

Father Goffine's instructions for the 12th Sunday after Pentecost.

From the *Explanation of the Epistles and Gospels* by Father Leonard Goffine.
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The Introit of the Mass is the prayer of a troubled soul, entreating God for assistance against its enemies: Incline unto my aid, O God: O Lord, make haste to help me: let my enemies be confounded and ashamed, who seek my soul. Let them be turned backward and blush for shame, who desire evils to me. (*Ps. lxxix*) Glory &c.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH. Almighty and merciful God, of whose gift it cometh that the faithful do Thee homage with due and laudable service: grant, we beseech Thee, that we may run without stumbling to the attainment of Thy promises. Thro'

EPISTLE. (*ii Cor. iii. 4-9.*) **BRETHREN**, such confidence we have through Christ towards God: not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God, who also hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit: for the letter killeth: but the spirit quickeneth. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.

EXPLANATION St. Paul speaks in the epistle, from which this extract is taken, of the conversion of the Corinthians, which he accomplished not by his own ability, but with the help of God, who made him a minister of the New Testament, a teacher of the true religion of Christ. The New Testament by the grace of the Holy Ghost recalls the sinner from the death of sin, reconciles him to God, and thus enlivens and makes him pleasing to God; whereas the letter of the Old Law, which contains more eternal ceremonies and fewer commandments, changes not the man, but rather destroys him, that is, threatens with death the transgressor of the law instead of freeing him from sin and reconciling him to God, thus permitting him to die the eternal death. St. Paul preached the true religion of Christ, which vivifies, justifies, and sanctifies man. If the ministry of Moses was so glorified by God, that his countenance shone, when he returned from Mount Sinai, where God gave him the law, how much more dignified and glorious must be the ministry of the New Law. Learn from this to esteem the office of preaching, and be humble like St. Paul, who trusted not in himself but in God, to whom he ascribed all honor.

GOSPEL. (*Luke x. 23-37.*) **AT THAT TIME**, Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What

is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said to him: Thou hast answered rightly: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away; leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him: and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him: and the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him, and whatsoever, thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner.

Why does Christ call His disciples blessed?

Because they had the happiness which so many patriarchs and prophets had desired in vain, namely: of seeing Him and hearing His teaching. Though we have not the happiness to see Jesus and hear Him, nevertheless we are not less blessed than the apostles, since Christ pronounces those blessed who do not see and yet believe. (*John* xx. 29.)

What, besides faith, is necessary for salvation?

That we love God and our neighbor, for in these two commandments consists the whole law. (*Matt.* xxii. 40.)

*Who is our neighbor?**

Every man, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, poor or rich, of our faith or of another; for the Samaritan did not ask the one who had fallen among robbers: Who and whence are you? but considered him his neighbor, and proved himself as such by his prompt assistance.

How should we love our neighbor?

As we love ourselves, that is, we should wish him everything good, and when in necessity do to him as we would wish others to do to us, and, on the contrary, not wish nor do to him anything that we do not wish to be done to ourselves. In this way the Samaritan loved his neighbor, and in this he was far superior to the priest and the Levite.

How can we especially practice love for our neighbor?

By the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. [See instruction for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.] Besides which we must rejoice at the spiritual and corporal graces of our neighbor, which God communicates to him; we must grieve for his misfortunes, and, according to the example of St. Paul, (*i Cor.* i. 4.) have compassion for him; we must bear with the faults of our neighbor, as St. Paul again admonishes us: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ. (*Gal.* vi. 2.)

Why should we love our neighbor?

We should love him because God commands it; but there are also other reasons which should induce us to do so. We are not only according to nature brothers and sisters in Adam, but also according to grace, in Christ, and we would have to be ashamed before animals, if we would allow ourselves to be surpassed in the love which they bear one to another; (*Ecclus*, xiii. 19.) all our neighbors are the image and likeness of God, bought by the blood of Jesus, and are adopted children, called to heaven, as we are; the example of Christ, who loved us, when we were yet His enemies, (*Rom.* v. 10.) and gave Himself for us unto death, ought to incite us to love them. But can we be His disciples, if we do not follow Him, and if we do not bear in us the mark of His disciples, i. e. the love of our neighbor? (*John* xiii. 35.) Finally, the necessity of the love for our neighbor ought to compel us, as it were, to it; for without it, we cannot be saved. He that loveth not, says St. John, abideth in death, (*i John* iii. 14.) and he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not? (*i John* iv. 20.) because he transgresses one of the greatest commandments of God, and does not fulfil the law. (*Rom.* xiii, 10.)

What is necessary to make the love of our neighbor meritorious?

It must tend to God, that is, we must love our neighbor only in and for God, because God commands it, and it is pleasing to Him. For to love our neighbor on account of a natural inclination, or self-interest, or some other still less honorable reason, is only a natural, animal love, in no wise different from the love of the heathens; for the heathens also love and salute those who love and salute them in turn. (*Matt.* v. 46.)

PETITION. O my God, Father of mercy! give me a loving and compassionate heart, which will continually impel me to do good to my neighbor for Thy sake, so that I may merit the same from Thy mercy.

What is understood from this day's gospel in a higher and more spiritual sense?

According to the interpretation of the Fathers, our father Adam, and hence the whole human race is to be understood by the one who had fallen among robbers. The human race, which through the disobedience of Adam fell into the power of Satan and his angels, was robbed of original justice and the grace of God, and moreover, was wounded and weakened in all the powers of the soul by evil concupiscence. The priest and the Levite who represent the Old Law, would not and could not repair this misfortune; but Christ, the true Samaritan, embraced the interests of the wounded man, inasmuch as He poured the oil of His grace, and the wine of His blood into the wounds of man's soul, and thus healed him, and inasmuch as He led him by baptism into the inn of His Church, and there entrusted him to His priests for further care and nursing. Thank Christ, the good Samaritan, for this great love and care for you, and endeavor to make good use of His blessings by your cooperation.

INSTRUCTION ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

He bound up his wounds pouring in oil and wine. (*Luke* x. 34.)

The conduct of the Samaritan in regard to the wounded man may be viewed as a figure of the holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction, in which Christ, the true Samaritan, by means

of the holy oil and the prayer of the priest, His representative, dispenses His grace to the sick for the welfare of the soul and often of the body, provided the sick place no obstacle in His way.

Is Extreme Unction a Sacrament?

Yes; because it was instituted by Christ, and by it grace is conveyed to the sick through an outward sign.

Did Christ institute this Sacrament?

He did, for He sent His disciples to anoint the sick with oil and heal them, as the Evangelist writes: Going forth they preached that men should do penance: and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. (*Mark* vi. 12, 13.) We must believe that this unction was not invented by the apostles, but ordained by the Lord. This is confirmed by the Council of Trent, which says: (*Sess. xiv. C. I.*) "This sacred Unction of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord, as indicated by St. Mark, but recommended to the faithful and promulgated by the Apostle St. James, a relative of our Lord." "Is any man," he says, "sick among you? let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven. (*James* v. 14, 15.) St. James could not have said this, if he had not known the institution and command of Christ: to it apostolic and uninterrupted tradition also gives testimony.

What is the external sign of this Sacrament?

The anointing with holy oil, which is blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday, and the prayer of the priest.

What graces does this Sacrament produce in the sick man?

The Catechism of the Council of Trent enumerates the following: first, it remits sins, especially venial sins. Its primary object is not to remit mortal sin. For this the Sacrament of penance was instituted, as was that of baptism for the remission of original sin; secondly, it removes the languor and infirmity entailed by sin, with all other inconveniences. The time most seasonable for the application of this cure is, when we are visited by some severe malady, which threatens to prove fatal; for nature dreads no earthly visitation so much as death; and this dread is considerably augmented by the recollection of our past sins, particularly if the mind is harrowed by the poignant reproaches of conscience; for it is written: "They shall come with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them." A source of alarm still more distressing is the awful reflection, that, in a few moments, we shall stand before the judgment-seat of God, whose justice will award that sentence, which our lives have deserved. The terror inspired by these considerations frequently agitates the soul with the most awful apprehensions; and to calm this terror nothing can be so efficacious as the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. It quiets our fear, illumines the gloom in which the soul is enveloped, fills it with pious and holy joy, and enables us to await with cheerfulness the coming of the Lord; thirdly, it fortifies us against the violent assaults of Satan. The enemy of mankind never ceases to seek our ruin: and if it be possible to

deprive us of all hope of mercy, he more than ever increases his efforts, when he sees us approach our last end. This Sacrament, therefore, enables the recipient to fight resolutely and successfully against him; fourthly, it effects the recovery of health, if advantageous to the sick person.

What intentions must the sick man have, in order to gain these graces?

Since the Sacraments work the more powerfully the better the preparation made by those who receive them, and since by this Sacrament those sins are remitted which we have forgotten, or have not sufficiently known, the sick man should, therefore, receive beforehand, if it be possible, the holy Sacrament of Penance and the blessed Eucharist; or if this cannot be done, he should make an act of perfect contrition, and have the wish to confess if possible. He should, therefore, not defer the reception of this Sacrament to the last moment, when the violence of sickness has already taken away the use of his reason and senses, but he should ask for this Sacrament whilst yet enjoying the use of reason, so that he may receive it with devotion and salutary result.

Is this Sacrament necessary for salvation?

No; yet we should not neglect in case of sickness to partake of the excellent fruits of this Sacrament since the Council of Trent teaches: "To despise so great a Sacrament would indeed be a great sin, an insult to the Holy Ghost." (*Sess. xiv. C. 3.*)

Can we receive this Sacrament more than once?

We can receive it as often as we are in danger of death by sickness; but we must bear in mind that we can be anointed only once in the same sickness.

Why is this Sacrament called Extreme Unction?

Because among all the Sacraments which our Lord and Saviour ordained in His Church, this one is the last we are to receive. But from this it does not follow, as so many believe that one who receives this Sacrament must die soon, but it will rather become a means of salvation for their souls, and if it be for their eternal welfare, will also restore their bodily health.

What does the priest do when he enters the house of the sick person?

He wishes peace to the house, and prays that God may send His angels to protect its inmates, that He may drive away the enemy, console the sick, strengthen and give him health.

Why does the priest sprinkle the sick person with holy water?

To remind him that he should implore of God the forgiveness of his sins, with tears of contrition, in order to dispel the influence of the evil spirit.

Why does the priest exhort those present to pray while he administers the Sacrament?

That God may grant through their prayers whatever may contribute to the welfare of the sick man's body and soul.

For what does the priest pray when he imposes his hands on the head of the sick person?

He begs that God, through the imposition of hands and by the intercession of all the saints, may take the sick person under His protection, and destroy the power of the devil, who attacks one particularly in the hour of death.

What does the priest say at the anointing with oil?

He begs that God, through this unction and through His gracious mercy, may forgive the sick person all the sins which he has committed with his five senses. At the same time the sick person should, in a spirit of humility and with a repentant and contrite heart, implore of God the forgiveness of all his sins.

Why does the priest present the sick person a crucifix to kiss?

To remind him that, like Jesus, he should suffer with patience, and place his whole confidence in the infinite merits of the Crucified, and be willing to suffer and die for love of Him. For this reason the crucifix ought to be presented often to the dying person.

What should the sick person do after he has received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction?

He should use all his remaining strength to thank God sincerely for the benefit he has received, commend himself to the wounds and the blood of Jesus, and meditate with quiet recollection on death and eternity.

How consoling does our holy Catholic Church appear in the continual use of this Sacrament! Having, like a tender mother, received man by holy Baptism under her maternal care; by holy Confirmation given him the necessary weapons against sin, heresy, and infidelity; by the holy Sacrament of Penance purified him from stains and sins; and by the blessed Eucharist nourished him with the bread of life, enriched him with virtues, and secured him against falling, she does not desert him even in the last, all-important moment of death. In that dangerous hour when the dying person, forsaken by all, often by his most intimate friends, or looked upon with fear, lies on his bed of pain, when behind him time ceases and before him a certain, though unknown eternity opens itself, when Satan brings all his resources into play, in order to ruin his soul, and the thought of the coming judgment makes the heart tremble, - in this terrible hour the faithful mother, the Catholic Church, does not abandon him; she sends the priest, her servant, like a consoling angel to his couch, to encourage the sufferer and strengthen the fearful with the divine word, to cleanse the sinner and reconcile him with God by the Sacrament of Penance, to fortify the weak and nourish him with the bread of life, to strengthen the combatant with the holy oil, thus providing him with all the means of grace which Jesus obtained for His Church, to conduct his soul before the face of the eternal Judge, there to find grace and mercy.

Considering this, dear Christian, should you not feel happy to be a member of this Church, should you not thank God continually, and adhere faithfully to a Church, in which it is indeed not so pleasant to live, as in the bosom of irreligion, but in which it is good to die!

* A detailed Instruction on the Love of God may be found under the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. Here we treat only of the love of our neighbor.

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