

Below is a transcription of the audio file of the Catechism Class given 12-12-10.

I would like to wish all of you a blessed feast day on this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Madonna of the Americas, that she would continue to watch over and take care of this country of America.

We pretty much covered over the last two or three classes the Fourth Article of the Creed, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried." Now, we come to the Fifth Article, "He descended into hell, the third day He arose again from the dead."

I have decided that before I cover what the Catechism of the Council of Trent itself says directly on this Fifth Article, I would cover a subject that several people have been asking about recently in preparation for our resurrection from the dead; that is, the signs of our love of God, as given by the Saints. In other words, people have been asking is there any way to tell or figure out if we might be in the state of sanctifying grace. It is an important subject, of course, because unless we die in the state of sanctifying grace, we will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven and have a glorious resurrection.

When we speak of the importance of this subject, people ask, "Have I got the virtue of charity?" In other words, do I have sanctifying grace, which brings the virtue of charity with it? Are there any signs by which I am able to conjecture with confidence that I am in God's friendship and am, therefore, an heir to the Kingdom of Heaven? When we speak of the practice of love, we mean the acts of love for God, which, with the help of God's grace, are received from the virtue of charity. These acts may be either the interior acts of yielding to God's attraction, uniting our will to His, making His interest to be ours, choosing Him in our soul above all attractive things, rejoicing in His happiness; or, these acts of love may be the external good acts which are done under the influence of these interior acts and are the manifestation of them.

When we speak of the signs of love, we refer to some prominent instances of the above acts which are considered as proofs that we are in the state of grace, and that in consequence, we have the virtue of charity. This virtue of charity is the permanent power given to all in grace of making acts of supernatural love of God. The virtue produces such acts under the influence of actual grace (which shows us God in His adorable attractiveness) and draws our will to yield to God, to prefer God, to choose God above all; that is, to choose God's holy Will.

The signs of love which evidently we must have will not be very prominent except when the virtue of charity is in a well-developed and perfect state. Hence, the following tests of our possession of charity are not so easy of application for those whose charity is still in an insipid state. There are two great saints who told us about these signs of love, whether we can determine to some degree whether we are in the state of grace (well, there are probably more saints), but I will cover those given by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Teresa of Avila.

St. Thomas, in treating of the virtue of charity and the act of love, asks this all-important question: can I man know that he has charity? Then he goes on to answer saying that: although we cannot be absolutely certain, we can conjecture with probability that we are in the state of grace if we notice in ourselves these signs:

1) That we take delight in God; that is, that we find contentment in God on account of what our faith tells us about Him; His infinite goodness, His infinite generosity, His infinite loveliness.

2) That we look down on earthly things, considering them of little account compared to God; that is, we choose God above all. This sign flows from the first as is evident.

3) That we are not conscience of any unforgiven mortal sin.

If we have reason to think that we have these three signs, we should thank God with all our hearts for the grace which has led us to this happy state, and we should take all care to preserve the treasure we possess. We preserve this virtue of charity by living the three signs, which means: we have to think of God, we have to contemplate God in His infinite loveliness as revealed by faith, and that we may take complacency and find contentment in Him. We have to convince ourselves of the passing character of earthly things that we may think little of them compared with God, and we have to take all care in avoiding the danger of sin.

The signs of having the virtue of charity, which are given by St. Thomas, deal with the very nature of the act of love itself. They deal with the act as it is in our own soul, and in consequence, they demand attentive

observation to arrive at a conviction that we possess them. Hence, it will be useful to consider the signs more closely.

Remember the first sign is that we take delight in God. Sometimes we may not be conscience of taking complacency in God. In times of spiritual trial when the vision of faith is obscured, we are not aware that we take delight in God, but we know that we cannot find full delight elsewhere. Lord, to whom shall we go, we say with the Apostle? This knowledge is our assurance than in actual fact we do take complacency in God. This first sign is the most important of the three.

The second sign given by St. Thomas is that we look down on earthly things. This implies that we see them in relation to God or see God in them. To see them thus is to see them in true perspective. Hence, this sign does not presuppose insensibility to created loveliness in any form. The Church prays that we may love God in all things. It means that we look down on the satisfaction or attraction which created things may minister apart from their relation to God.

The third sign given by St. Thomas is that we are not conscience of unforgiven mortal sin. To shrink from all deliberate venial sin is a sure indication that we have the third sign.

It is noteworthy that these signs may be the test of charity in all its degrees. As charity increases, these signs become more manifest. There is greater purity of conscience, greater attention to God and to His interests, and less absorption in earthly things apart from Him. The descriptions of the highest degrees of charity given by St. John of the Cross expose the full development of the characteristics set forth by St. Thomas. Consider what St. John of the Cross said: "The soul may then with truth call Him Beloved when it is wholly His, when the heart has no attachments but Him, and when all the thoughts are continually directed to Him."

Then there are the signs of love as given by St. Teresa of Avila, who puts before us rather the exterior acts that flow from the virtue of charity and are inspired and characterized by charity. She speaks of these acts as acts of love. The particular acts she mentions are easy to perceive. We can easily be sure we act thus. Since her way then of setting forth the signs of love is simple, and the signs as she states are easy to test in ourselves. We shall explain them at greater length.

First, let us bear in mind that St. Teresa of Avila was one who knew well the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. For long years in prayer, she had contemplated that Sacred Heart. Her contemplation led her to complacency in Jesus. She was pleased and contented in the thought of Him. She was drawn to Jesus by His infinite attractiveness. Because she knew him thus, she was a lover of Jesus. In fact, we know from the Church, that she was a great lover. She loved Jesus for His human goodness and she loved Him for His divine goodness.

If we listen to her description of love, we shall see that we, too, can love Christ Who is God and Man. Her words will show us that we can love, although our hearts seem as ice. St. Teresa writes: "Love does not consist in great sweetness of devotion, but first in a firm determination to please God in all things; second, in avoiding all that would offend Him as far as possible; third, in praying for the increase of the honor and glory of His divine Son and for the growth of the Church." These are the words of this great saint, so let us examine them carefully.

St. Teresa first emphasizes the truth that real love does not consist in the sweetness of devotion. There are many people who deceive themselves in this point. Many are persuaded that love to be real must be felt, but our saint says that love does not consist in the feeling of devotion. Then she gives these three characteristics of real love. First, love consists first in a firm determination to please God in all things. A firm determination, an absolute fixing of our will; not an ordinary determination, but a firm one; a determination that has a character of finality about it. To be firm, a thing must have a secure basis. Our determination to please God in all things must be based on the knowledge of His goodness and His love for us as seen in Jesus, and of our utter dependence on Him. Then, it will be firm. Rooted in Christ, our determination will have a character of finality. A firm determination to please God in all things, not merely to do what God wants, but to do it to please Him; to please Him in ALL things, not merely in great things, but in little things also. Nothing is little once we know it pleases God.

How are we to know what pleases God? We know what pleases God by His commandments, by the directions of those placed over us, and by the duties of our state of life. His commandments are a clear expression of His Will. They emphasize fraternal charity. Remember the great commandment and the second

one that is like unto it (as well as the Ten Commandments). The directions of those placed over us also convey His Will to us unless they order what is clearly sinful. The duty of our state in life indicates God's Will as regards most of the actions of the day.

These commandments and directions and duties must be fulfilled for the motive of pleasing God. It is this motive that gives them their value in God's eyes. Without the motive of pleasing God, our actions (and so forth) are of little value. Many who work hard and who externally are very faithful are not real lovers of God. The reason is there is a difference between doing God's work and working for God. Take that sentence and reflect upon it seriously. There is a difference between doing God's work and working for God. Love is found in work only when we work for God, and not working to please ourselves or for some other motive.

Love is found in doing this work, and therefore, we must do what we can to understand it. We must not only do what pleases God, we must do it to please God. To have this motive, it is not required that we continually think of God. It is sufficient if our will is firmly set in the desire and the determination to please God in all our acts. This fixed determination follows easily when our whole life, our mind and our heart, are dominated by the idea of God's majesty, of His fatherly kindness, and of our absolute dependence on Him.

When the Blessed Virgin Mary was taking care of the divine Child Jesus, we do not contemplate that She was always so totally conscience that every little act was done to please God – to such an extent that her mind did not think of anything else. Although She went about her household duties, She had that general intention in a very fixed way to do it to please God. No matter what her household duties were, She did them for God's greater honor and glory; and the same with the life of St. Joseph. That should be the way with our life.

If you are parents or just have any people under you, say for example the parents who have a family to raise. Not only does the father go out and earn the living for the family, but he does it to please God, not just to fulfill his duties as a father and to provide for the family. He provides for that family because that is the Will of God in fulfilling the duties in his state of life. The mother not only stays home and educates the children (as true Catholic children should be educated) and takes care of the household duties, but she does it to please God, and only secondarily (so to speak) to please her husband and the children and to give herself the glory and the praise that comes from that. Her real motive is to do all of those duties, educating the children and fulfilling the household duties to please God. That is the way we need to have our lives ordered if we are going to have this certitude that we are in the state of grace. We must do what pleases God because it is His holy Will.

Secondly, St. Teresa tells us that love consists secondly in avoiding all acts that displease God, avoiding ALL not merely some. Avoiding not merely the things that displease Him more or less seriously, but even the things that displease Him in the smallest way.

Remember how I spoke before of the example of throwing darts at the bulls-eye. In the very center of the bulls-eye about the size of a quarter are only those people who are the true lovers of God, who are firmly determined to avoid every sin (not only mortal sin, but every deliberate venial fault as far as they can) as St. Teresa explains here. Those in the middle who are careless about what they have in their minds to be a venial sin, sooner or later, will fall into mortal sins. We must be willing to avoid everything that displeases God even in a small way. If we do deliberately anything that displeases God no matter how small it is, it puts us outside the circle of His great lovers until we repent and turn to Him completely.

We are weakness itself and Our Lord knows this. Hence, the venial faults committed with little deliberation, through surprise or frailty, will not seriously injure our love, provided we at once regret them. This is why the wise St. Teresa adds the words, "as far as is possible." Our frailty is such that we shall never avoid all faults of weakness. Remember the Scripture says: A just man falls seven times a day; but we must constantly strive to diminish their number, and there is love in this constant striving. Faults that are fully deliberate, we can hope with God's grace, to avoid altogether. If we are great lovers, we shall be determined to do so.

All those who are in the state of grace are lovers of God in some degree. All such may be regarded as inside this circle around Him as the center, the circle of God's lovers. Outside this circle lie the unhappy souls in mortal sin. Within this circle of God's lovers, there is the inner circle, which includes God's great lovers. Those who are determined not to offend Him with full deliberation, even in small things, and who try to please Him in all they do. Those inside this inner circle shooting for the bull's eye, and those only, have the dispositions to ensure a happy eternity. The other lovers, those between the two circles, are not secure unless

they enter the inner circle of the great lovers. They are in danger of passing, sooner or later, outside the outer circle by mortal sin. If we do not fear to commit some deliberate venial sins, then we will probably sooner than later fall into mortal sin. Therefore, if we are going to secure our salvation, we must strive to keep within the inner circle of the great lovers of God.

In the third place, St. Teresa tells us that love consists in praying for the increase of the honor and glory of Our Lord and for the growth of the Church. This implies that we make the interests of Our Lord Jesus Christ our own; that is, that we are desirous of the furtherance of His interests as we are of the furtherance of our own personal interests. Love demands that we put these desires into practice by constant prayer that God may be known and loved by all – that is His glory; and that His Church may spread unto all peoples – that all sinners may be drawn to enter into friendship with Him.

Besides praying, we must work when the occasion offers. We must do all we can to make Him known and loved and to make His Church revered and loved also. To work for this is a proof that our prayers are genuine. Let us examine ourselves on this point. Do we really strive to increase the honor and glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ? What are we doing to spread the growth of the true Church and the true Faith? St. Teresa's description of love makes the great commandment very clear and practical. We can all aspire, and we should aspire, to be real lovers of God.

One more question suggests itself. What about the four superlative terms of the great commandment? We must love with all our heart, and all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength. Can we rise to this perfection? The answer, of course, is that we can rise to this perfection because God would not command this perfection if it were not possible for us. Our love is naturally greater according as the person we love is more lovable. We have seen that God is infinitely lovable. He is pure and unmixed Goodness. The attractiveness of God is as infinite as Himself. Hence, our love can rise with His grace to the perfection commanded. It can and must be supreme love.

The difficulties that may suggest themselves can be swept away by His grace. His grace sought for in prayer will enable us to overcome progressively the obstacle of our inability to realize adequately His goodness, His attractiveness. His grace will also enable us to counteract gradually the weaknesses of our nature and its liability to be seduced by the enticements of earthly things. This prayer and grace will ultimately seal our practice of love with the stamp of the real lovers of God.

As we have already seen, to do everything to please God, to avoid what displeases Him, to seek the honor and glory of Christ Jesus, and the growth and welfare of His Church, these are the first and greatest concerns of a real lover of God. The interests of God have become the interests of His lover. The lover has his personal interest, no doubt, but his first concern regards the interests of God. It is true that the personal interest of a lover of God may impress his emotional nature more deeply than the interests of God, but in the judgment of his mind and the determination of his will, the interest of God comes first.

Love is essentially in the will and mind. The independence of the acts of mind and will in presence of seemingly greater movements of emotion and feeling, can be easily understood by the following examples: A man may be more upset. He may feel greater sorrow for the loss of all the money he had laid up than he feels for the loss of God's friendship by the mortal sin he committed in a moment of weakness; while at the same time, in the judgment of his mind, the loss of God's friendship is the greater evil. The reality of this judgment is proved by the fact that by God's grace, he would not commit a mortal sin to have his money returned to him. In spite, therefore, of emotions and feelings, our mind and will can place God's interest first. God's interests must be so much first that we place them before all our own personal interests.

The supremacy of God's love over all loves, including the love of oneself, is not so difficult to illustrate. Consider again, the love of a mother for her child. It is one of the purest and most perfect of earthly loves, but what are its characteristics? The interests of her child pass before her personal interests. She prefers that her beloved should possess material advantages rather than that she should possess them herself. She is more content when her beloved child is honored and praised than she would be if the praise and honor were hers. The welfare of her beloved is more to her than her own personal welfare. In our own love of God, if it is to be perfect, it must have these same characteristics. The honor and glory of God, His holy Will, the growth and welfare of His Church, – in a word, the interests of God must pass before all others in the judgment of our mind

and in the determination of our will. This is possible for us, and hence, it is possible for us to love God with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength.

If we consider these words of St. Teresa, it should be clear how practically and how completely St. Teresa has described love when she said: love does not consist in great sweetness of devotion, but first, in a firm determination to please God in all things; second, in avoiding all that would offend Him as far as possible; third, in praying for the increase of the honor and glory of his divine Son and for the growth of the Catholic Church. This description of love shows us how far love extends and all it includes, how love directs all our being to God, and how the commandment of love is in the power of all the children of the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

After this above clear and practical and encouraging statement, St. Teresa adds: these are the signs of love. Her words may come as a surprise to some. They seem like a contradiction of the first statement, but they are only an explanation. Real love itself is so hidden in the soul that we can only know of its existence and its strength by the acts that proceed from it. These acts of the above named signs of love. By these signs, we can be confident of the existence of love in the soul. We can argue from effect to cause.

On account of the sure relation between love and these signs, anyone who possesses them can conclude with confident assurance that he is a real lover of God. It is because the relation between these signs of love and love itself is so intimate, that St. Teresa spoke of these signs as being love itself. These signs give evidence of the love of benevolence. They would not exist without a real spirit of benevolence, of well-wishing in regard to God. This benevolence comes from the fact that we have yielded to the divine attractiveness, and have united and conformed our will to the Divine Will.

If the signs of love are not very prominent in our spiritual life, it shows that love is not very strong in our hearts even though we be in the state of grace. Love can be strengthened by acts of love, and the very signs we have been considering are acts of love. If, therefore, we practice these acts, our love will certainly grow stronger. But our weakness is great, our perversity is profound, our attachment to the things of earth hold us back from giving ourselves to the divine attraction. It is only by God's help, by God's grace, that we can overcome this difficulty, and enter perfectly on the narrow path of divine love. This grace may be had by prayer.

Let us beg of God to give us the grace to live the signs of love that we may all fulfill the first commandment, the commandment of love. Let us ask the spirit of love to come into our hearts and to fill them with His love. Let us pray to Jesus, Our Savior and His holy Mother, Mary, for this great grace.

I will now go on with the Fifth Article of the Creed from the Catechism of the Council of Trent. That Article is: "He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead."

To know the glory of the burial of Our Lord, Jesus Christ of which we have last treated is highly important. Still higher in importance is it to the Faithful to know the splendid triumphs which He obtained by having subdued the devil and despoiled the abodes of hell. Of these triumphs, and also His Resurrection, we are now about to speak. Although the latter presents to us a subject which might with propriety be treated under a separate and distinct head, yet following the example of the holy Fathers, we have deemed it fitting to unite it with the descent into hell.

The first part of this Fifth Article is "He descended into hell." We profess that immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, His soul descended into hell and dwelt there as long as His Body remained in the tomb; also, that the one Person of Christ was at the same time in hell and in the sepulcher. Nor should this excite surprise, for as we have already frequently said, although His soul was separated from His Body, His Divinity was never parted from either His soul or His Body. I hope that is clear. His divinity was in the tomb and also went with His soul into hell.

We will explain now what is meant by hell. In this place, we may throw considerable light on the exposition of this Article. It is to be observed that by the word "hell" is not here meant the sepulcher as some have impiously and ignorantly imagined, for in the preceding Article, we learn that Christ the Lord was buried and there was no reason why the Apostles in delivering an Article of Faith should repeat the same thing in other and more obscure terms. Hell, then, here signifies those secret abodes in which are detained the souls that have not obtained the happiness of Heaven. In this sense, the word is frequently used in Scripture. Thus, the Apostle

says: At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and in hell. In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter says that Christ the Lord is again risen, having loosed the sorrows of hell.

There are different abodes called hell. They are not all of the same nature. From among them, is that most loathsome and dark prison in which the souls of the damned are tortured with the unclean spirits in eternal and inextinguishable fire. This place is also called Gehenna, the bottomless pit, and is hell strictly so-called. Among them is also the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of just men are cleansed by temporary punishment in order to be admitted into their eternal country into which nothing defiled entereth. The truth of this doctrine, founded, as holy Councils declare, on Scripture, and confirmed by apostolic Tradition, demands exposition from the pastor, all the more diligent and frequent, because we live in times when men endure not sound doctrine. Lastly, the third kind of abode is that into which the souls of the just before the coming of Christ the Lord were received, and where without experiencing any sort of pain, but supported by the blessed hope of redemption, they enjoyed peaceful repose. To liberate these holy souls, who in the bosom of Abraham were expecting the Savior, Christ the Lord descended into hell.

I would think that you probably read in your spiritual reading books that purgatory is equal in sufferings to the torments of the damned with that one exception. Those in purgatory know that their sufferings are not eternal. Those tortured in the eternal torments of hell know that they can never and will never leave it. That is why it is so important that we pray fervently for the holy souls in purgatory, because apparently there are so few Masses that are offered up for the souls in purgatory any longer; especially now that the number of priests offering a valid and licit Mass are few.

By the part of the Creed that says "He descended," we are not to imagine that His power and virtue only, and not also His soul, descended into hell. We are firmly to believe that His soul itself really and substantially descended thither according to this conclusive testimony of David: Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. Although Jesus Christ descended into hell, His supreme power was in no degree lessened, nor was the splendor of His sanctity obscured by any blemish. His descent served rather to prove that whatever had been foretold of His sanctity was true, and that as He had previously demonstrated by so many miracles, He was truly the Son of God.

This, we can easily understand by comparing the causes of the descent of Christ with those of other men. They descended as captives; He is free and victorious among the dead to subdue those demons by whom, in consequence of guilt, they were held in captivity. Furthermore, all others descended either to endure the most acute torments, or if exempt from other pain, to be deprived of the vision of God, and to be tortured by the delay of the glory and happiness for which they yearned. Christ the Lord descended, on the contrary, not to suffer, but to liberate the holy and the just from their painful captivity, and to impart to them the fruit of His Passion. His supreme dignity and power, therefore, suffered no diminution by His descent into hell.

Let us then contemplate why Jesus descended into hell: to liberate the just. Having explained these things, the Pastor should next proceed to teach that Christ the Lord descended into hell in order that having despoiled the demons, He might liberate from prison those holy Fathers and the other just souls and might bring them into Heaven with Himself. This He accomplished in an admirable and most glorious manner, for His august presence at once shed a celestial luster upon the captives and filled them with inconceivable joy and delight. Jesus also imparted to them His supreme happiness, which consists in the vision of God, thus verifying His promise to the thief on the cross: This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.

Although Jesus had not yet ascended into Heaven, these people on that day, when His soul and divinity descended into hell, you might say had the vision of God. This deliverance of the just was long before predicted by Osee in these words: O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite. Also, by the prophet Zachary: Thou also by the blood of the testament hast sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water. Lastly, the same is expressed by the Apostle in these words: Despoiling the principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself.

The better to understand the efficacy of this mystery, we should frequently call to mind that not only the just who were born after the coming of Our Lord, but also those who preceded Him from the days of Adam, or who shall be born until the end of time, obtain their salvation through the benefit of His Passion. Wherefore, before His death and resurrection, Heaven was closed against every child of Adam. The souls of the just on their

departure from this life were either born to the bosom of Abraham, or as is still the case with those who have something to be washed away or satisfied for, were purified in the fires of purgatory.

Another reason why Christ the Lord descended into hell, is that there, as well as in Heaven and on earth, He might proclaim His power and authority; that every knee should bow of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Here, who is not filled with admiration and astonishment when he contemplates the infinite love of God for man? Not satisfied with having undergone for our sake a most cruel death, Jesus penetrates the inmost recesses of the earth to transport into bliss the souls whom He so dearly loved, and this liberation from thence He has achieved.

That is something that you are probably aware of, but the main thought is that hell and purgatory are somewhere towards the center of the earth. That is why there is that difference we talked about before, I think, that when God created the angels and the demons, we know that the angels were tested right away and that right away those who rebelled against God were cast into hell. So, where were they cast if the earth was not created before the angels? I think we might have discussed that before from the Summa.

The second part of this Fifth Article is: The third day He rose again from the dead. How indefatigable should be the labors of the pastor in its exposition we learn from these words of the Apostle: Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from the dead. This command, no doubt, was addressed not only to Timothy but to all others who have care of souls.

The meaning of the Article is this: Christ the Lord expired on the Cross on Friday at the ninth hour and was buried on the evening of the same day by His Disciples, who with the permission of the governor, Pilate, laid the Body of the Lord, taken down from the Cross, in a new tomb situated in a garden near at hand. Early in the morning of the third day after His death, that is on Sunday, His Soul was reunited to His Body; thus, He Who was dead during these three days arose and returned again to life from which He had departed when dying.

By the word resurrection, however, we are not merely to understand that Christ was raised from the dead, which happened to many others. He arose by His OWN power and virtue, a singular prerogative peculiar to Him alone. For it is incompatible with nature, and was never given to man, to raise himself by his own power from death to life. This was reserved for the almighty power of God as we learn from these words of the Apostle: Although He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.

This divine power was never separated either from His Body in the grave or from His Soul in hell. There existed a divine force both within the Body by which it could again be united to the Soul, and within the Soul by which it could again return to the Body. Thus, Jesus was able by His OWN power to return to life and rise from the dead. This David, filled with the Spirit of God, foretold in these words: His right hand hath wrought for Him salvation, and His arm is holy. Our Lord confirmed this by the divine testimony of His own mouth when He said: I lay down my life that I may take it again ... and I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. To the Jews, He also said in corroboration of this doctrine: Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Although the Jews understood Him to have spoken thus of the magnificent temple built of stone, yet as the Scripture testifies in the same place, He spoke of the Temple of His Body.

We sometimes, it is true, read in Scripture that He was raised by the Father, but this refers to Him as man; just as those passages on the other hand which say that He rose by His own power, would relate to Him as God. Never forget that in Jesus Christ were two natures: human and divine. His divine power united again to His Soul and He was raised from the dead. He rose from the dead by His divine power.

It is also the peculiar privilege of Christ to have been the first to enjoy this divine prerogative of rising from the dead, for He is called in Scripture the first Begotten from the dead and also the First Born of the dead. The Apostle also says: Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep, for by man came death and by man the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all died, so also in Christ, all shall be made alive; everyone in his own order, the first fruit is Christ, then they that are of Christ.

These words of the Apostle are to be understood of a perfect resurrection at which we are raised to an immortal life and are no longer subject to the necessity of dying. In this resurrection, Christ the Lord holds the first place, for if we speak of resurrection (that is, of a return to life subject to the necessity of again dying), many were thus raised from the dead before Christ, all of whom, however, were restored to life to die again. Christ the Lord having subdued and conquered death so arose that He could die no more, according to the most

clear testimony. Christ rising again from the dead dieth now no more. Death shall no more have dominion over Him.

By the additional words of the Creed “the third day”; we must not think of Our Lord remaining in the grave during the whole of these three days. As He lay in the sepulcher one full day, a part of the proceeding and a part of the following day, He has said with strictest truth, to have laid in the grave for three days; on the third day, to have risen again from the dead. To prove that He was God, He did not delay His resurrection until the end of the world, while on the other hand, to convince us that He was truly Man and really died, He rose not immediately, but on the third day after His death, a space of time sufficient to prove the reality of His death according to the Scriptures.

The Fathers of the First Council of Constantinople added the words “according to the Scriptures,” which they took from St. Paul. These words they embodied with the Creed because the same Apostle teaches the absolute necessity of the mystery of the resurrection when he says: If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain and our faith is also vain, for you are yet in your sins. Hence, admiring our belief in this Article, St. Augustine says: It is no great thing to believe that Christ died. This the pagans, Jews, and all the wicked believe. In a word, all believe that Christ died, but that He rose again from the dead is the belief of the Christians. To believe that He rose again, this we deem of great moment.

Hence, it is that Our Lord very frequently spoke to His disciples of His resurrection, and seldom of His Passion without reverting to His resurrection. Thus, when He said: The Son of Man shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him they will put Him to death, Jesus added: And the third day, He shall rise again. Also, when the Jews called upon Jesus to give an attestation of the truth of His doctrine by some miraculous sign, He said: A sign shall not be given to them, but the sign of Jonas the prophet, for as Jonas was in the whale’s belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

To understand, still better the force and meaning of this Article. There are three things which we must consider and understand:

- 1) why the resurrection was necessary,
- 2) its end and object, and
- 3) the blessings and advantages of which it is the source.

With regard to the first, it was necessary that Christ should rise again in order to manifest the justice of God, for it was most congruous that He Who through obedience to God was degraded and loaded with ignominy, should by Him, be exalted. This is a reason assigned by the Apostle when he said to the Philippians: He humbled Himself becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross for which cause God also hath exalted Him. He rose also to confirm our faith, which is necessary for justification, for the resurrection of Christ from the dead by His own power affords an irrefutable proof that He was the Son of God.

Again, the Resurrection nourishes and sustains our hope. As Christ rose again, we rest on an assured hope that we, too, shall rise again. The members must necessarily arrive at the condition of their Head. This is the conclusion which St. Paul seems to draw when he writes to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians. Peter the prince of the Apostles says: Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead unto the inheritance incorruptible.

Finally, the Resurrection of Our Lord was necessary to complete the mystery of our salvation and redemption. By His death, Christ liberated us from sin. By His resurrection, Jesus restored to us the most important of those privileges, which we had forfeited by sin. Hence, these words of the Apostle: He was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification. That nothing therefore may be wanting to the work of our salvation, it was necessary that as He died, He should also rise again.

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