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JMJ

U.I.O.G.D.

Ave Maria!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, we love Thee, save souls

O God come to our assistance. Jesus, Mary, Joseph please make haste to help us!

+ + + Jesus, Mary, Joseph + + +

VOL. 4 - THE CHRISTIAN'S STATE OF LIFE

SUNDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

### The Good Use of Time

*“And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.” Luke 2:59.*

The possession of sanctifying grace does not depend upon long life, but on the proper use of time. A zealous Christian can gain more merits for heaven in a month than a tepid Christian in many years. Hence, the Holy Ghost exhorts you, brethren, not only to “redeem the time because the days are evil,” but also to “observe the time” that still remains to you. If it were to last a hundred years, O, do not squander a moment of it; but making good use of it, imitate our Lord, increasing not alone in age, but in the grace of God. Take notice, then, that while

*I. All are bound to make good use of present and future time for their eternal salvation,*

*II. Very few attend to this important duty; and*

*III. That we, my brethren, must be particularly careful to “observe the time.”*

I. Time is a very precious treasure. Every year that is given to each one of us, what else is it but a fortune that the great Father of all gives to the human soul as to his beloved child? And what a splendid fortune it is! What a rich and fruitful capital, provided only it is well employed and made good use of! So rich is it, and so precious, that if the Saints in heaven could feel any discontent, they would envy us the possession of it, and the greatest torment of the souls in purgatory, the greatest despair of the reprobate in hell, arise from the fact that they can no longer have that precious gift. It is a common and a true saying, that it is only the sick who know the value of health; he who has never been ill cannot value health properly. Let us then hear what they have to say who have lost time forever.

Blessed souls who now behold and possess God securely, I expect no answer from you; for if I were to ask you how you value time, you would say to me, as my faith teaches me already by the holy apostle St. Paul: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:9). Go and tell all men, you would add, that this is the interest we reap from having well invested the capital of the short time of our lives on earth.

Poor Souls who are still in Purgatory, tell us the value of that gift, which the good God bestows on us, when he gives us this fleeting time to live in. Ah, it seems to me I hear you cry: “If we had only one hour!” If we had that

priceless treasure that you now possess! We do not ask for a whole year, we would be satisfied with a day or an hour; and what terrible torments we could free ourselves from in that short time! We have misspent only a little of the capital that was given to us; some moments here and there we have lost, and on that account we must now suffer the painful loss and unspeakable torment of not being yet able to possess our highest Good; so that perhaps for many years we must bemoan in this lake of fire the loss of our precious time! “Ah, if only one hour were given to us!” This should suffice to teach you who still live on earth what a precious thing time is.

Lost souls, you who are in hell forever, tell us how we are to value time. Suppose that God placed me as a merchant at the gate of hell, to sell time to the reprobate; how dearly would they purchase it, think you? *Rich glutton*, who are now in the midst of the flames, and desire a drop of water to cool your tongue, what would you give me for a few minutes of that time which you spent in eating and drinking? Ah, would be his answer, you ask what I would give; ask rather what I would not give. If I had all the treasures of a thousand worlds, I would give them with pleasure. *Cruel Herod*, I have half an hour’s time here for you; what will you give me for it? Everything; a thousand kingdoms, if I had them! *Despairing Judas*, where are the thirty pieces of silver that you got for your treason? Will you give them to me? I have got one moment of time for you. Ah, would that I could have it to do penance in! Willingly would I endure all pains and torments imaginable for a million of years, if I could only gain that one moment. But alas! Not one of you shall have a single moment for all eternity. “Time shall be no longer.”

Time is the precious gift, the rich treasure that the divine generosity has bestowed upon us all, and upon us alone who still journey through this life to our fatherland; and he has given it to us in such a manner, that nothing really belongs to us on earth but the time that is given us. Time alone belongs to us; whatever else we have belongs to others. Honors, riches, money, food, drink, and clothing, are external things that we cannot have full dominion over to do with as we wish, and they can be taken from us even against our will. Time alone belongs to us, and is fully in our power. No man on earth can take it away from me, unless he deprives me of life. Of course, men may talk to and tempt me, and thus prevent me from doing the good that I wish to do—for instance, from going to Church to hear Mass or a sermon; but they cannot hinder me from employing that same time well or ill, according to my own will and intention. Time is the precious treasure that you, Christians, who are still in the bloom of youth, may naturally look forward to enjoy for a longer period than those who are already advanced in years. You ask: What shall we do with this rich treasure? Shall we squander it in amusement, idleness, and pleasure-seeking? Oh, no; that would be folly indeed! And what must we do with it, then? We must lay it out at good interest, so that we may enjoy the profit from it for eternity.

II. But, alas, precious time, how thou art thrown away, especially by young people! Such is the complaint of even the heathen philosopher Seneca. He says: “A great part of life is spent in doing evil, the greatest part in doing nothing, and nearly the whole of it in doing what one should not do.” What a sad use to make of such a priceless treasure. Let each one examine his conscience, and see how he has hitherto spent the years of his life; will he not find that a great part of them has been spent in doing evil? Perhaps there are some persons who, in their childhood and at the first dawn of reason, committed sins that still burden their consciences, because they never confessed them, or confessed them improperly, through shame, or at all events were wanting in true sorrow and resolution because they remained in the proximate occasion, and never did penance as they ought, and they will be forced to confess that they have not passed a single day on which they did anything really good and meritorious of heaven. Precious time, priceless treasure that is thus thrown away in a manner that cannot be sufficiently deplored! When I think of it, my heart is like to break with sorrow and repentance. I must say with David: “The sins of my youth do not remember” (Ps. 24:7). The first, best, and most precious part of my life, which God has specially reserved for himself, has been snatched away by the devil, with my consent!

Why should precious time be thus wasted? Have we nothing else to do on earth? “Why stand you here all the day idle?” is the question that Christ asks us. Can one of us answer, like the laborers in the Gospel: “No man hath hired us”? (Matt. 20:6, 7.) In fact, young people often say they have nothing to do, they have no household to look after, no children to attend to, and therefore they must do something to pass away the time. Have you really nothing to do? Have you no sins to repent of, for which you still owe a terrible debt to the divine justice? Have you nothing to do? Have you not to gain the friendship of a great God, who is worthy of all love and service from you? Have you not an immortal soul to care for, which, if it is once lost, can never be redeemed

and is lost for eternity? Have you not a terrible enemy to conquer, against whose assaults you cannot be too careful in protecting yourself day and night? Have you not a strict judgment to fear, in which an account will be demanded of every idle word, and your good works themselves will be scrutinized? Have you not to prepare for death, that comes like a thief in the night, to hurry you away when you least expect? Have you not to labor for a long eternity to avoid the never-ending pains of hell, to gain the everlasting joys of heaven? And you say that you have nothing to do! Say, rather: "There is nothing more precious than time; but, alas! Nothing is valued so little nowadays," or squandered so foolishly! There are many who do not do evil nor live in idleness; but they have their hands and heads full from morning till night. With what? Principally with things that do not concern them, and for which they were not placed in this world. Running around the world, crossing the seas, fatiguing the head with study, filling whole reams of paper, working till the perspiration rolls down our faces, laboring the whole day and breaking our rest at night to scheme and plan, with our minds full of thoughts, our hearts full of desires, and all for this earth, all for this miserable vale of tears, in which we are not to live, but merely to travel like pilgrims. Such are our occupations! Have we not another most important business in which to occupy our time? We are born to gain a kingdom which cost the Son of God thirty-three years labor, nay, even his very life's blood, to regain for us after we had lost it.

III. My son, my daughter, observe the time that is given to you for such an important business. Let not a particle overpass you. If you lose a moment, you lose a whole kingdom that you might have gained in it. Do not say: I have time enough to gain heaven afterwards. Ah, afterwards, fatal word that has brought many to hell! There is no Christian among the reprobate, who had not the same intention of working out his salvation afterwards. How can you dispose of future time, when you are not certain of a moment? Even if you still have many years to live, according to the divine decree, can you say that afterwards you will have the favorable time, the acceptable time, the time of peace and salvation that the Sacred Scripture speaks of so often? Unhappy Jerusalem, was the cry of our Saviour: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:42, 44). Make a good use, therefore, of the time which you now have, and do not squander the rich treasure on which you must live for eternity. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good. Let us, my dear Christians, take those words to ourselves, that they may spur us on daily to make a holy use of the time that still remains to us, and that death may not come before we carry out our good resolutions. Alas, what will become of us in that sad night when we shall wish to work good and shall not be able, as Christ warns us: "The night cometh when no man can work"? (John 9: 4.) While time lasts for us, let us, then, hasten to do penance, to gain grace and to attain heavenly glory.

In all documents the year is mentioned as, "the year of our Lord," or "the year of salvation." The words *Anno Domini* are also written in all contracts, wills, and epitaphs. They ought to be written also, and with truth, on all the years, weeks, days, and hours of our lives: Today is the day of the Lord; this hour is the hour of the Lord and of salvation; therefore, it must not be employed for any other purpose, but for the Lord alone and for your salvation. Away, then, with all useless thoughts and words, with all idle and foolish pastimes that have already stolen so many golden hours from you, in which you might have earned an eternity of glory; bid farewell to all these follies forever! In future so divide each day as to give to your body only what is barely necessary for it, and even this do solely for God's sake, to whom all time properly belongs. If you were certain that you had still a hundred years to live, would it be too much if you were to give all that time to God? Would it be too soon for you to commence now to love God alone with your whole heart, who has loved you from all eternity, and created you for no other end but to love him? As God is deserving of all our love, let us, at least, now begin, and with his grace continue to serve him, so that when death comes, be it soon or late, we may be able to say: Go forth, my soul, why shouldst thou fear? Thou hast served God for thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy years, and hast not wasted a moment of that time. Go forth from time to the place where thou hast safely invested thy treasure, to a joyful eternity. Amen.

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