

Below is a transcription of the audio file of the Catechism Class given 11-21-10.

Today, we will begin the Fourth Article of the Creed, “Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.” We should realize that this Article is also, of course, very important. Throughout the ages of the Church, the priests were always recommended to remind the Faithful of the importance of often recalling to mind the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings. That is also what the apostle, St. Paul, reminds us that he knows nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

During the last Article, we meditated upon the Incarnation, and together with the Incarnation, we should reflect upon the sufferings of Jesus Christ to increase our love of God. These are two of the greatest mysteries of our Faith, which prove to us both the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ.

The first part of this Article, “suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified” brings to our mind the belief that when Pontius Pilate governed the province of Judea under Tiberius Caesar, Christ the Lord was nailed to the Cross. Having been seized, mocked, outraged, and tortured in various forms, Jesus was finally crucified. If you read attentively the Holy Gospels, I think it is in St. Luke’s gospel, he speaks about all the rulers of Judea and also who ruled the Gentiles, and that gives us in the history of the world a pretty exact date as to the year when Jesus Christ was crucified. Of course, this is what our whole Faith is based upon. Before, the cross was held in contempt; now, the Cross is the glory of the world.

It cannot be doubted that Jesus Christ suffered in His soul, as to the inferior part was sensible to these torments. Jesus Christ truly assumed human nature, and it is a necessary consequence that Jesus really and in His soul experienced the most acute sense of pain; hence these words of the Savior – “My soul is sorrowful even unto death.” Although the human nature was united to the Divine Person, Jesus felt the bitterness of His Passion so acutely as if no such union had existed, because in the one Person of Jesus Christ, were preserved the properties of both natures, human and divine. Therefore, was it passable. What was passable and mortal remained passable and mortal, while what was impassible and immortal, that is His divine nature, continued impassible and immortal.

As I just mentioned, though, under this Article “suffered under Pontius Pilate,” it is important to recall to mind that Jesus suffered, and it was recorded under who (not only of the Gentiles but also who ruled Judea) so that we have a very fixed time. We also find this done by the apostle, St. Paul, in his letter to Timothy. That is important and so necessary that an event should more easily be ascertainable by all. Furthermore, these words show that the Savior’s prediction was really verified – They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified (as we read in St. Matthew’s gospel).

The fact that Jesus suffered death precisely on the wood of the cross must also be attributed to a particular council of God, which decreed that life should return by the way whence death had arisen. The serpent that had triumphed over our first parents by the wood of a tree was vanquished by Christ on the wood of the Cross. Many other reasons, which the Fathers have discussed in detail, might be adduced to show that it was fit that Our Redeemer should suffer death on the Cross rather than in any other way; but, as the pastors throughout the history of the Church should have shown, it is enough for the Faithful to believe that this kind of death was chosen by Our Savior because it appeared better adapted and more appropriate to the redemption of the human race, for there certainly could be none more ignominious and humiliating.

Not only among the Gentiles was the punishment of the cross held accursed and full of shame and infamy, but even in the Law of Moses, the man is called accursed that hangeth on a tree. Of course, it was predicted throughout history in the Old Testament how Jesus would die and that He would die upon the Cross. Furthermore, we will not admit the historical part of the Article, which has been so carefully set forth by the holy evangelist, so that the Faithful may be acquainted with at least the principal parts of this mystery, that is to say; such as seemed more necessary to confirm the truth of our Faith. For it is on this Article, as on their foundation, that the Christian Faith and religion rests, as if this truth be firmly established, all the rest is secure.

In truth, if one thing more than another presents difficulty to the mind and understanding of man, assuredly it is the mystery of the Cross, which beyond all doubt, must be considered the most difficult of all. So much so, that only with great difficulty can we grasp the fact that our salvation depends on the Cross, and on Him Who for us was nailed thereon. In this, however, as St. Paul teaches, we may well admire the wonderful providence of God, for seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. It is no wonder then that the prophets before the coming of Christ and the

Apostles, after His death and resurrection, labored so strenuously to convince mankind that He was the Redeemer of the world and to bring them under the power and obedience of the crucified.

I might remind you of the important little circular letter that St. Louis Marie de Montfort wrote titled, "The Friends of the Cross." You can find that available on my website at www.jmjsite.com. Look for that article under the religious tab, "The Friends of the Cross." In there, St. Louis Marie de Montfort explains so many beautiful things about the mystery of the Cross. Toward the end of that article/letter, he gives us 14 rules, which are very important on how we should bear our cross in imitation of Jesus Christ Who was nailed on the Cross to redeem us for love of us.

As mentioned already, there are a number of prophecies and figures of the Passion and death of Our Savior in the Old Testament times. To mention just a few of these:

1) Abel fell a victim to the envy of his brother. As we read in the Sacred Scriptures. When they delivered Jesus Christ before Pilate as this Creed reminds us, Pilate knew that he delivered Him up out of envy. That is why Abel fell a victim to his brother, Cain, out of envy.

2) Isaac was commanded to be offered as a sacrifice and Jesus Christ was offered on the Cross, a sacrifice to redeem us and all mankind.

3) The lamb immolated by the Jews on their departure from Egypt. Remember the lamb was sprinkled on the doorpost, and the first-born of all those in the land of Egypt were killed that night by the angel of revenge, except those who had the blood of the paschal lamb on their doorposts.

4) The brazen serpent lifted up by Moses in the desert. All are figures of the Passion and death of Christ the Lord. That recalls to mind the other words of Jesus Christ; "If I be lifted up, I will draw all things to myself." Remember as the brazen serpent was lifted up, those who beheld it were cured and saved and those who were not were not saved.

5) As to the prophets. How many there were who foretold Christ's passion and death is too well-known to require development here, not to speak of David whose psalms embrace all the principle mysteries of redemption. The oracles of Isaias, in particular, are so clear and graphic that we might be said rather to have a recorded a past than predicted a future event.

The second part of this Fourth Article of the Creed is "died and buried." We should always recall to mind and forever believe that Jesus Christ after He was crucified really died and was buried. It is not without just reason that this is proposed to the Faithful as a separate object of belief, since there were some who denied His death upon the Cross. The Apostles, therefore, were justly of opinion that to such an error should be opposed the doctrine of faith contained in this Article, the truth of which is placed before the possibility of doubt by the united testimony of all the evangelists who record that Jesus yielded up the ghost.

Moreover, as Christ was true and perfect man, He, of course, was capable of dying. Now man dies when the soul is separated from the body. When, therefore, we say that Jesus Christ died, we mean that His soul was disunited from His Body. We do not admit, however, that the divinity was separated from His Body. On the contrary, we firmly believe and profess that when His soul was disassociated from His body, His divinity continued always united both to His Body in the sepulchre and to His Soul in limbo. "It became the Son of God to die that through death, He might destroy him who had the empire of death that is the devil, and might deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their lifetimes subject to servitude." (Heb. ii. 10:14, 15)

We also realize that Jesus Christ died freely. He knew from the beginning of His life that He would die upon the Cross. This was the peculiar privilege of Christ, the Lord, to have died when He Himself decreed to die, and to have died not so much by external violence as by internal assent. Not only His death but also its time and place were ordained by Him. For thus, Isaias wrote: "He was offered because it was His own Will." The Lord before His Passion, declared the same of Himself: "I lay down My life that I may take It again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

As to the time and place of His death, Jesus said when Herod insidiously sought His life: "Go and tell that fox: Behold I cast out devils, and do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am consummated. Nevertheless, I must walk today and tomorrow, and the day following, because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." Jesus, therefore, offered Himself not involuntarily or by compulsion, but of His own free will. Going to meet His enemies He said: "I am He." All the punishments which injustice and cruelty were inflicted on Him, He endured voluntarily.

That is why I would remind each of us that it is important that we pray every day for the grace to accept holy martyrdom, that we will have the grace to imitate Jesus Christ crucified. If it be God's holy Will that we have the workings of Divine Providence that we die as a martyr, we will have the grace to do so. We must also die freely if that be God's way to call us back into eternity.

That is why the Saints and all the spiritual writers whose books I have ever read so often recommend the importance of meditating on the sufferings, death, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. That is the great way to excite our love and gratitude. Is it not one of the great saints who told us that meditating on the mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ is of more value than fasting on bread and water for the entire year? Because when we meditate on the sufferings and on all the torments of the Redeemer, nothing is better calculated to stir our souls than the thought that Jesus endured them thus voluntarily.

For anyone to endure all kinds of suffering for our sake, not because he chose them but simply because he could not escape them, we should not consider this a very great favor; but, were he to endure death freely and for our sakes only, having had it in his power to avoid it, this indeed would be a benefit so overwhelming as to deprive even the most ungrateful heart, not only the power of returning, but even of feeling, due thanks. We may hence form an idea of the transcendent and intense love of Jesus Christ towards us and of His divine and boundless claims to our gratitude; greater love than this no man hath that he lay down his life for his friends. Jesus Christ then proved what He stated to be the truth. He could not have shown us greater love than to lay down His life for us, who were still sinners. How greatly we needed Him!

But, are we grateful? Gratitude is one of the virtues that is so often forgotten and most people do not practice it. Gratitude in itself brings many more graces. Hopefully, we will never again be ungrateful for the great graces God gave us in dying for us. Let us not be ungrateful, but let us every day meditate on the crucifixion.

When we confess that Jesus was buried, we do make this as it were a distinct part of the Article as if it presented any new difficulty which is not implied from what we have said of His death. If we believe that Christ died, we can also easily believe that He was buried. The word "buried" was added in the Creed first that His death might be rendered more certain for the strongest argument of a person's death is the proof that his body was buried; secondly, to render the miracle of His resurrection more authentic and illustrious.

It is not, however, our belief that the Body of Jesus Christ alone was interred. The above words propose, as a principle object of our belief, that God was buried. According to the rule of Catholic Faith, we also say with the strictest truth that God died and that God was born of a Virgin, for as the divinity was never separated from His Body, which was laid in the sepulcher, we truly confess that God was buried. As to the manner and place of His burial, what the holy evangelists quoted on this subject, will be sufficient for the pastor, as you read in all four gospels (as we are reminded in Holy Week). All four gospels of the Passion are read every year for the Catholics who follow the sacred liturgy.

There are, however, two things which demand particular attention. The one that the Body of Jesus Christ was in no degree corrupted in the sepulcher according to the prediction of the prophet: thou wilt not give Thy holy One to see corruption. The other, in regards to several parts of this Article, that burial, passion, and also death apply to Christ Jesus, not as God, but as man. To suffer and die are incidental to human nature only, yet they are also attributed to God, since as is clear, they are predicated with propriety of that Person who is at once perfect God and perfect Man. So once we have obtained to the knowledge of these things, we should also proceed to explain in particulars the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, which enable us not to comprehend, but at least to contemplate, the immensity of so stupendous a mystery.

First, we must consider Who it is that suffers all these things. His dignity we cannot express in words or even conceive in mind. Of Him, St. John says that He is the Word, which was with God. The apostle, St. Paul, describes Him in sublime terms, saying that this is He Whom God has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the world, Who being the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high. In a word, Jesus Christ, the God-man suffers.

The Creator suffered for His creatures; the Master for His servant. He suffers by Whom the angels, men, the heavens, and the elements were made; in Whom, by Whom, and of Whom are all things. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of surprise that while He agonized under such an accumulation of torments, the whole frame of the universe was convulsed, for as the Scriptures inform us: the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, there was

darkness over the whole earth, and the sun was obscured. All creation recognized its Creator, but unfortunately it seems, that mankind in great numbers does not recognize the love and the fact that their Creator, their God Jesus Christ, true God and true man, suffered and died for our redemption.

Most people have such a love for the world and the ways of the world that this great suffering, this Passion and death, will be in vain for the majority of mankind. Let each of us take it upon ourselves to pray and sacrifice that it will not be in vain for us, and pray that it will be enlightening to enough people, to all that we can influence to lead them to the love of the Crucified and die in the state of sanctifying grace.

If then even mute and inanimate nature sympathized with the sufferings of Her Creator, let the Faithful consider that with what tears they, the living stones of the edifice, should manifest their sorrow. That is why, I repeat, daily meditation on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, is one of the greatest ways the Saints tell us that we will increase in our perfect love of God and cease to commit the least willful venial sin; certainly, never another mortal sin.

Reflect on the truth that Jesus Christ, the God-man, suffers! The Creator suffers for His creatures, the Master for His servant. Knowing that Jesus died for us and suffered so much, we should consider the reasons why Jesus Christ suffered; thus, the greatness and intensity of the divine love towards us may be more fully appreciated as it appears. Should anyone inquire why the Son of God underwent His most bitter Passion, He will find that besides the guilt inherited from our first parents, the principal causes are the vices and crimes which have been perpetrated from the beginning of the world to the present day, and those which will be committed to the end of time.

In His Passion and Death, the Son of God, Our Savior, intended to atone for and blot out the sins of all ages, and to offer for them to His Father a full and abundant satisfaction. Besides, to increase the dignity of this mystery, Jesus Christ not only suffered for sinners, but even for those who were the very authors and ministers of all the torments He endured. Of this, the apostle reminds us in these words addressed to the Hebrews: Think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds.

In this guilt are involved all those who fall frequently into sin, for as our sins consigned Jesus Christ, the Lord, to the death of the Cross, most certainly those who wallow in sin and iniquity crucify to themselves again the Son of God as far as in them lies, and make a mockery of Him. This guilt seems more enormous to us than in the Jews, since according to the testimony of the same apostle, if they had known Him, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory; while we on the contrary, professing to know Him, yet denying Him by our actions, seem in some sort of way to lay violent hands on Him. That is why it is the teaching of our Faith that every time we commit a mortal sin, we crucify unto ourselves again the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Jews and Pontius Pilate and those on the first Good Friday, you might say, had the opportunity to crucify Jesus only once in that physical way; but, every time they committed a sin thereafter, they are like the rest of the people in the world today. Sometimes, I think it should be a great help to increase your own love of God if you reflect, at least in a general way, on the enormous number of grievous sins committed every day, every 24 hours, throughout the world; how each one of those mortal sins in thought, words, deeds, and omission, is crucifying again our great lover, Jesus Christ. Think of all the wicked things going on in the night clubs, the immorality, the drugs, the murders, and the thoughts ... thought, word, deed, and omission. Then, maybe, it will inspire you to do penance, reflect on the Passion, and at least yourself live a virtuous life. That is what the Saints did, and inspired them to lead a holy life.

Jesus Christ was delivered over to death by the Father and by Himself. To this, of course, the Scriptures bear witness for in Isaiah, God the Father says: for the wickedness of my people have I struck Him. A little before, the same prophet filled with the spirit of God cried out as he saw the Lord covered with stripes and wounds: all we like sheep have gone astray. Every one hath turned aside unto his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Of the Son, it is written: if He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long lived seed. This the apostle expresses in language still stronger when, in order to show how confidently we on our part should trust in the boundless mercy and goodness of God, he says: He that spared not even His Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how hath He not also with Him, given us all things.

In the next subject of the pastor's instruction is the bitterness of the Redeemer's Passion. If we bear in mind that the sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground, and this as the sole anticipation of the

torments and agony which He was about to endure, we must at once foresee that His sorrows admitted of no increase; for if the very idea of impending evils was overwhelming, and the sweat of blood shows that it was, what are we to suppose their actual endurance to have been?

That Christ, Our Lord, suffered the most excruciating torments of mind and body is certain. In the first place, there was no part of His Body that did not experience the most agonizing torture. His hands and feet were fastened with nails to the Cross. His head was pierced with thorns and stricken with a rod. His Face was defiled with spittle and buffeted with blows. His whole Body was covered with stripes. Furthermore, men of all ranks and conditions were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. Gentiles and Jews were the advisors, the authors, the ministers of His Passion. Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, and the rest deserted Him; while Jesus hangs from the Cross, are we not at a loss which to deplore, His agony or His ignominy or both?

Surely no death more shameful, none more cruel could have been devised than this. It was a punishment usually reserved for the most guilty and atrocious malefactors, a death whose slowness aggravated the exquisite pain and torture! Basically, those who were crucified kept attempting to push themselves up with the nails through their feet (if they were nailed to the cross as Jesus was). Think of the pain to do that; yet, they had to push themselves up to get air to stay alive. That is why toward the end of their three hour agony, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, then the other, but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs that the Scripture might be fulfilled: you shall not break a bone of Him.

Just think of that terrible agony every day if you desire to truly increase your love of God. His agony was increased by the very constitution and frame of His Body. Formed by the power of the Holy Ghost, He was more perfect and better organized than the bodies of other men can be. He was therefore endowed with a superior susceptibility and a keener sense of all the torments which it endured. As to His interior anguish of soul, that too was no doubt extreme. Those among the saints who had to endure torments and tortures were not without consolation from above, which enabled them not only to bear their sufferings patiently, but in many instances to feel in the very midst of them interior joy, as the Apostle says: I rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the Church. In another place, St. Paul wrote: I am filled with comfort. I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations. Christ, Our Lord, tempered with no mixture of sweetness the bitter chalice of His Passion, but permitted His human nature to feel as acutely every species of torment as if He were only man and not also God.

Let us then explain the blessings and advantages which flow from the Passion of Jesus Christ:

In the first place, then, the Passion of Our Lord was our deliverance from sin; for as St. John says, He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own Blood. He hath quickened you together with Him, says the Apostle, forgiving you all offences, blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the Cross.

In the next place, Jesus has rescued us from the tyranny of the devil, for as the Lord Himself says: Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. Again, Jesus discharged the punishment due to our sins and, as no sacrifice more pleasing and acceptable could have been offered to God, Jesus reconciled us to the Father, appeased His wrath, and made Him favorable to us.

Finally, by taking away our sins, Jesus opened to us Heaven, which was closed by the common sin of mankind. In this, the Apostle pointed out when he said: We have confidence in the entering into the holies by the Blood of Christ.

Nor are we without a type and figure of this mystery in the Old Law, for those who were prohibited to return into their native country before the death of the High Priest, typify that no one, whoever just and holy may have been his life, may gain admission into the celestial country until the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, had died; and by His death, immediately opened Heaven to those who, purified by the Sacraments and gifted with faith, hope, and charity, become partakers of His Passion.

Let us now also reflect upon the divine blessings which flow to us from the Passion of Jesus Christ:

First, indeed, the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, in an admirable manner, has been made to God the Father for our sins, and is full and complete. The price which He paid for our ransom was not only adequate and equal to our debts, but far exceeded them. Again, in it, the Passion of Jesus Christ was a sacrifice most acceptable to God, for

when He offered His Son on the altar of the Cross, it entirely appeased the wrath and indignation of the Father. This word, “sacrifice,” the Apostle used when he says: Christ hath loved us and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness.

Furthermore, it was a redemption to which the prince of the Apostles says: You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver from your vain conversion to the tradition of your fathers, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled. The Apostle teaches that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.

Besides these incomparable blessings, we have also received another of the highest importance, namely, that in the Passion alone, we have the most illustrious example of the exercise of every virtue. He displayed patience, humility, exalted charity, meekness, obedience, and unshaken firmness of soul, not only in suffering for justice’s sake, but also in meeting death. We may truly say, on the day of His Passion alone, our Savior offered in His own Person a living exemplification of all the moral precepts inculcated during the entire time of His public ministry.

Would to God that these mysteries were always present to our minds, and that we learn to suffer, die, and be buried together with Our Lord; so that from henceforth, having cast aside all stain of sin and rising with Him to newness of life, we may at length, through His grace and mercy, be found worthy to be made partakers of the celestial kingdom and glory.

So, again, we might reflect on some other lessons at Calvary because the Passion is a satisfaction for sins. When we desire to meditate on the Passion, we often bring the Cross before us; we recall the facts of the gospel story; we consider the details and make a comparison between the accounts of the four Gospels; we contemplate the intensity of Our Lord’s sufferings; we try to bring home to ourselves His physical pain and His mental anguish. These facts move us to wonder, to compassion, to sympathy.

That is why we should reflect on the Passion every day, but let us not forget another truth. It is possible to be lost in the details of the history of the Passion. It is possible to know much about the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and yet, to know very little of the man-God Who suffered. You know the sufferings of Jesus, but you do not know the Sufferer. To know Jesus Who suffered, we must try to penetrate deeper. We must consider the interior of Jesus. We must contemplate the soul of Our Savior. It is the heart of Jesus that attracts us to love. We must, therefore, contemplate the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

We are conscious of the mystery that surrounds the awful scene of Calvary because we hear the Passion read every year from all four Gospels during Holy Week and throughout the year. Hopefully, we meditate on this great mystery and we pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary every day. So, our mind, our intellect is aware of the sufferings and awful scenes of Calvary, yet the sincere soul is convinced that it will be pleasing to God if it tries to penetrate in some little way into this mystery. It is convinced that the mystery contains a further revelation of love, and also the explanation (as far as we can grasp it) of many of the spiritual problems that arise in the soul.

We should then endeavor, therefore, to enter into the mystery of Calvary. We shall try to know more about the Sufferer; in what spirit did Jesus bear His pain? In other words, people see the Crucifix on their Rosary or on their wall, but do they really try to consider what was the reason, what is the object of Jesus hanging on the Cross? What were the dispositions that expressed His willing suffering unto death? What object had Jesus in view when He died upon the Cross for us? If you follow the liturgy, then we know that holy Mother the Church will guide us in seeking the answer to these kinds of questions.

The Church tells us that Our Lord suffered and died to satisfy for sin and to open Heaven: For us men and for our salvation, He came down from Heaven. Again, we reflect: He was crucified for us. These are the words of the Creed that we are meditating upon today and trying to explain. Jesus Christ, Who hath loved us, says St. John, washed us from our sins in His own Blood. He bore our sins in His Body on the tree, says St. Peter. He atoned for our sins by His death. Calvary was a satisfaction for sin. The more we penetrate into the depths of this great work of satisfaction, the more we shall realize the depths of the love which made Our Lord’s final act so pleasing to the heavenly Father, and the more we shall be drawn to return love for love.

The Vatican Council of 1870, speaking of this study of the mysteries of religion says: when reason, enlightened by faith, pursues its researches with care, piety and sobriety, it reaches with the help of God, a most

fruitful knowledge of the divine mysteries. To understand that the Passion of Jesus Christ is an act of satisfaction for sin, we must first understand the act that called for satisfaction. Therefore, we must consider the nature of sin.

We are God's creatures and by grace, we are God's adopted children (or at least we have the power to become His children). Hence, our disposition before it should be the disposition of filial dependence, of childlike subjection. Our acts, our lives should be governed and directed by the fundamental truth that we are creatures of God and children of God; that God is our Father. We should live in loving dependence on Him. This, my dear friends of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, is the very foundation of all sanctity, of our religious life, of our spiritual exercises: to realize that we are the creature and God is the Creator, and we are (or at least we have the ability to become) children of God.

Mortal sin is the very opposite of this loving dependence. In every mortal sin, first we turn away from God, and second, we turn to some created satisfaction which we prefer to the Divine Will. In a single act of mortal sin, we find, therefore, a double evil. First, mortal sin is a turning away from God. It is a refusal to be obedient to Him from Whom we received existence, and Who keeps us in existence each moment. Mortal sin is a practical rejection of the first consequence of our position of dependence on the Most High. It is an act of disobedience to God, Who is not only our Creator but also our Father, Who in His goodness, has opened to us the entry into His own happiness.

That is why the liturgy of Holy Mother the Church, especially during the last three days of Holy Week, reminds us that He became obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. We were disobedient. Every human being who committed mortal sin has been disobedient. It was disobedience on the part of Adam that caused each of us to come into the world with original sin. Now the obedience of the Cross atoned for that grave disobedience of each of us and all mankind in general.

By turning away from God, by refusing to be subject to Him, is the fundamental malice of mortal sin. In every mortal sin, in one way or another, is just that: an act of disobedience; an act of turning away from our kind, loving Father; seeking an earthly pleasure or such like thing in preference to the pleasure of loving our eternal Father Who created us and, in each moment, keeps us in existence. Never forget that God is the source of man's existence, of his preservation in being, of his final happiness. He is man's first beginning and He is man's last end.

There is another evil in an act of mortal sin. In committing mortal sin, the creature turns to a forbidden gratification, which is preferred to God's good pleasure. In every sin committed, man expects to satisfy himself in it. This turning to a creature is contrary to justice because, preferring a pleasure to God, means putting God in the second place and thereby refusing Him the reverence which is His due as man's first beginning and man's last end.

All that we have said of mortal sin applies in a special way to the sin of Adam, the father and head of our race. By that sin, he lost all God's special favors, both for himself and his posterity. His descendants are born with the stain of that sin, deprived of sanctifying grace and excluded from Heaven. Jesus Christ loved us and loved us unto the end. He died on the Cross that we may again have the ability to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven if we will love our Father and not seek ourselves.

Adam and his posterity were incapable, by their own powers, either of atoning for this sin or repairing the consequences. But, God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son so that by Him satisfaction might be made for sin and grace merited. The eternal Son, out of His pure goodness, out of His immeasurable mercy, came down from Heaven and became man. For us men and for our salvation, He came down from Heaven and was made man. Jesus came to undo the damage done both by the sin of Adam and by the sins of all men.

Now, what precisely was the nature of the atonement and satisfaction for sin which Our Lord made? Why was it necessary that satisfaction to be perfect should be offered by God and man? These are the questions that come to mind when we reflect on the Fourth Article of the Creed: He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. With the help of Divine Providence, we will take up this subject again next Sunday as it has been about an hour. So, at this time, we will say our closing prayers...

Thank you for visiting <http://www.JMJsites.com>. Please tell others about this website and pray much more. Saint Alphonsus Maria (the great Doctor of prayer) reminds us that: "Those who pray will certainly save their souls, and those who do not pray will certainly lose them." Read the sermons and listen to the audio files. "Ignorance is the mother of all evils."