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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 + + +

THE GOOD CHRISTIAN - VOL. III

EASTER SUNDAY

### The Honor Given to God by Patience in Adversity

*“You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.”* St. Mark 16:6.

Would it not have been enough for the Angel to say: You seek Jesus of Nazareth without mentioning that hateful word crucified? Those words would have enabled the holy women to understand who was risen from the dead. The world hates the cross as an instrument of shame; but Christ placed his greatest honor and glory in it, saying to his disciples when he announced to them his approaching Passion and death: “The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.” It was by the cross that Jesus gave most honor and glory to his heavenly Father; it was by the cross that he wished to make the glory of his resurrection still more evident to the world. “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?” The name of the cross of adversity in this life is hateful to our natural inclinations. But considered in the light of faith we shall find that we, too, can give no greater honor and glory to God, Jesus Christ, and even to ourselves, than by patiently bearing the cross of adversity, as I shall now show to the consolation of all who are afflicted.

*By patiently bearing the cross of adversity we give great honor and glory to God: therefore we should consider it an honor and glory for ourselves to be visited with many trials in this life.*

The honor and glory that God expects from us consists in this chiefly, that we submit completely to God, obey him willingly in all possible circumstances, are always resigned to his holy will and decree, and thus acknowledge before the world God’s supreme sovereignty. For you must know, God is not in the least need of his creatures, and he has placed his exterior glory in this, that his creatures are always ready to do, to omit, and to suffer whatever and as long as he wills them to do, to omit, and to suffer. But never does man show this full submission and obedience clearer, or better than in the trials that he accepts from the hand of God, and bears patiently for his sake.

1. To be always in good health and prosperity; to have an abundance of worldly goods; to enjoy a good name and the esteem of men; to live in constant peace, pleasure, and quiet; that is a state that is most in conformity with our nature and all its inclinations, and the object of the sighs and desires of many men. See, I say to you; see how satisfied and resigned to the will of God that man is, who has everything he can wish for; how completely he accepts all the divine decrees; how respectful and obedient he is to the law of God; how thankfully he receives the benefits bestowed on him; how zealous and diligent he is in attending church and

practicing devotion, hearing the word of God, and frequenting the holy Sacraments; how carefully he brings up his children in the service of God. Is he not a good Christian? Truly he is, and a real example of piety; for they who receive most temporal benefits from God are generally the most ungrateful to him, and make use of his gifts for purpose of pride, vanity, dissipation, and vice. But that man is good and pious, and always united with the will of God. Does he not honor and glorify his Creator by the Christian life he leads, and by his resignation to the divine will? Without a doubt he does; but at the same time you cannot help thinking: if I were as well off as that man, I, too, should be satisfied with the will of God, and should willingly thank and serve him. For it is natural to accept readily that which we like, and to be satisfied with one who gives us everything we wish for.

2. Now look at that other man, and see what misery he has to suffer for such a long time. Consider that poor tradesman; how he has to work hard the whole day long to get dry bread enough for himself and his family; that unfortunate citizen, who never has luck in anything he puts his hand to, so that wherever he turns he finds the cross. Consider that poor widow with her family of little children, who has no friends to console her, and is more over exposed to the attacks of her bitter enemies; that wife, who in addition to the poverty she has to bear daily is also tormented by a drunken, good-for-nothing husband, who curses and beats her; that person who has now been for many years in bed suffering great pain. Truly their state has nothing conformable to our senses and desires, but everything in direct opposition to our natural inclinations; but those people are nevertheless just as satisfied as the other in their state, just as resigned and submissive to the will of God; they willingly follow our Lord on the rugged way of the cross, as well as the other who has a road strewn with roses and flowers. While he thanks God for riches, health, and other blessings bestowed on him, they praise, bless, and honor God by their humble submission for the trials and sufferings he sends them. Never do they give the least sign of impatience; and although nature cannot help groaning under the weight of the cross, which presses out sighs from their hearts and tears from their eyes, yet amidst all their weeping and lamentation, they never utter a word but to signify their complete obedience to the will of God. Lord, thy will be done! is their prayer; I am satisfied with what thou hast decreed for me! What honor and glory for God to have such servants! One of them gives more praise and honor to God than a hundred of those who serve him in prosperity. Even a heathen philosopher cries out at the sight “Behold a spectacle worthy of being looked at by God! Behold a pair worthy of God: a patient man laden with misfortune.”

3. And so it is. When I represent to myself a Job, who was so richly endowed with wealth and honors that his like was not to be found in the whole East, and who led such a holy, innocent life, offering every morning a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God; when I represent to myself a Tobias, who as the chief man of his tribe was held in high honor, how grateful he was to God, how diligent in going daily to the temple to adore the one true God, how zealous he was in practicing the works of mercy, in feeding the hungry, and burying the dead. I am indeed rejoiced at the honor and glory thus given to God; but I do not wonder much at it, for I cannot help thinking that it is an easy thing when you are endowed with wealth and honor and crowned with victory to appear before the altar to show your gratitude and kiss the bounteous hand that has been so generous to you.

But when I remember that the same Job after losing all his children, his cattle, his houses, his lands, his wealth, after being covered with wounds and sores from head to foot, and being abandoned by all, and left to sit on a dung-hill, still praised and blessed God: “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21) when I remember how Tobias was deprived of his sight, and thus blind and helpless was exposed to the mockery of his friends and even of his own wife, and yet how he praised and blessed God, rejoicing in the hope of eternal goods, and saying to his son: “We lead indeed a poor life, but, we shall have many good things if we fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is good” (Tob. 4:23); when I hear him in his blindness, not merely abstaining from all complaint, but even thanking God for it. When I consider how those great men thought and acted under such circumstances, then I am compelled to cry out, “God is wonderful in his saints” (Ps. 47:36).

4. They who serve God in prosperity are to my mind like the attendants and courtiers of a king, who are always at the side of their royal master, accompany him wherever he goes, whether it is to the chase, to the theatre, or to the table; dressed in magnificent array, they pay him their respects early and late, and await his commands. But they who serve God in adversity are like those brave soldiers and heroes who fight for their king far away from his presence, and risk their lives and shed their blood for him in the open air, in heat and

cold, amidst constant dangers from sword and bullet, daring death daily from fire and sword. Which of these two classes of men give more honor to their king? There is no doubt that one heroic act performed by a soldier at the risk of his life during a siege or a battle makes the king more glorious than all the attendance and waiting of the courtiers. For the latter only make a vain show and parade about their sovereign's person; while the former by their valor make him illustrious as a conqueror, increase his kingdom, extend his power, and make him respected and feared by his enemies and by other monarchs.

5. To pray long and frequently, to hear Mass daily, to give alms to the poor, and perform other good works of the kind, that, according to most people, is the proper way to be pious and to honor God. It is true those works are laudable, by them we acknowledge our duty to God, and make parade before him, as it were; but I can say without hesitation that one "May thy will be done," spoken from the heart in sorrow and trial, brings more honor to God than a whole book full of prayers, or all the outward works of devotion that one performs when things are prospering with him. Not to be impatient when we have all we wish for; not to be angry when no one contradicts us ; not to hate, when no one injures us; these are virtues found even in heathens who know nothing of the Christian doctrine: "Do not also the heathens this?" Even the devil pays no regard to such virtue. As long as holy Job was prosperous, the wicked spirit had no great respect for him. The Lord asked him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a simple and upright man, one that feareth God and avoideth evil?" But, replied the demon, is any credit due to him for that? He serves thee in a house filled with everything, with riches, pleasures, servants, and good friends. "But stretch forth thy hand a little," visit him with trials, and then thou shalt see if he will remain faithful to thee. And so it is. Certain virtues that are practiced in prosperity are not much to be wondered at. Many a one lives a chaste life with a wife who enjoys all the love of his heart; many a one gives alms, but he is so rich that he does not miss what he gives; many a one never gets angry, because he has no occasion for anger; many a one never nourishes hatred, because no one persecutes him. We must not imagine that these are great virtues. But to be contented and cheerful in the midst of poverty and persecutions, to rejoice at thus having an opportunity of becoming more like the poor and persecuted Christ; to be glad of contempt, shame, and disgrace, because we thus follow the despised Christ ; to bear sickness and suffering willingly and thank God for having given us an opportunity of suffering with our Lord, that is a virtue which makes men dear to God and the Angels ; a virtue which renders the greatest honor to God, to Christ our Redeemer.

Let no one be so ignorant of the designs of God as to think that the trials he sends us are intended to injure us. Let no one be so rash as to complain of God as a hard task-maker, because he sends us sufferings. Let no one be so foolish as to make his cross heavier by refusing to bear it patiently. If the cross brought us no other advantage but that of enabling us to further the honor and glory of our great God, should we not accept it with joy and thanksgiving as a glorious pledge from the hand of God, and like St. Paul boast of nothing but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Let us at least bear our trials with patience for the honor of God in any case we must suffer them; let us do so, then, with the consolation and firm hope that we shall one day be honored in the glorious resurrection, and shall be exalted to eternal joys in heaven by him whom we have honored by suffering for a short time on earth.

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