But, the Holy Spirit, in order to give to Jesus Christ witnesses of His resurrection, descended visibly upon these apostles, who were the witnesses whom He had chosen. And He filled them with courage, so that from the weak men that they were, He made them

strong; from the simple-minded and ignorant men that they had been, He filled them with a divine science, and gave them words which silenced their adversaries who were no less than the chiefs of the people. Instead of being cowards who had forgotten their Master and who had all together taken flight, He made them bold defenders of His doctrine and of His resurrection. Finally, the same Spirit having descended upon them, performed miracles through their hands which were second to none of those performed by Jesus Christ, and which even surpassed them in certain circumstances, just as He Himself had predicted that they would. Not content with inspiring them with the understanding of the prophecies, and the power of defending them, He filled them with the spirit of prophecy, and made them act and speak like inspired men. As was shown at Pentecost, Saint Peter supported Him with an astonishing assurance and with a power to which everything submitted. (Act. ii. 17, 18) All these admirable works of the Holy Spirit prove that Jesus Christ told the truth in assuring His followers that this same Spirit would again convince, and in a more conclusive manner, the incredulity of the world.

Behold then, the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the apostles, who, in confirming the resurrection of Jesus Christ, speak thus: *And we are witnesses of these things and the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to all who obey Him.* (Act. v. 32) It was the last and the clearest testimony that Jesus Christ reserved for them, and for this reason, foreseeing that the hearts of the majority would still be hard enough to resist this testimony and this conviction, He warned them to avoid this crime, as the one which, in the end, would bring an inevitable punish-

ment upon them; since God had determined never to remit it to those who carried it to certain excesses known only to Him. Possibly this is what prompted the Saviour to pronounce the following sentence: *And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come* (Matt. xii. 32), and those who persist in attributing to the devil the miracles of Jesus Christ and of His disciples, even though these were confirmed after His death by the testimony of His resurrection, *will receive no pardon, but will be guilty of eternal sin; because, as Saint Mark stated: they said: He hath an unclean spirit* (Mark iii. 30), which performed miracles through Him; and they were disposed to carry this revolt to the last excess, as they did in resisting again the miracles of the disciples, and in daring to attribute to the evil spirit the firm and permanent continuation of the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Add to all these things, the sanctity which the Holy Spirit established in the Church through such glorious effects, and this perfect unity of hearts which was Its great work, and the evident stamp of Its presence. Add the formidable authority that God placed in the Church, so that to lie to Peter *was to lie to the Holy Ghost*. (Act. v. 3, 4, 9) Through all these things, one can see the efficacy of the testimony of this same Spirit clearly enough to convince incredulity.

One must notice also that God, Who had borne with the Jews after the crucifixion of His Son, finally resolved to cause His justice to burst forth in an astonishing and, until now, unheard of manner, after this ungrateful peo-

ple continued to resist, with an unprecedented boldness and hardness, the testimony of the apostles, which was, as we have seen, the testimony of the Holy Spirit. For those who had sinned against the Holy Ghost, in this manner, and with the violence which He did not wish to forgive He reserved the most terrible punishment in hell.

Let us take care then not to fall into such a sin. We begin to succumb to it when, abusing the grace of the Holy Spirit in the remission of sins through confession, we make of it an occasion to sin more easily. In such a case, we do injury *to the spirit of remission and of grace*. (Hebr. x. 29) And because we do not know the degree of God's mark on this crime which He will never pardon, we do not cease to augment it from day to day, and indeed we multiply our sins through the readiness with which we imagine ourselves pardoned. But God, Who sees us perish, warns us that there will come a time when He will cease to pardon, and in which we shall finally fall into the last degree of hardness, and of final impenitence.

Let us fear, therefore, to resist the Holy Spirit, for fear that some day our resistance might be pushed to the limit and we shall no longer be capable of receiving the graces which convert hearts. Let us fear, I say, of going too far in trying the goodness and the patience of the spirit which remits crimes. We do not know just how far God wishes to be indulgent, and perhaps the first sin that we commit will attain this degree of malice which is known to Him, and on account of which He does not wish to pardon those who would have received certain graces. The Jews are an example of this; and not all of

them have found mercy, either in this world or in the world to come, because they have resisted the conviction of proof of the Holy Spirit to the very point that God Himself would not tolerate.

THE TENTH DAY

The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of injustice.

He will convince the world concerning justice. This is the second point upon which the Holy Spirit was to convince the world: *Because I am going to My Father, and that you will see me no more.* You must have understanding, without which you would cease to believe in Me, and your faith would slacken.

In order to understand this second conviction of the Holy Spirit, one must know that Christian justice comes from faith: according to the word of the prophet, repeated three times by Saint Paul: *The just man liveth by faith.* (Rom. i. 17) But the real trial of faith is to believe what we do not see. As long as Jesus Christ was on earth, His presence sustained the faith of His disciples, but as soon as He was arrested, their faith began to dwindle, and those who formerly had believed in Him as the Redeemer of Israel, began to say coldly: *We were hoping that He was to redeem Israel.* (Luke xxiv. 21) It was as though they said: but now after all His agony, we have lost this hope. Behold then the faith of the apostles, faith that died with Jesus Christ.

When the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead, however, they were more constantly and perfectly attached to the person and to the doctrine of their Master, than they had been during His life. A genuine faith was seen in them, and in this faith, veritable justice, which, being the work of the Holy Spirit, it follows that He gave to the world a perfect conviction of justice.

Let us then be truly righteous through the spirit of faith, and, without attaching ourselves to that which we see, let us unite ourselves to Jesus Christ Whom we do not see. Let us believe firmly with the apostles that His death was not an extinction of His life, but, as He said, a pass-over to His Father, since, after His departure, He was even more generous with us in the distribution of graces. Let us work without ceasing toward the conquest of the senses. Let us not judge our happiness by their judgements. Let us live in the spirit of faith. Let us base all our sentiments on truth, and let us listen all the more to Jesus as He appears to us less frequently. *You have believed, Thomas, because you have seen; blessed are those who believe and have not seen.* (John xx. 29) It is by such faith that we are righteous.

THE ELEVENTH DAY

The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of the iniquity of its judgement (John xvi. 8-11).

The Holy Spirit will convince the world concerning its judgement; *because the prince of this world is already*

judged. Jesus has said above: Now is the judgement of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (John xii. 31)

How does Jesus Christ judge the world during the time of His passion? It is in letting Himself be judged, and in pointing out, through the wicked judgement of the world on Jesus Christ, that all its judgements are to no effect.

The Holy Spirit Which has descended confirms this judgement against the world. What has the judgement of the world upon Jesus Christ demonstrated? Nothing but its iniquity. The doctrine of Jesus Christ, which the Jews believed they had destroyed by His cross, is raised up again more powerful than ever. Jesus even declares that as a result of His crucifixion and in spite of the Jews, the Gentiles will accept this doctrine and create a new nation. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, which, having come down to us in the form of tongues of fire, shows the efficacy of the apostolic teaching. All nations understand it; of all the languages available only one is used to show that the Gospel will reunite everything.

The prince of the world is judged; all peoples will consent to his condemnation. Let us judge the world; let us condemn the world. The authority, which it takes upon itself to tyrannize us through its maxims and customs, has given it an occasion for condemning the truth in the person of Jesus Christ Himself. Ah world! I detest you; the Holy Spirit convinces you of falsity. Let us not adhere to the smallest direction of the world; its cause is always wicked. *Little children, do not love the world nor the things which are in the world; for all that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, sensuality, pleasures*

of the body, *or concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but of the world; and the world passes with its desires* (I John ii. 15-17), and only God remains.

It is, therefore, in this way that the world is judged. The life which the Holy Spirit inspires within the faithful condemns all its maxims. There is no more avarice when everyone brings his goods to the feet of the apostles; there are no more arguments or jealousies when there is but one heart; one soul. There are no more sensual pleasures. There is no longer pride, when all divisions are submitted to the leaders in the Church, whom we consider masters of all its wishes, and still more of ourselves than of its riches. Let us begin this Christian and apostolic life then, and let us be convinced through the Holy Spirit.

THE TWELFTH DAY

The Holy Spirit is equal to the Son through His works.

All the functions of the Holy Spirit are equal to the manifestations of the Son of God, Whose work He accomplishes. If He places perfection there, if Jesus Christ, so to speak, gives Him all the glory of it, it is because the glory of the Holy Spirit is that of the Son of God, as the glory of the Son of God is that of the Father, since the glory of the Trinity is one and indivisible.

If that which is reserved for the Holy Spirit is so great that the apostles would not have been able to bear it,

even though announced by Jesus Christ Himself, this is not, therefore, an indication of inequality in the works of the Trinity, on the side of the three Divine Persons, but a diversification exists in our minds only. But Jesus Christ will ennoble us to a still greater degree, and after having equalized the Holy Spirit to the Father and to the Son through a demonstration of His works, He will again show us His perfect equality to Them through His origin.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY

The Holy Spirit is equal to the Son through His origin: He announces future happenings, and penetrates the secret of hearts (John xvi. 13).

When this Spirit of truth is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, He shall speak: and the things that are to come, He shall show you. (John xvi. 13)

The Holy Spirit speaks only of that which He has heard, but He has heard everything. Also, He will teach us all truth. He is in the council of the Trinity where everything is said. The Father speaks through the Son; the Son says everything through His birth. If everything is said through Him, He understands everything, otherwise, He would not understand Himself. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person in on this secret; no creature may enter there. Nothing is merely half said in this unity: Nothing is imperfectly heard. For this reason, *the*

Spirit searcheth all things. Yea, the deep things of God (I Cor. ii. 10), and this is the character that the Saviour of the world gives Him, when He says *that He teaches us all truth, and announces things to come.*

It is the Holy Spirit Who speaks to the prophets. When He speaks in them, it is God Who speaks, and we call Him the prophetic Spirit. This title shows that He is perfectly equal to the Father and to the Son, since, like Them, He enters into the great secret reserved to God Who is He of the future.

He enters, for the same reason, into this other intimate secret, which is the knowledge of the secret of hearts. Who sees the secret of God? What does He not see? Through Whom did Saint Peter see the secret of Ananias and of Saphira, in the sale of their goods? The Gospel tells us that in lying to Peter, they lied to the Holy Spirit. (Act. v. 3, 4, 9) *By Whom was the secret of hearts manifested* in the assemblies of which Saint Paul speaks; that which makes everybody say that *God is in the midst of us?* (I Cor. xiv. 24, 25) How, if not through the spirit of prophecy, which is for the same reason, the work of the Holy Spirit, to Whom all these graces are attributed, according to this utterance: *But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as he will.* (I Cor. xii. 11)

THE FOURTEENTH DAY

What does Jesus mean: Again a little while? (John xvi. 16).

A little while and you shall not see Me; and again a little while and you shall see Me because I go to the Father. (John xvi. 16)

From verse 9 of chapter XIV of the Gospel of Saint John to the end, when the Evangelist mentions that Jesus left the house, and through chapters XV and XVI, Jesus Christ spoke alone without discontinuation and without being interrupted by His disciples, except for this short utterance of Saint Jude: *How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world?* (John xiv. 22) Jesus did not reply to this question, or at least only indirectly, while continuing His discourse.

Now they interrupt Him more openly, saying to one another: *What is this that He saith to us: A little while and you shall not see Me; we know not what He speaketh.* (John xvi. 17, 18) And Jesus, Who had foreseen this interruption, and Who had seemingly uttered these words with the design of giving them greater consolation and instruction, continued saying: *You ask one another what He means by a little time: Verily, verily, I say to you: you will moan and you will weep, and the world will rejoice; but your sadness will be changed into joy.* (John xvi. 19, 20)

Indeed, there was some sort of ambiguity in this discourse of the Saviour: *A little while and you shall not see Me*, etc. One could understand by this phrase that in a little while you shall not see Me, because I am going to die. And soon you will see Me again, for I am going to rise from the dead. The shadows of death cannot retain Me, and I must return to My Father. During the time that I shall be in the tomb, the world will triumph, and will believe that it has succeeded in its designs and

you will be in desolation and despondent, like a flock of lost sheep. But at My resurrection, which will follow closely, your joy will be returned to you, and your enemies will be routed in confusion. It is thus that one could understand these hard words concerning the deprivation of His sight.

From the following, however, we see that Jesus Christ saw even farther ahead. We shall cease to see Him, not precisely because He is going to His death, but because He will mount to heaven, at the right hand of His Father, and then we shall see Him again, nevermore to lose Him, when He returns from heaven a second time in order to take us back there with Him. That which He calls a little while is the entire time between these two events; a little time He calls it because, compared to eternity, our period of time here on earth is less than a moment.

Let us learn then, that according to the language of the Saviour, which is that of truth, all that we know as time, is nothing but a dot, and less than nothing; and that that which lasts, that which is real is eternity which never passes. Let us count all that passes as nothing. It is almost seventeen hundred years since the ascension of Our Lord, and look at all the time that passed before Jesus Christ, *Who is the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.* (Isa. ix. 6) And yet, all this is possibly a very small part of all the time which will be found from the day of ascension to the end of the world, and Jesus Christ counted this as nothing. Centuries to Him are less than nothing: a thousand years, according to this gauge, are worth less than one day. What would the sufferings of this life be, if we had faith? Our senses mislead

us. All time is nothing; all that passes is nothing. Let us accustom ourselves to judge time by faith. According to this regulation, what are ten years; what is one year; and a month and a day of pain? Nevertheless, this hour seems so long to us. People of little faith, when shall we be Christians? When shall we judge time with reference to eternity?

THE FIFTEENTH DAY

Sadness changed into joy (John xvi. 20).

You will weep, and the world will rejoice; but your sadness will be changed into joy. (John xvi. 20) Let us say as the man of ancient times said: I do not wish to rejoice with the world, for fear of sorrowing with it some day. I do not care for its short and deceiving joy, by which I will attract to myself the exhausting and heavy weight of an eternal sorrow.

Do not be deceived by the joys of the world, or by this flower which falls night and morning. Let us never abandon ourselves to worldly joy, for this is to abandon ourselves to an illusion. The holy Fathers did not wish that a Christian should abandon himself to joy, to the point of hysteria. Rather, we must nourish within our hearts a saintly and wholesome sadness, through the remembrance of our sins, through the fear of the judgement of God, and through a distaste for the goods of this world. This salutary sadness will not only be changed into joy in the day of eternity, but even in the present century,

the joy of Jesus Christ will triumph in our heart; and it is from this font of joy that a heart attached to Jesus Christ will drink avidly, and from which will be expelled this thirst for the pleasures of the world, which are only illusion, temptation and corruption.

Taste, and see that the Lord is sweet. (Ps. xxxiii. 9) How sweet are truth, justice, hope and chaste desire. Possess them and you will weep at seeing yourself in the midst of deceit and errors; you will cast a sweet and tender sigh in the direction of the holy city, which God has prepared for us, where all truth reigns, where eternal peace is found, and with God, all that is good.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY

Suffer and do violence to yourself (John xvi. 21).

What effort must we not make in order to put to death our passions, our evil desires, and all that the Scripture calls the "old" man? We really think we are going to die when we tear our hearts away from all that pleases them. What a life, we say, will be ours, when we shall have renounced these sweet joys and pleasures. Everything will be sad, vexing, annoying, insupportable. Let us remember that this is the time of travail, when we must give birth to a new spirit. *All the cries of a woman when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world. (John xvi. 21)* What joy then must be ours, when

it is not another, but ourselves, we give birth to, in order to change the life of sin into the life of God.

And yet, how much it costs me to renounce this pleasure, to practice this humility, to support this de-traction! Dear Christian, when will you give birth to your new self? You will not bring forth your salvation; you will not break your fetters; you will not become a new man without doing violence to yourself. After you have done so, however, what peace, what joy will follow! I begin to live, since I live for God, and I have opened heaven for myself!

To love God is to have life; one could not purchase it through many labors, or even through many deaths.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY

This joy cannot be taken from you (John xvi. 22).

Nobody can take your joy from you. (John xvi. 22) Whence comes our joy? From our happiness. When therefore we place our happiness in a good which cannot be taken from us, then our joy will not be taken from us either. What is it then that is essential for our happiness? It is that God, Whom we love, must be happy and He alone all powerful: *Beatus et solus potens*: as Saint Paul says. (I Tim. v. 15)

We must love God with our whole heart, with all our intelligence, and with all our strength, and since we cannot contribute anything to His happiness, our part is to rejoice in this fact. Let us rejoice in the glory of God,

in His perfection, in His happiness, in the eternal birth of His word, in the eternal procession of His Holy Spirit, in what He knows of Himself, in the fact that He is all action, complete intelligence, all love, all life; Who is so great that He can acquire nothing, as beneficent as rich, filled with life, full of Being, Being itself, truth itself, the perfect One, the All. Who can take from us this object of joy? One would have to be able to remove God, and in taking Him away, to take away one's self and all existence, and leave only nothingness. All that can be taken from us is the joy that we have coming from God. But, who can take it away from us? We ourselves can through sin. The time will come, however, when sin being entirely destroyed in us, we shall never cease to place all our joy in the felicity and perfection of God. Then we shall be perfectly happy, and our joy will never be taken from us.

At the same time, let us rejoice that Jesus Christ has entered into the glory of His Father: *If you loved Me, says He, you would be glad that I return to My Father; because the Father is greater than I.* (John xiv. 28) According to the nature that I have taken, to return to My Father is to return to the center of grandeur and felicity.

God has a happy and perfect nature; and at the same time, a kind nature and beatifying: to love Him, is to live; it is to be just; it is to be truthful; it is to be happy; it is to be perfect, as much as anything which is not God, can be perfect. But God teaches us that He makes us gods; we share one same spirit with Him; we are participants associated to His divine nature, to wisdom, to life, to eternity, to the felicity of God. He, Who is our happiness, becomes ours: our happiness is, consequently, the

happiness of God. God gives Himself to us entirely. We shall see Him, and we shall love Him assured of never ceasing to see and to love Him. *In that day, said the Saviour, you shall not ask me anything; Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My Name, He shall give it to you.* (John xvi. 23) Live therefore, and rejoice in this hope. You are therefore no longer beggars, since you have the name through which you are able to obtain everything.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY

What one must ask in the name of Jesus Christ (John xvi. 24).

Hitherto you have asked for nothing in My name. (John xvi. 24) Can this be? When they said to Him: *Lord, teach us how to pray,* and again, *Increase our faith* (Luke xi. 1), was it not by Him and through Him that they hoped for this grace?

At that time, their demands were not yet purified enough. On the occasion of the discourse on the kingdom of Jesus Christ, they had in their mind ideas of grandeur and ambition, which contained, to a great degree, the spirit of the Jews. The attachment to the senses that they had was an obstacle to the spiritual love which He asked of them. When their faith was purified by His cross, by His absence, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, they learned what they had to ask for in the name of Jesus Christ. This was to conform to Him, to follow

Him on the road of crosses and of death. What can you ask in the name of Jesus Christ, if not the things which you see in Him? Take care, dear Christian soul, and note just Who Jesus Christ is. Through that knowledge you will learn that which you must ask for in His name.

This is what the apostles did not yet understand, and far from wishing to carry their cross with Jesus Christ, they did not even wish to hear what He tried to tell them about His: *And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said.* (Luke xviii. 34) They did not understand because they feared to learn too much of their obligations, in discovering the dispositions of their Master. Thus, since the cross was repugnant to them, they did not understand what they had to ask in the name of Jesus Christ crucified. For this reason He told them: *Until now you have asked for nothing in My Name; ask and you shall receive, in order that your joy be accomplished.* (John xvi. 24)

The joy which Our Lord promised them here was not a joy of the senses: it was a joy in faith; it was a joy in the cross, as that of Jesus Christ; *looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, Who having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebr. xii. 2) What joy! That of glorifying His Father, and satisfying His love in saving men! Thus we must learn to place all our joy in glorifying Him, that which will make us rejoice in our sufferings; that which inspired in the apostles this joy which they experienced in being scourged *for the name of Jesus.* (Act. v. 41) It was then that they learned what one receives and what one must ask in His name,

which is to glorify one's self, in rejoicing in that which one suffers for Him.

Patience is the only means of surmounting vices and perfecting virtue. Christian patience teaches us not only to carry one's cross without murmuring, but also to rejoice in the sufferings that God sends. To be grounded in patience, and to unite one's self to the cross of Jesus Christ, is the means of praying in His name, and it is through this means that one obtains all things.

THE NINETEENTH DAY

Everything comes to us through Jesus Christ (John xvi. 25-28).

I say this to you in parables: I have not yet explained the details of My departure to you; I am now going to speak to you openly; everything can be explained in these words: *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father.* (John xvi. 28) With these words Jesus ended His discourse since He had nothing more to explain to them, after having told them so explicitly whence He came, and His obligations to return there.

The apostles will hear more about this truth which will remove from them any remaining misconceptions which they might have concerning the reign of Jesus Christ. They had rudely expected to see themselves established on this earth with a worldly pomp; but, since Jesus Christ was mounting to heaven they sacrificed this

aspiration because it was now evident that His kingdom is not of this world; that His throne is at the right hand of God, and that it is from there that He must place all His enemies at His feet. This is what the apostles heard, and as it appears in the first sermon of Saint Peter, wherein he cites a passage of the 109th Psalm: *The Lord saith to My Lord: sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool.* When the apostles heard from what place Jesus Christ was to reign, and from where He was to conquer His enemies, they knew that from that time on, they had to ask for everything in His name. Here is the secret of it: *I have come from God in order to come to you: I loved you and I came to get you: If I leave you to return to My Father, I take with Me My love, the love that I have for you, to place it in His very bosom; and, more than ever, I shall be your intercessor, your advocate, and the perfect Mediator between God and men.*

So it is, that to ask through Jesus Christ is to believe that He is our Advocate in heaven: and again He adds: *I do not tell you that I shall pray for you,* but He lets it be known in an admirable way, by presenting Himself for us before God, as Saint Paul records it in the Epistle to the Hebrews. (Hebr. ix. 24) He also wishes to say that, not content with that, He does more, since He wins for us so thoroughly the affection of the Father, that He Himself of Himself loves us, although always in the Name of His Son, since He says: *My Father loves you because you have loved Me, and that you have believed that I am come out of God.* (John xvi. 27)

Thus, to ask through Jesus Christ is to believe that He has come out of God, to love Him with all our heart, and

to wish for nothing but what He wishes us to have, since there is nothing to obtain except from Him. Such is the mediation of Jesus Christ: we love Him, and through that love, His Father loves us. We love Jesus Christ, through Whom we ask for all things; and all things are returned to us through Jesus Christ, in Whose name we ask for everything.

Let us enter then into this secret correspondence of the Father Who loves us, because we love His Son. Let us believe that it is He Himself Who inspires this love within us, since it is true that it is not we ourselves, but He Himself Who has loved us first; and His love is the source of the love which we render Him.

My Saviour, my intercessor, my mediator, my advocate; I have nothing to hope for except through You. I enter Your ways; I obey Your precepts: thus You justify that which You say: *I am the way*. (John xiv. 6) It is through You that one must move; it is through You that we must ask; it is through You that we must receive.

The many great truths that we have just learned are found in the conclusion of the prayers of the Church: *Per Dominum nostrum Jesus Christum*. Every time that these words ring in our ears, let us recall these truths in our mind, and let our hearts be drawn to them.

Our vows mount to God through Jesus Christ. All graces come to us through Him. In order to invoke Him, we must imitate Him. This is the summary of Christianity.

THE TWENTIETH DAY

The forlornness of Jesus Christ (John xvi. 29, 30–32).

The disciples, delighted at having heard this great secret of their Master, showed Him their joy, saying: *This is the hour that You have spoken openly to us. You have answered our most secret thoughts; You have satisfied our most profound desires. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.* (John xvi. 29, 30) No other than a God come forth from God could discover the secret of the human heart: We believe in You.

Who would believe, in hearing them speak in this manner, that their faith would not have as much perseverance as their apparent sincerity? But Jesus knew them better than they knew themselves; and He said to them: *Do you believe now? Behold, the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you will be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.* (John xvi. 31, 32)

Who can make us understand here the state of a soul whose only possession is God: a soul destitute of all strength, of all human consolation? What distress on one side! What joy on the other, since we possess God more than ever, when we possess Him alone! This is the state into which Jesus Christ was about to enter; this was the height of His desolation. He possessed God without feeling that He did, since God seems to have retired, even to

the point of reducing Jesus Christ to saying: *My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?* (Matt. xxvii. 46)

Ah souls, who share this desolation of Jesus Christ, who fall deeper and deeper from one abyss to another; who are so far from God that it seems to you that you are separated from Him by this great chaos, that your voice cannot reach His ears, as though you were in hell. I place you into the hands of Jesus Christ, Who gives you His gall and vinegar to drink; His desolation to bear. He is with you, and if He does not wish to make Himself known, that is your trial. Say with Him from the depths: *In hope against hope.* (Rom. iv. 18)

I am dying; I am going to breathe my last: *My Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.* (Luke xxiii. 46) I give you back my life, my salvation, my free will with all its exercise. After that, be silent, and await your deliverance in silence. Amen, Amen.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY

Consent to the Divine Will (John xvi. 33).

I told you this: Jesus says. I explained to you the desolation I should be thrown into by your flight, which will leave God alone with me: *in order that you find peace in Me alone,* not within yourselves, or in your faith, that you see is so wavering. There is then no peace for you, except the peace that I give you in protecting you. You are going to leave Me alone my children, ac-

ording to the ways of the world. If in this abandonment I am not alone, if My Father does not leave Me alone for a single moment, while He seemingly abandons me in desolation, learn from that, that there is neither peace nor strength except in Him alone, and in the consent of His will. *You will have affliction in the world; but take courage, I have conquered the world.* (John xvi. 33) Destitute of all appearance of help, and having for my only recourse, a forlorn and irritated God, I conquered the world; I conquered it for Myself and for you. Take care; have confidence. No matter how helpless you may think you are, and even though you see yourselves at the edge of the precipice, and already crushed in death, the world that I have conquered cannot harm you. Provided that you know how to commit yourselves to my faith, your peace is unalterable.

Let us review here all the persecutions of the Church, all the havoc that the schisms and heresies have worked, all the interior and exterior troubles, and all the desertions of its servants. See the condition in which they left everything, and yet, the good have emerged from all these storms, and rest, like a Jonas, amidst the winds and waves. God is always with you. Even though you should be thrown into the ocean, and swallowed by a whale, the awful bosom of this living pit would be a temple for you, and that is where your deliverance would begin.

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY

The four words or prayers that Our Lord addressed to His Father.

With these words, Jesus concluded His last farewell to His apostles. After having spoken to them, He would now speak for them and for us all to His Father. For it is not enough to teach men through sermons about the truth, if we do not obtain for them through prayer, the grace to know and to practice it. This is what Jesus Christ will do in the following prayer.

I find that until now the Son of God addressed His Father four times, and expressed Himself positively. The first time, He said: *At that time Jesus answered and said: I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones: Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.* (Matt. xi. 25, 26; Luke x. 21) This is a prayer of kindness and thanksgiving which causes the Christian soul to enter, through the example of Jesus Christ, into the secret designs of God, in order to submit to them, and to comply with His wishes.

The other prayers of Our Lord, addressed to the Father, are, secondly, the one at the resurrection of Lazarus: *Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me; I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.* (John xi. 41, 42) This again is an act of thanksgiving, but it presupposes an invocation, since Jesus says that His Father has listened to Him, and has answered all His prayers.

The third prayer, addressed to the Father by Jesus Christ, is found in the Gospel of St. John, again before the people; *And what shall I say? Shall I say: Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause I came into this hour. My Father, glorify Thy name.* (John xii. 27, 28)

This is a prayer of demand, and the summary of all the vows and of all the demands, as of all the prayers, of all the mysteries, and of all the actions of Our Saviour. And the Father answered it with a word that came down from heaven like a clap of thunder. (John xii. 29)

The fourth and last prayer of Jesus Christ to His Father is the prayer which we shall note particularly because it is much longer than all the others, and is the prayer itself of His sacrifice.

The soul of the sacrifice is the prayer which declares why it is offered, and which is the oblation itself or the action of offering. It is thus in the prayer of the Canon, where the action of the sacrifice begins, and wherein the Church declares to Whom, for Whom, and for what purpose it offers it. This is what Jesus Christ does as He prepares to consume His sacrifice, and consecrate Himself. This prayer, if I dare say it, is like the Canon, or, to speak more worthily of Jesus Christ, it is the express and solemn prayer which is to accompany His sacrifice. The disposition of His heart, and the demands which He makes of His Father, followed Him everywhere during the course of His passion, even unto His death, and this is the soul of His sacrifice.

Let us, therefore, be attentive to this prayer which comprehends and confines in itself all the force of the sacrifice of the cross, and which contains especially the consecration that Jesus Christ makes of Himself on the cross.

How great a silence must we impose on all that is created, in order to understand thoroughly, from the bottom of our hearts, the words that Jesus Christ addresses for us to His Father in this intimate and perfect communication! Let us be silent: Jesus Christ is going to speak.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY

Jesus raises His eyes to heaven when beginning His prayer (John xvii. 1).

These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven He said: Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son. (John xvii. 1) There is nothing unusual in this action of Jesus Christ by which He raised His eyes to heaven before prayer. When he multiplied the loaves, He looked up to heaven (Matt. xiv. 19), as a manner of addressing it for the work that He wished to perform. Saint Luke notes the same thing. In Saint John, when Jesus brought back Lazarus to life, *raising His eyes to heaven, He said: My Father* (John xi. 41) and the rest. And the Church has so well understood that this action was natural to Jesus Christ, that she has used the same action in the benediction of the Consecration, while saying in the Canon that *Jesus raised His eyes to God, His all powerful Father*, although that has not been indicated among the sacred writers, who have repeated this action.

Let us therefore raise our eyes to heaven with Jesus Christ, to Whom alone may we raise them. For the Publican, who was a sinner, did not even dare raise his eyes to heaven, but struck his chest, saying: *O God take pity on me, for I am a sinner.* (Luke xviii. 13) And the prodigal son said: *My Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Your eyes.* (Luke xv. 18) Why then do we look to heaven against which we have sinned? We dare to do so only by uniting ourselves to Jesus Christ, Who raises His

eyes to heaven for us, and appeases it for us, by raising His eyes to heaven.

But why raise our eyes to heaven, unless it be to adore God and His magnificent presence in His glory, and to transport us there in spirit? Go therefore, my eyes: go to heaven, and take my heart with you. Go through desire and through hope where you are called, and where, in fact, you will one day be. Go to the home which is shown to you, and love this celestial Fatherland, where God will be all in all.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

The infinite glory of the Father and of the Son (John xvii. 4).

I have glorified you on earth through My preaching and through My miracles: I have finished the work that You have given Me to do. (John xvii. 4) By these words, Jesus means that as much work as He had accomplished during His mortal life, He still has as much to do during the time of His passion, which He considers as already done, because, in a moment, it would be, and really was so already in His thoughts. Since then He has or is about to accomplish all that His Father had given Him to do for His glory, what else remained, if not that which He says: *And now glorify Thou Me, Oh Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee. (John xvii. 5)*

The glory which He gives to His Father is to declare

His immense and natural grandeur; the glory which He asks of Him is that His Father also declare the grandeur which He enjoyed eternally in His bosom, as His Word, Who, being in Him, could be nothing less than Him, and Who was, consequently, one and the same God with Him. Jesus therefore begs Him to declare this grandeur in spreading it over the humanity which He had united to Himself, as being with Him, one and the same person, and upon the men to whom He had united Himself, as His living members.

Behold the perfect unity, and the perfect equality of the Father and of the Son. The Son glorifies the Father, and the Father glorifies the Son. They give themselves mutually an infinite glory in eternity through their mutual love: and they give themselves in time the glory which is their due, because the Father manifests the Name of the Son, and the Son the Name of the Father, of Whom He is Himself *the glory, the brilliance, the invisible image, the imprint of His substance and the reflection of His eternal light*. And our glory is to have a part in this glory which the Father and the Son give themselves mutually, as the following words declare.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

Jesus saves all those whom the Father has given Him (John xvii. 6; vi. 37, 40; x. 27, 30; vi. 43, 65, 66).

hast given Me out of the world. Thine they were, and to I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou

Me Thou gavest them; and they have kept Thy word. (John xvii. 6) Read verses 7 and 8, and notice carefully all that Jesus says there of those whom His Father has given Him. Read also these words of this same Saviour in Saint John: All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me: and him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out: because I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. Now this is the will of My Father Who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but raise them up again in the last day (John vi. 37-39) of the resurrection of the just, and give them eternal life.

Our Lord continues in chapter X: My sheep hear My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me, is greater than all; and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one. (John x. 27-30)

Again read these words of Jesus Christ in Saint John: Jesus said to them: Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father, Who hath sent Me, draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets: And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me. (John vi. 43-45) And afterwards, according to John: But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him. And He said: Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to Me, unless it be given him by My Father. (John vi. 65, 66)

Let us spend a few hours considering, attentively and humbly, all these words of Our Saviour whose evidence is so manifest. You will see there the secret and mutual communication between the Father and the Son, to choose men, to attract them, to separate them from the world, and their secret, but just judgements, to leave them to themselves, when they do not believe, that they might perish, as the son of perdition perished just as Our Lord had predicted. Behold this is what you shall see generally. But do not judge anything immediately, for possibly, at the end, all you will be asked to do will be to adore these profound and mysterious words.

Or rather, without understanding anything, say: I shall be content in believing, and I shall unite myself with all my heart, in all simplicity and candor, to all the truths that Jesus Christ has revealed, or hidden or exposed to a humble flock which hears His voice. Let us be silent now, and let us listen in great silence to the impenetrable truths of God.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

The elect are taken from the world by the Father (John xvii. 6).

The first truth which appears in the words of Jesus Christ is that those whom the Father gives to His Son, He has taken from the world: *I have*, says He, *manifested Your name*, Your perfections, Your grandeur, Yourself, Your wisdoms, and Your counsels. And, *Your name*, this

name of Father, which had not yet been revealed perfectly; *I have manifested it to the men whom You have given Me, in taking them from the world.* (John xvii. 6) These men were evidently of this world, of which it is written: *The world has not known Him* (John i. 10); and again: *Do not love the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world.* (I John ii. 15, 16) This meaning is repeated in the same epistle: *We know that the whole world is seated in wickedness.* (I John v. 19) It is then from this world and in the midst of corruption and of sin that God has taken those whom He has given to His Son. It was not because of their merits, or their good works, that He has rescued them, and separated them from the world. Rather, notice the first truth; that is, that every man that God has given to Jesus Christ, was in corruption, in evil, ready for perdition. And when He says: *Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me* (John xvii. 6), He does not mean: They were Yours because of their virtue, or they were Yours because of their good will, but that they belonged to You because of Your power: not through their choice, but through Yours: not because they were good, but because You were. It was You, My Father, Who chose them to give them to Me.

Although this is true of the apostles about whom He speaks here and whom the Father gave to the Son through this singular grace of the apostolate, it is not true of all those whom the Father has given to the Son in the

qualification of faithful ones to be His members. The Father gave them all to His Son through the same grace, and through the same gratuitous kindness with which He gave Him His apostles.

What had these chosen ones done, to be given to the Son of God, to be not only the members, but the leading members of His Mystical Body? *I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world. Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them; and they have kept Thy word.* (John xvii. 6) Let us not glorify ourselves because we belonged to the Father, and He has given us to His Son. On the contrary, let us humble ourselves because we were His, only through a gratuitous love which preceded us, according to these words: *Not that we may have loved Him; for it is He Who loved us first.* (John iv. 10)

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

The Son instructs those who are given to Him by the Father (John xvii. 6).

Behold how God begins to form His Church: The Father chooses those whom He gives to His Son through this secret communication which exists between them, and those whom the Father chooses thus, He makes them His through choice, and they are His, but they are also His Son's, because He gives them to Him, and the Son receives them, and makes them know the Name of God. Behold there the teaching of Christ, which is the exterior

foundation of this Church which He came to establish. And while this grace was for all the people, it was intended chiefly for the apostles, whom He inducted to be the doctors of it. Thus, He instructed them in particular, and taught them the name of His Father; this name of the Father Who sends His Son, and sends Him through a pure love, to be the Saviour of the world. This then is the preaching of Jesus Christ.

But if His preaching were purely exterior, the apostles would not have said to Him: *Lord increase our faith.* (Luke xvii. 5) Through this prayer they did not wish to say to Him: Preach to us, for they understood that He was doing so, and that He never stopped teaching them. Instead, they asked Him to speak to them interiorly in order to augment their faith, and when they asked Him for an increase of it, it was not because they believed they had had the beginning of it themselves; but that they asked for the growth of it from Him Who was the source of it. Jesus Christ was then known as the One Who acted, Who spoke within and without, for He was the interior voice of the Father, and when He was clothed in our nature, in order to exercise the ministry of the word visibly, this did not mean that He had lost this inner quality which not only lived in the bosom of the Father, but also insinuated itself into all hearts, *in enlightening all men who come into the world* (John i. 9); and speaking to whom it pleases Him, as it pleases Him.

How attentive must I therefore be, within and without, to the preaching, to the reading of the Gospel. I must listen with the ear of my heart to that sweet insinuation of the truth which makes itself heard wordlessly, and without ostentation. Oh my Jesus! I am listening. Speak.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

How the Father gives the elect to the Son (Ibid.).

They were Yours, and You have given them to Me. (John xvii. 6) But has not the Son given them to Himself? How is it then that He has said in the preceding chapter: *You have not chosen Me; but I have chosen You.* (John xv. 16) And when the Father chose them, if it was not through the Son that He had made this choice, would Saint Paul have said that: *As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity: Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ Himself: according to the purpose of His will?* (Ephes. i. 4, 5) Otherwise, it would not be true that we should owe Him all, since we could have been chosen without Him. Let us understand then, that the Father inspires the holy Soul of His Son made Man, to choose those whom He was to choose, and the Son Who does only what He sees His Father do (John v. 19), chooses them after Him, and the Father does not wish that His choice have its effect until the Son agrees with it. But the Son, Who, on His side, does nothing but what he sees in the will of His Father, chooses those whom the Father wishes. Thus, the Father Who directed, animated, and inspired the will of His Son, was the first Who chose; for this reason, the Son says: *They were Yours and You have given them to Me.*

And what shall we say of the Son as God! Those beloved ones chosen of God, were they not His as well as

the Father's? Yes, without doubt, as He says afterward: *All that is Yours, is Mine, and all that is Mine, is Yours.* (John xvii. 10) But it was His custom to credit everything to His Father from Whom He derived His own origin; and again, according to this understanding, the words belonged to the Son as soon as they were uttered by the Father. Everything is common to Them; and everything that belongs to the Son also belongs to the Father. This is the language of the Son, the mysterious and sacred language of the mutual communication with His Father—in one word, the language of the Trinity—that Jesus Christ would not have spoken before men, if He did not wish to introduce them into this secret through faith, in order that, one day, he might introduce them there through a clear vision. Let us then believe, and we too shall understand.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY

Jesus does not pray for the world (John xvii. 9).

I do not pray for the world. (John xvii. 9) I do not pray for vain men, in love with themselves, who merely wish to appear good, and who deceive one another, for all that is the world. I do not pray for men who are filled with hatred, with jealousy, and with deceitfulness, or for this world whose maxims are all contrary to truth, to piety, to sincerity, to humility, and to peace. Ah world, truth condemns you here! Jesus Christ excludes you from His charity; rather, you exclude yourself from it, and you

render yourself incapable of the great fruit of His prayer, which is this perfect unity which He asks for His apostles and for all His other faithful.

The world is filled with corruption and division, because it bears concupiscence, interest, avarice, pride, and all that not only corrupts, but divides hearts. We witness it in ties which seem to be the closest and the most intense. Even in these, we witness ruptures, according to the spirit, or even jealousies and mutual distrust. Where do we find friends who are not suspicious of each other, and divided in some way? And if we should find in all the universe one or two true friendships, who can say that these friendships will last, and that there will not come a time when these friends will not be able to tolerate one another? No, the world is not capable of this union of heart and spirit that Jesus Christ asks for His apostles, *in order that they be one.* (John xvii. 11) Only the Holy Spirit can place this unity in hearts. This was evident in the faithful, after this spirit of unity had descended upon them. *And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul.* (Act. iv. 32) But as Our Saviour has just said, *the world cannot receive* (John xvi. 17) this spirit which brings peace and union to hearts. For this reason one must not be astonished if Jesus Christ refuses to pray for the world: He does not speak this way thus in vain. If He Who is so good and so charitable tells us that He does not pray for the world, we must understand how much we must hate the world, and the spirit of the world, this world which Jesus does not wish to remember when He prays for His faithful.

THE THIRTIETH DAY

He prays for those in whom God is glorified (Ibid.).

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me: because they are Thine; and I am glorified in them. (John xvii. 9, 10) Jesus Christ is glorified in us, when we glorify His Father, and His Father is glorified not only when we bear *much fruit* (John xv. 8), as Jesus Christ Himself says, but also when we offer all this fruit *Unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son* (Ephes. i. 6), so that as it is written: *He that glorieth may glory in the Lord.* (I Cor. i. 31) Let us be among those for whom Jesus Christ glorifies Himself before His Father, saying to Him, as He has just done concerning His apostles: *They have kept Thy Word, and because the words which Thou gavest Me, I have given to them; and they have received them; and they have known in very deed that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.* (John xvii. 6, 8)

Let us be among those to whom Jesus Christ renders this testimony, but let us also be of those who recognize that all of that comes from God, and that our faithful cooperation to the grace of Jesus Christ, is the first effect of this grace. *Amen:* It is thus. And if we have this sentiment within ourselves, the testimony of God will be in us: we shall be the true disciples of the grace of Jesus Christ, and He will truly be glorified in us, although He is never able to be glorified in those who glorify themselves, no

matter how little it may be; because He is the only one and true God, *I am the Lord. This is My Name: I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven things.* (Isa. xlii. 8) Let us enter then seriously within ourselves; and every time that we find ourselves mysteriously supported in our work, in our lights, in our studies, in our merit, in our own powers, let us come out of ourselves, in order to cast ourselves with abandon, into the arms of the One Who sustains us. Let us cling to Him alone.

THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY

He asks that they be one as His Father and He are one (John xvii. 11).

I am no longer in the world. Jesus always spoke in this manner; that is, as though that which He was going to do was already accomplished. *I am therefore not of this world: and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name whom Thou has given Me: that they may be one, as We also are.* (John xvii. 11) Behold then what Jesus Christ asks for His apostles, through them for all His elect, as He will explain more clearly in what follows. If He asks this for them, we cannot doubt that He will obtain it, for He Himself has said: *I know, My Father, that Thou hearest Me always.* (John xi. 42) He knows then that He will be heard when He asks His Father to keep them in such a

way that they may be one, and that they will be, since Jesus Christ has asked that they be so.

I pray You, My Father, that they may be one; that is, that the spirit of dissention, of envy, of jealousy, of vengeance, of animosity, of suspicion and of defiance be not in them. May they be one as we are. It is not enough that they be one, like the Father and the Son are one in the nature which is common to them, but that they have, like Them, one will, one thought, one love; that is, that they be *one like Us*.

This *like* or similarity in unities does not, however, cause the unity of the Father and of the Son to descend to the imperfection of the creature as the Arians imagined. On the contrary, it raises the imperfection of the creature to the point of taking, as much as it can, for its model, the perfect unity of the Father and of the Son. *That they be one like Us*: that is to say, that We be the model of their union. We know that they can never attain the perfection of this model, but, nevertheless, let them aim towards it. As the Scripture says: *Be holy because I am holy, for I am the Lord thy God* (Lev. xi. 44); and again: *Be perfect, be merciful, as your celestial Father is perfect and merciful.* (Matt. vi. 48; Luke vi. 36) We know that it is not our nature to be gods, to be good, to be perfect in the transcendence which belongs alone to the divine nature. Nevertheless, we must aim towards it, and propose this model to ourselves, in order that we may come closer and closer to it. So that, as the Scriptures say: *they may be one like Us*, that is to say, we may imitate them, advancing today and afterwards, and every day more and more tirelessly until we can strive no more. For, the more we advance, the more we realize the great distance between us and our

goal, and our efforts seem more and more endless, and we continue to humble ourselves, to the very end, to absolute emptiness.

That they may be one as We are, uniting themselves, in all cordiality and truth, not by words only, but also by acts, and by the effects of a sincere charity; that they may be one verily; that they be one inseparably; that they may see in themselves, in the perpetual perseverance of their mutual union, an image of this eternal and incomprehensible unity, through which the Father and the Son being One, in a single and simple intelligence, with a same and simple love, through all that, make an only God. So too, the faithful compose a single body, one soul, an only Jesus Christ. For if it is reserved to God and to the divine Persons to be One, of a perfect unity, it is suitable for us to be one, as created in Their image, and this is the grace that Jesus Christ asks for us.

He does not mean that *they be one with Us*, or that *we and They should be one and the same thing*, for this would be making men equal to God, *but that they be one as We are*, according to the proportion which suits those created in Our image, while saying: *Let us create man in Our image and likeness.* (Gen. i. 26) Ah image, whose image are you? The Father's, the Son's and the Holy Spirit's, Who have pronounced with one voice in common: *Let us create man to Our image.* Finish the portrait, and impress upon yourself all the features of this Divine resemblance. Let us remove bit by bit what divides us from our brothers. Let us do away with our possessions, our own desires, our own thoughts, our self love. All that would remain then would be the common good, which is God, in Whom we shall be a same reality.

THE THIRTY-SECOND DAY

The child of perdition (John xvii. 12).

While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled. (John xvii. 12) We understand that this child of perdition is the traitor disciple. He is child of perdition, a child of trouble, a child of hell, through his own fault. For Jesus Christ had called him not only to the faith, but even to the apostolate, and if he had purified himself, he would have been, as Saint Paul says, *a vessel of honor, sanctified to the Lord*, instead of that which he made himself, a vessel of rejection and contempt. (II Tim. ii. 21) God did not precipitate him into crime in order to accomplish the predictions of His Scripture. This is clear; this is certain, and one must never listen to anything contrary to it. Judas was not pushed into crime, unless it was by the devil or by his own malice. Jesus Christ called him back, during the kiss of a traitor, and still called him His friend, and said to him: *My friend, why have you come here? What! Judas dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?* (Matt. xxvi. 50; Luke xxii. 48) And He received his kiss, and He Himself returned the kiss. But because Judas hardened himself in the midst of all His graces, Jesus left him to himself, and to the evil spirit which possessed him, and to his own despair. It is thus *that he went to his own place*, as is noted in the Acts (Act. i. 25), to the place which had been

prepared for him through a just punishment for his crime; a crime which he himself had chosen, and had appropriated to himself through his free and voluntary depravity.

It was necessary that the Scripture be accomplished in him, as Saint Peter states (Act. i. 16), because God accomplishes His just will in the very ones who oppose it. For, as Saint Augustine says, He does what He pleases with those who do not as He will (Enchirid. Cap. Civ. n. 28), and in wishing to escape from the empire of His truth, they fall again in suffering the laws of His justice. Oh justice! oh justice! oh justice! One must adore Thy holy and inexorable rigors. By dint of pardoning, God, in some way or other, finally comes to the point where He can no longer pardon, and His justice must be accomplished.

THE THIRTY-THIRD DAY

Jesus Christ keeps the faithful in body as well as in soul.

I have kept those whom Thou hast given Me. (John xvii. 12) I have kept them, even in body, conforming to the explanation that Saint John himself gives us: Let them, says the Saviour, go their way; that the word might be fulfilled which He said: Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one (John xviii. 8, 9), in order to show us that Jesus Christ takes care of our body as well as our soul, and that we lose nothing of that which He wishes us to keep. This is again what determines the saying that these words must not be heard except by those

who were present. *Allow these to go*, He said, in pointing out the eleven apostles who stayed with Him. Because as for Judas, who had left Him, he had nothing to fear from the Jews, to whom he had given himself, and was to perish in another way. Let us then fear nothing for our bodies. For Jesus Christ keeps them for as long as He pleases; *but a hair of your head shall not perish*. (Luke xxi. 18) In persecutions, in works, in sicknesses, Jesus Christ takes care of our bodies, as much as is necessary; and nothing can hurt us, as nothing can hurt Him, except when our hour has come.

But let us remember that He protects our bodies at the price of His. It is in surrendering Himself to His enemies that He says to them: *Let these others go*. His death delivers our bodies as well as our souls. This act is the sign that one day He will save us entirely from death.

Let us learn from this explanation of John that the words of the Scripture, and those of the Son of God Himself, can have a double meaning. It is clear that these words of Jesus Christ: *Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost* (John xvii. 12), include the soul. According to Saint John, however, it is also clear that this passage refers to the body. Let us meditate thoroughly on the Scripture, and let us examine carefully in order to gather from it all its meaning and sweetness. For therein is spirit; therein is life; for Jesus Christ has the words of eternal life.

THE THIRTY-FOURTH DAY

What is the world? (John xvii. 16)

They are not of the world; as I also am not of the world. (John xvii. 16) Jesus Christ never stops repeating these words because He wishes us to savor them. Let us taste them then and ponder them day and night in our hearts.

My dearly beloved, said Saint John, *do not love the world.* (I John ii. 15, 16) It is not enough to dislike it generally, he explains: *nor all that is in the world*, for what will you find in the world if it is not *the concupiscence of the flesh* and the love of the pleasures of the senses whereby the heart is blinded, corrupts itself, and loses itself; and the concupiscence of *the eyes* that causes us to desire beautiful furniture, gold, silver, and jewelry; indeed, all that satisfies the eyes. What, after all, does this come to? Do we really possess all that we see? Flee then also from the concupiscence of the eyes, vanity, curiosity, useless sciences; for, even though all these things seem to possess you, and delight you for a moment, in reality, all these things are not a part of you and so can easily be effaced in your mind, so that not even the slightest souvenir of it will remain in you. And still these things are the most beautiful in the world.

But there is also the *pride of life*: ambition, the desire for offices and a great following which seem to render life more alive, so to speak, because one becomes a public figure. You live then in the spirit of the world, which seeks you, which crowds around you, and you think that

you are living better than others, but you are mistaken. For all things are mere pride, that is to say, vain bombast. You think that you are satisfied, but you are only swollen; all that you delight in is mere smoke.

Let us taste these truths then; let us feed on them. My little children, do not love the world, because, behold, this is the world which you love. These desires, these concupiscences are not from God, and, consequently, lack stability. *For the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof* (I John ii. 17); these are like torrents which pass along with a great noise, but they do pass. *The world passes then, and its concupiscence thereof; but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever* (I John ii. 17); because the word of God which does not pass, remains in him. And this is the reason that Jesus said: *I have given them Your word, and they are not of the world.*

THE THIRTY-FIFTH DAY

Jesus is not of the world, nor are His true disciples (John xvii. 14, 16).

Who can say in good faith with Jesus Christ: *I am not of the world?* We retire into our private rooms; the world follows us. We flee into the desert; the world follows us. We close our doors and put on a hundred locks, one hundred bars, if you wish, a hundred walls; the fence is impenetrable; yet, the world follows us. We collect our thoughts; the world follows us, and we give ourselves all

the honors we desire, even those which the world refuses us. What shall I do then, to leave the world which follows me, which lives within me, and which has so firm a hold on me? I must be able to say with Jesus Christ: *I am not of the world*; since He did say: *They are not of the world; as I am not of the world*. Ah Jesus! I shall be able to say it, when You will have said it for me: *I do not pray You to take them from the world: but to keep them from evil; that is, keep them from the spirit of the world*.

THE THIRTY-SIXTH DAY

Jesus prays for all the elect: that they be one (John xvii. 20).

And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. (John xvii. 20) Happy Christians! Jesus Christ has you all in mind in this prayer. In praying for the apostles whom He sent to the people, He prayed also for those to whom He sent them. But in order to confirm our faith, and to declare His intentions to us, He has deigned to express Himself in our favor, in a more expressive manner through the words which we have just read. And in order to make us understand that He associates us with His apostles, He asks for us the same grace that He has asked for them. *I pray you, said He, that they be one like us*. That is what He asked for His apostles. And what does He ask for us now, we, who ought to believe through their word? *That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in*

Thee; that they also may be one in us. (John xvii. 21)

That they be one like us; that they may be one in us. He explains more distinctly to us the idea which He had of our unity. *That they be one like us;* that is to say with the proportion that must be between the perfect original, and the images that are imperfect. But when He says: *that they be one in us;* He explains more distinctly that the unity is in God as in the source, as in the center, as in the first principle, through Whom and in Whom we are united. *That they be one in Us;* that we be not only the model, but even the chain of their unity; that they may have through Us and through grace, that which We have by nature and of Ourselves; that they may be streams which unite in Us, as in the source whence all is drawn. Thus, they will all live of a same life, and they will be but one heart and one soul.

If Christians are *one*, in this way, they are happy. For what is more joyful than to be in the Father and in the Son, than to be one veritably, perseveringly, inseparably? This is what will be given us in the perfection of eternity, but it is necessary to begin here through the sincerity of our concord.

Let us often repeat these words: *And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul. (Act. iv. 32)* It is through this unity that Christianity began. But if we were faithful to a Christianity so beautiful in its origin, would charity be so repressed, harmony so rare, almsgiving so lacking in abundance?

The heart of man is such an enemy of concord and of peace that in the midst of this primitive union, which made the first faithful one in heart and one in soul, discontent arose: *And in those days, the number of the disciples*

increasing, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. (Act. vi. 1) The apostles soon remedied this neglect, which brought about the promotion of the first deacons. Ah God, awaken in Your Church this spirit of apostolic charity which repairs the dissensions so often seen spread throughout the orders of the Church! Instead of this first unity, we see only jealousy, abuse, only coolness among those in orders, especially among all those in the specific ones. Ah God, give us some Stephens who breathe only charity, and who harbor concord and peace! Ah God, put an end to schisms, heresies, wars, the jealousy of Christians! Throughout the earth, let there at least be peace and unity in Your Church. That there may be but *one same spirit* and one same heart, *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* (Ephes. iv. 5)

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH DAY

Faith, full and entire, is the effect of the unity of the faithful (John xvii. 21).

That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. (John xvii. 21) When the world believes thus, the world will be converted, and that part of the world which will believe it, will cease to be of the world. Jesus Christ attributes this conversion of the universe, which is to come, to the unity of the faithful. *But that the world may know the Father: and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I: Arise, let us go hence.* (John xiv. 31)

He had said, in speaking of brotherly love: *By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.* (John xiii. 35) And He says here more precisely: *That the world may know that You have sent Me.* This is faith, full and entire, and it is the effect of the unity of the faithful. He continues: *I in them, and Thou in Me: that they may be made perfect in one: and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.* (John xvii. 23)

The best way to preach is to preach by example. If you wish to convert the world, live in this perfect unity, for which I have shown you the perfect model in the one which exists between My Father and Me. Imitate this unity, and the world, which will see the image of it in you, will rise to the original. It will see then, that My Father and I are in you, imprinting there the character of charity and of harmony, and it will believe that I am truly the messenger sent from God, in that unifying men in a manner so cordial, I am performing a task which seals the dignity of my envoy and the power of My grace.

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH DAY

Jesus shares His glory with His elect (John xvii. 22).

And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one. (John xvii. 22) He considers this glory as given, because He wished to give it to us, as the fruit of the sacrifice that He was going to offer for us.

He begins here by showing us another truth, which is,

that after having been one in charity on earth, we shall be one in glory in heaven, and that the glory which shall be given us, will be the glory of Jesus Christ. John speaks here of the glory which was to be given to Jesus Christ, according to His human nature, in resuscitating Himself. This glory will be given to us also, since we shall have a share in the glory of His resurrection. Moreover, He has deigned to state in the Apocalypse: *To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne: as I also have overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne.* (Apoc. iii. 21)

All of the holy city, all of the society of saints, are but one before the throne of God, Who has said: *I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* (II Cor. vi. 16) He will be like a King, who, having crushed the reign of sin and of death, will establish His empire among all subjects, rendering them eternally and perfectly happy. This will happen to them so *that God may be in all.* (I Cor. xv. 28) Therefore, then we shall be united in glory, as on earth we have been united in charity and in grace. Our glory then shall be that of Jesus Christ our Head, a glory which shall be shed over all His members, and the glory of Jesus Christ will be that of His Father, which glory, being in Him through His eternal birth, will reflect over the humanity that the Son of God has united to Himself. Behold then all will be reduced to *one* through glory and eternal happiness. And to be received in this glory, we must be *one* through charity, for God wishes to make of His faithful, a body perfectly unified in Jesus Christ, a body whose unity continues to grow, until it completes itself, and receives its final perfection in heaven.

In order, then, to respond to the designs of God, we

must strive to unite ourselves with our brothers, and banish anything that can bring about the least division among us. My God, more than ever I shall search within myself for all that sets me at variance with my brothers, be it defiance, jealousy or pride, which might be the source. Pride draws everything to itself, wishes everything for itself, and so, is the beginning of division.

Oh holy life! Oh happy life which is the life that exists without pride! It is the true beginning of eternal life. Let us then begin this life, and since Jesus Christ never ceases to inculcate this unity within us, let us turn our thoughts, our desires, and all our cares to the establishment of it in our heart. May we always have this precept of Saint Paul in our thoughts and on our lips: *Each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's.* (Philip. ii. 4)

This is the perfect abnegation of self commanded by Jesus Christ. Let us be *one* on our part, even with those who do not wish to be one with us. Let us not even consider ourselves, and may all of our displeasure be a result of our not being able to communicate enough all that we have and all that we are. Let us seek a means of fostering as much as we can, a common good, in making us *all to all*, with Saint Paul. (I Cor. ix. 22)

Oh charity! Oh love! Oh compassion! Oh condescension! Oh support! Alms, liberality, consolation, tenderness of mercy, peace among brothers in God our Father, and in Jesus Christ Our Lord—you are the object of my desires. I no longer wish to meditate on anything else. Amen. Amen.

THE THIRTY-NINTH DAY

The elect are completed in one (John xvii. 23).

I in them, and Thou in Me; that they may be made perfect in one: and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me. (John xvii. 23) Jesus always returns to this holy unity, it is the delight of His heart, and He cannot set aside a subject which pleases Him so strongly. He continues to delve deeper and deeper into this matter, and He teaches us here that the source of this unity is in us as His Father is in Him.

The holy Fathers have interpreted these words in the following manner: *I am in them*, through My spirit; *I am in them*, through My flesh which I give them in the Eucharist. I return to them, by this means, all that I have taken from them. I give them, at the same time all that I have received from You. My divinity is theirs as well as My humanity. In the humanity, which is theirs and in them, they find the divinity which is united to Him, and they can enjoy it as their one good. So it is then that *I am in them; and You, My Father, You are in Me*. All is, therefore, in them; all is theirs. What more do they need to become perfectly united? Nevertheless, You give them something even more touching. It is, My Father, that *You love them as You have loved me*. They are children only by adoption and through grace, and I, Who am Your Son by nature, I have found this excellent means to unite them to Myself as My members, in order that this pater-

nal love that You have for Me, would extend to them, *in order*, He continues, *that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them.* (John xvii. 26)

Oh man, do you see how much you are cherished by God! What! does the world still please you? What! Can you still think of anything else but God? One could die of regret and shame to hear your reply. One must be silent here in a profound admiration and thanksgiving, in considering, in savoring the fact that we belong to God through Jesus Christ. It is an ineffable mystery. Also, if the world could realize it, it would know at the same time that Jesus Christ is truly sent from God, and that a God sent to the world, could teach nothing or perform anything greater!

THE FORTIETH DAY

The justice of God is unknown to the world (John xvii. 25).

Just Father, the world hath not known Thee. (John xvii. 25) In this oration, Jesus Christ discusses only two qualities of His Father: *My holy Father, My just Father.*

My holy Father, sanctify them in truth; I sanctify Myself for them, in order that they be saints in truth (John xvii. 17, 19), through the communication of Your sanctity, which is also Mine. One could note the same of justice in Saint Paul: *That He Himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ.* (Rom. iii. 26)

But the following seems to ask for something more. *My Father, You are just, and the world does not know You.* Not only is it corrupt, and knows not Your justice, but again, through Your justice, You abandon it to its corruption, from which it does not wish to emerge, and cannot do so of itself, and You allow it to be deprived of Your knowledge. *Just Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee: and these have known that Thou hast sent Me.* (John xvii. 25)

It is thus that they know You. They deserved, as did the others, never to know You, but I, Who alone know You, and Who alone am worthy to know You, have made You known to them, in making Myself known, because they are so little and so humble. *I praise You, My Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and from the prudent of the earth, and You revealed them to the little ones; So be it, My Father, because You have wished it. All things are given to Me by My Father, and nobody knows the Son, if it be not the Father; and nobody knows the Father if it be not the Son, and those to whom the Son wish it to be known.*

For this reason He says: *the world does not know You,* through the same truth which makes Him say: *You have hidden this secret from the wise of the world,* who, puffed up with their presumptuous science, have not wished to submit themselves to the justice of God: *My just Father, those do not know You; and I know You, and I have made You known to these,* who have known how to seek truth in littleness, and in humble abasement of their spirit. My just Father! Make them adore, with trembling, the just and terrible judgement that You exercise over the world, which is deprived of Your knowledge, and

the marvelous mercy with which You have deigned to make Yourself known to these whom You have separated from corruption.

Dear Christian, humble yourself if you wish to know God, and in God, Jesus Christ, in the manner that one must know Him in order to be holy.

THE FORTY-FIRST DAY

The justice of God is unknown to the presumptuous (John xvii. 25).

Just Father, the world hath not known Thee. What! Do not the Jews know You; they who have Your law? And are You not the One of Whom it is written: for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also, and divinity: so that they are inexcusable? (Rom. i. 20) Let us understand then in what way God is not known to the world.

He is not known to the world, because He is not known by those who presume of themselves. For this reason Saint Paul adds, concerning those Gentiles who have known God, that, *for professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* (Rom. i. 22)

In this sense the Jews themselves have not known Him, *since they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, not knowing the justice of God, and seeking to establish their own, have not submitted themselves to the justice of God.* (Rom. x. 2, 3)

Thus, in order to know God in this secret manner, of which He assures us that the world does not know Him, we must banish all presumption of our own justice, and recognize that God *hath included all in unbelief, that He may have mercy on all. Oh the depth of all the riches and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgements, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made Him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory forever. Amen.* (Rom. xi. 32-36)

THE FORTY-SECOND DAY

The elect are loved by God in Jesus Christ (John xvii. 25, 26).

These, the apostles who were present in person and through them, the entire society of the children of God Whom they represented, have known that You have sent Me, and I have made known Your Name to them, and have already explained to them, Your grandeurs, Your counsels, and this name of Father. And I have made known Thy name to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou has loved Me, may be in them, and I in them. (John. xvii. 26)

Behold in the conclusion of this prayer of Our Lord, the design of all the rest, and in particular the unraveling of that which we have seen in verse twenty-four. This is

what we must consider with attention and with respect, as that which must give us the greatest consolation. For this is the last mark of the tenderness of Jesus Christ.

I am in them. (John xvii. 26) They are My living members; they are other Christs; other Selves. They have in them His spirit, which makes the doctrine of Jesus Christ shine in their lives; which renders them, like Him, gentle, humble, patient, and calm in good and in evil, whether the world esteems or despises them, whether it honors or rebuffs them, whether it invites them, so to speak, to its festivals as it invited Jesus Christ, or whether it nails them to the cross as, at the end, it placed the same Jesus there. In all these things, the spirit of Jesus which is in them, as in His living members, makes them like Him, and prompts them to follow His example, so that we see in them the life and death of Jesus Christ: His life, because they follow in His footsteps; His death, because they carry the imprint of His cross; and, as Saint Paul says, *always bearing about in our bodies the mortification of Jesus.* (II Cor. iv. 10) Thus the eternal Father sees only Jesus Christ in them. For this reason, He loves them through the pouring out and extension of the same love that He has for Jesus Christ Himself, and this love, in embracing them as the members of His Son, spreads over them the same glory that Jesus Christ received, in consequence of that which was due to His natural grandeur as God, and in His sufferings as Man. What more is there to desire? Jesus Christ Himself has nothing more to give us. For this reason, after having pronounced these words, with an infinite tenderness, He ends His prayer and prepares to leave to fulfill them through His sacrifice.

Now we can see the design and the sequel of this

prayer: Jesus began by asking His Father to glorify Him, and this glorification ends in making us a part of it, so that the perfection of the glorification of Jesus Christ may be in ours; that which unites us so closely to Him that the Father Himself does not separate us from it in His love. Let us remain in silence with the Saviour and contemplate the many grandeurs to which we are called in Jesus Christ. Let us have no other desire than to render ourselves worthy of them with His grace.

THE FORTY-THIRD DAY

Let us have a firm faith in Jesus, the real Messiah (John xxv. 8).

They have known that You have sent Me. (John xvii. 25) They have accepted it with a firm faith and a persuasion as forceful as the one which we have of things more assured: *They have truly known it.* (John xvii. 8) Blessed are those to whom Jesus Christ renders this testimony! Let us examine ourselves on this important disposition of our hearts. Let us listen to Saint Paul, who says to us: *Try your own selves if you be in the faith: prove ye yourselves.* (II Cor. xiii. 5) See how much he insists, how much he inculcates. *Try yourselves, prove to yourselves.* Do you believe, with complete certainty, that Jesus Christ is truly sent from God?

What reason could you have for not believing it? Have we not seen in Him all the testimonies that the prophets and the patriarchs had advanced of the Christ Who was to

come? Did He not perform all the miracles that He had to perform, and under all the circumstances that it was necessary that He perform them, in undoubted testimony that He was the One expected, and the true Envoy of God?

Who else but Jesus has given to men so saintly a morality, and one so pure, so perfect? And who has been able to say as He did: *I am the light of the world?* (John viii. 12) Where shall we find more charity toward men, more holy examples, a more beautiful model of perfection, a more gentle authority, one more firm; where shall we find a greater condescension towards the weak, towards sinners, even to the point of rendering Himself their advocate, their interceder? This is what He Himself lovingly explains to us through the following words: *Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest in your souls. For My yoke is sweet and My burden light.* (Matt. xi. 28–30) Man needs a yoke, a law, an authority, a commandment. Otherwise, carried away by his passions, he would forget himself. Where shall we find the consolation, the encouragement, and the words of eternal life? This is the first question of our survey.

But when we shall have said: Yes, I believe it, I recognize it with *this fullness of faith* (Hebr. x. 22), of which Saint Paul speaks; *in the Holy Ghost and much fullness.* (I Thess. i. 5) Saint John will tell us with his incomparable gentleness: *And by this we know that we have known Him, if we keep His commandments. He who saith that he knoweth Him, and keepeth not His com-*

mandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, and a little later: He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk, even as He walked (I John ii. 3, 4, 6), and follow His examples. Certainly, they profess that they know God: but in their works they deny Him. (Tit. i. 16) Saint Paul said it; and Saint John said: *My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. (I John iii. 18)* Are we, or are we not among these? What do we have to say for ourselves thereon? This is the second question, still more important than the first, of the survey which we are making.

And the third is the most important of all: *Dearly beloved, if our heart do not reprehend us we have confidence toward God. (I John iii. 21)* If we try to live in such a way that we may be the children of truth, at least that we try to become so, and *that we may be able to persuade our heart in the presence of God,* let us believe that *that is a gift of God, in accordance with the following words: Peace be to the brethren and charity with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephes. vi. 23),* so that we have no reason to glorify ourselves over it, but rather to humble ourselves to the very depths, because we have brought nothing to it of our own, even to the beginning of good works, except misery, poverty and corruption, and if one loses oneself by straying from virtue, one loses oneself much more by behaving with over confidence or presumption concerning it.

After that, all that remains is to confess our sins, not with discouragement and despair, but with a sweet hope, because the same St. John has said: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity. (I John i. 9)* Notice the words

faithful and just: it is not that God owes us anything, but rather because He has promised us all things in Jesus Christ. So that, in order to be able to hope for grace and the remission of our sins it is sufficient to believe that He has sent Jesus Christ to be, through His blood, the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. (I John ii. 2)

THE FORTY-FOURTH DAY

The secret effect of the prayer of Our Lord. Jesus Christ's prayers are always granted. The predestination of saints.

The secret effect of Our Lord's prayer is again another profound mystery.

Jesus Christ teaches us the first principle in the resurrection of Lazarus: *My Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always.* (John xi. 41, 42) No matter what Jesus asks of God, even if it is the resurrection of one dead four days and already rotten, He is assured of obtaining His request. And to show the efficacy of His prayer, He begins by thanking God for having been listened to.

It is true that in the Garden of Olives, Jesus uttered this prayer: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* (Matt. xxvi. 39) These words show, however, His demand was only conditional; if He had wished to make it absolute, His prayer would have been answered. It is necessary only to listen to what He Himself tells Saint

Peter when he tried to defend Jesus with the sword and struck one of those who came to arrest Him: *Thinkest thou*, said He then, *that I cannot ask My Father, and He will give Me presently, more than twelve legions of angels?* (Matt. xxvi. 53) He knew very well that if He had asked for them, He would have obtained them; and that His Father would have granted His request. His prayer is, therefore, always granted, no matter what His demands: be it twelve legions of angels, to snatch Him from the grasp of His enemies; be it as we have noted above, the resurrection of a dead man, whose body had begun to emit a bad odor.

Do we think that He is less powerful, and less listened to than when He asks His Father for that which depends on our free will? He would not ask it, if He did not know that that in itself is in the power of His Father, and that He would no more be refused that, than all the rest. For this reason, He said: *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.* (Luke xxii. 31, 32) No one doubts but that His prayer had its effect in His time. Who will doubt then that it was effective in all the other apostles, for whom He said: *I pray You that they be one in Us;* and again: *I do pray Thee not to take them from the world, but to protect them all from evil.* (John xvii. 15) Shall we say then that none of those for whom He said this prayer perished, and would never see His glory? One could even say that, despite the prayer He had said for Saint Peter, one might doubt whether his faith had not wavered. But God forbid that such a doubt would enter the Christian heart. All those for whom He asks certain powers, will have them;

they will, I say, have faith, perseverance, and perfect deliverance from evil, if Jesus Christ asks for it.

I do not deny the kindness with which He is touched for all men, or the means which, in His general providence, He prepares them for their eternal salvation. *For the Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine, but dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.* (II Peter iii. 9) But, no matter how greatly He loves all people, Jesus has a particular regard and preference for a number well-known to him. All those whom He regards thus, weep over their sins, and are converted in good time. That is why, when He looked lovingly at Saint Peter, he burst into tears; this was the effect of the prayer that Jesus Christ had offered for the stability of his faith. For He had, first of all, to make it live again, in time, to strengthen it so that it would last to the very end. It is the same with all those whom His Father has given Him, and it is of those that He has said: *All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me: and him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out. Because I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of the Father Who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing: but should raise it up again in the last day.* (John vi. 37-39)

And why does He admit us to the understanding of these sublime truths? Is it to trouble us, to alarm us, to cast us into despair, and cause us to say: Am I of the elect, or am I not? Indeed not! Such dark thoughts, which would cause us to penetrate into the secret counsels of God, should be far from us. The design of Our Saviour is that, contemplating this secret glance which He casts

on those whom He knows, and whom His Father has given Him through a certain choice, and recognizing that He knows how to lead them to their eternal salvation by means which never fail, we would learn, first of all, to ask for them, that they may unite us to His prayer, saying with Him: *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.* (Matt. vi. 13) As the Church says: *Do not permit that we be separated from You: if our will wishes to escape, do not permit it; keep it in hand, restrain it, and bring it back to You.*

This, therefore, is the first thing that Jesus Christ wishes to teach us. We should not trouble ourselves over the secret of predestination; rather, we should pray. And in order to do it properly, a second thing which He wishes to teach us is to abandon ourselves to His goodness: not that this is necessary to act and to work, or that it is necessary to permit ourselves to surrender ourselves against the orders of God to nonchalance, or to rash thoughts, but that while acting with all our heart, we must, above all things, abandon ourselves to God alone for time and for eternity.

My Saviour! I do abandon myself to You: I pray You to look at me with this very special glance, that I may not be among the unhappy number of those whom You will hold in contempt, and who will hate You. This is too horrible even to mention. My God, deliver me from such a great evil: I place into Your hands my sick and wavering liberty, and I wish to place my confidence in You alone.

A proud man fears that his salvation is too uncertain if he does not hold it in his own hands, but he is mistaken. Can I be sure of myself? My God! I feel that my will gets out of hand every minute, and if You wished to render

me the master of my fate, I should refuse a power so dangerous to my weakness. Let no one tell me that this doctrine of grace and preference brings despair to good souls. What! Do people think that they can reassure me by committing my salvation to my inconstancy? No, my God, I do not consent to this. I can find no assurance except in abandoning myself to You. Augment this desire within me then, and give me the blessed hope of finding myself, at the end, among this chosen number.

Said David, and Solomon: *The king is not saved by a great army: vain is the horse for safety; neither shall he be saved by the abundance of his strength. Behold the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear Him; and on them that hope in His mercy.* (Ps. xxxii. 16–18) When I shall have prepared my heart, *the Lord must direct my steps.* (Prov. xvi. 9) I am not more powerful than kings, *whose heart is in the hand of the Lord.* (Prov. xxi. 1) Let Him be my Master! May He save me from this weakness which makes me cry out: *Lord save me and I shall be saved* (Ps. cxvii. 25); and again: *Heal me Oh Lord, and I shall be healed* (Jerem. xvii. 25); and again: *Convert me and I shall be converted; For after Thou didst convert me, I did penance; and after Thou didst show unto me, I struck my thighs* (Jerem. xxxi. 19) as a sign of compunction and of regret.

THE FORTY-FIFTH DAY

Let us unite ourselves to Jesus Christ.

At the end of these reflections, I pray that all those

whom I have tried to help by this discourse may rise beyond it. I shall not say only beyond my thoughts, which are nothing, but beyond all that may be presented to them by the ministry of man. And in listening only to what God tells them in their hearts concerning this prayer, I trust that they will unite themselves to it with faith. For that is truly what is called praying to Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ; that we unite ourselves in spirit with Jesus Christ praying, and unite ourselves, as much as we can, to the entire effect of this prayer. The effect of this prayer is that, being united to Jesus Christ God and Man and through Him to God His Father, we unite ourselves in Them with all the faithful, and with all men, to be as much as it is in us to be, but one soul and one heart.

In order to accomplish this work of unity, we must no longer see ourselves except in Jesus Christ, and we must believe that there may not fall upon us the least light of faith, the smallest spark of the love of God, that is not drawn from the immense love that the eternal Father has for His Son. This very Son, our Saviour, being in us, the love with which the Father loves Him, extends also over us by an effusion of His kindness: For it is toward this union that the entire prayer of Jesus Christ bursts forth.

It is in this spirit that we can and must end all our prayers, with the Church, *Through Our Lord Jesus Christ*. For, not being obliged to ask God for the effects of His love, we really ask for them through Jesus Christ, if we believe with a firm and lively faith that God loves us through an effusion of the love which He has for His Son. This is the entire foundation of piety and of Christian confidence. I say that it is the foundation for believing that the immense love that the eternal Father has for His

Son as God, makes Him love the Soul, the saintly Soul, which is so narrowly and substantially united to Him, as well as the sacred and blessed Body which it animates; that is to say, His entire humanity. And the love which He has for this Person, Who is Jesus Christ God and Man, shows that He also loves all the members who live *in* Him and *of* His vivifying Spirit.

Let us believe then, that Jesus Christ is loved through a gratuitous and engaging love as we are also loved. As Saint Augustine says: *The same grace which has made Jesus Christ our Head, has made us all His members.*

We are made Christians through a continuation of the same grace, which has made the Christ. Every time that we say: *Through Our Lord Jesus Christ*, and we must say it every time that we pray, whether in fact or intention, there being no other name through which our prayers may be heard (Act. iv. 12), every time then that we say it, we must believe and know that we are saved through grace, only through Jesus Christ and through His merits: not that we are without merit, but because our merits are His gifts, and the grace of Jesus Christ is the great prize, because it is the merit of a God, and, consequently, infinite.

It is thus that we must pray *through Jesus Christ Our Lord*, and the Church, which does so constantly, unites Herself through that, to the entire effect of the divine prayer which we have just listened to. If the Church celebrates the grace and glory of the holy apostles, who are the shepherds of the flock, She recognizes the effect of the prayer that Jesus Christ has said particularly for them. But the saints, who are profound in glory, have not been

less understood in the sight and in the intention of Jesus Christ, even though He did not mention them by name. Who can doubt that He saw all those that His Father had given Him throughout the centuries, and for whom He was going to be immolated with a particular love?

Let us enter, therefore, with Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ, into the construction of the entire body of the Church, and rendering thanks with Her *through Jesus Christ*, for all those who are complete, let us ask for the completion of the entire body of Jesus Christ, and all the society of the saints. Let us ask, at the same time, with confidence, that we may find ourselves placed in the ranks of the blessed, never doubting that this grace will be extended to us, if we persevere in asking for it through mercy and grace; that is, through the merit of the blood which has been shed for us, and of which we have the sacred pledge in the Eucharist.

After this prayer, let us go with Jesus Christ to the sacrifice, and let us advance with Him to the two mountains; that is, to the Mount of Olives, and to that of Calvary. Let us go, I say, to these two mountains, and let us pass from one to the other: from that of the Mount of Olives, which is the one of agony, to that of Calvary, which is that of death; from the Mount of Olives, which is that of combat, to that of Calvary, where, in dying, one triumphs with Jesus Christ; from the Mount of Olives, which is the mountain of resignation, to that of Calvary, which is the mountain of actual sacrifice; and, finally, from the one where we say: *Not my will but Thine be done*, to the one where we say: *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit* (Luke xxii. 42; xxiii. 46); that is, from

the one where we prepare ourselves for all things, to the one where we die to everything with Jesus Christ, to Whom be rendered honor and glory, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.