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JMJ

U.I.O.G.D.

Ave Maria!

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

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

+ + + Jesus, Mary, Joseph + + +

*VOL. I = THE BAD CHRISTIAN*

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Depravity of Cursing

*“These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized.” St. John 16:20.*

There is no doubt that there are many Christians do not really wish that their prayers should be heard. Would to God that this were the greatest fault! For what a shameful, hellish kind of prayer is in daily use even amongst those Catholics who have their mouths filled with imprecations and seek to draw the divine malediction down on earth. To-day I must speak of that abominable language, which is unfortunately so common among all classes of people, and is such a fruitful source of scandal; so that they who are still free from this vice may not be influenced by the bad example of others, and that they who are addicted to this bad habit may at once correct it. For

- I. Cursing and swearing are a foolish and a hellish kind of language, highly unbecoming a Catholic; and*
- II. Of all wicked language, it is that which gives the most scandal.*

I. By the language that a man speaks we generally know what country he belongs to; if we hear a stranger speak Spanish and nothing else, we conclude that he is a Spaniard; if he speaks nothing but Italian, we know that he is a native of Italy; if he speaks French, we know at once that he is a Frenchman. When Peter was in the hall of Caiphas the high-priest, in spite of all his protestations to the contrary he was at once known to be a disciple of Christ, and was convicted of a lie; for the servant said to him: “Even thy speech doth discover thee” (Matt. 26:73), and betrays thee at once as a Galilean.

Now, you can draw the conclusion yourselves. If you wish to know what country many Catholics belong to, you have only to notice the language they speak; from that you will find out where they come from, where they were born and bred, and what country they belong to; whether they belong to the land of the Angels above, or to that of the demons below; to heaven, or to hell.

What sort of a language do the wicked speak in hell? They howl like dogs in their rage; they gnash their teeth with anger; they curse the hour of their birth; they curse their fathers and mothers, the God who created them, the devils who torture them, and the companions of their misery, with whom they must live in eternal hatred and enmity. Such is the language of hell, and it consists of nothing but curses, imprecations, and blasphemy. Therefore, at the last judgment the reprobate will receive from Jesus Christ, when he is passing sentence on

them, no other title but that of accursed: “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire!” there you can curse as much as you will.

The demons themselves approve of that hellish kind of language; these are our pupils, they say; they have acquired as great skill in speaking as the reprobate do in hell; so that, if we were even to forget our own language, we might learn it from them when they come to us; we are always ready to dance to music of that kind. The devil was once seen sitting at the open window of a house, holding in one hand a long sheet of paper full of notes, while with the other he kept on beating time like the leader of an orchestra, laughing all the while and showing signs of extraordinary joy, and crying out: “Well done! bravo! go on!” What was going on in the house? There were four people living in it who were adepts in cursing, the husband and wife, the son and the mother-in-law. There was nothing to be heard from them from morning till night but oaths and imprecations. They had just begun breakfast, and because the son was too greedy and had taken too much on his plate, the mother cried out to him: “May the first bite you eat choke you!” The father followed suit, saying, “Plague take you!” and last of all came the mother-in-law, who wished that he would swallow a thousand devils. This was the music that so delighted the evil spirit that he could not help expressing his joy, and doubtless he considered that he had secured four skilled musicians for his hellish orchestra, which always played tunes of that kind. Alas! how many Christian houses there are in which, if we could see the devil in visible form, we should find him exulting with joy at the cursing and swearing that are continually to be heard therein!

How disgraceful for a reasoning being, a Catholic, a brother and member of Jesus Christ, redeemed by the precious blood of the meek Lamb, and an adopted child of God, to accustom himself to the use of such hellish language, to speak as the damned do; to make himself the comrade of devils, and to bear about the evil spirit constantly in his heart, in his mouth, and on his tongue! Is that, then, the end that we are to work for, although God has created us for the sole purpose of praising, blessing, honoring, and loving him? Is that the wish that we daily send forth to God in heaven when we say the Lord’s prayer: “Hallowed be thy name”? Does that diabolical language harmonize with the solemn promise we made to God in Baptism as Catholics, to renounce forever the devil and all his works, and to devote ourselves, body and soul, and tongue especially, to the praises of God? The first member of the body that God takes possession of in Baptism is the tongue, for when a child is brought to the church to be baptized, the priest does not at once pour the water on its head; no, he first places the blessed salt on its tongue, to show that he whose name is enrolled among the servants and followers of Christ must use his tongue only to praise God, and to promote the divine glory.

Catholics, what do you mean by using such abominable language? Are you so very anxious to belong to the reprobate, even before your time comes to join them? Are you firmly resolved on going to hell? Then wait, at all events, until you die. You will then be able to swear and curse and blaspheme for all eternity, and will not that satisfy you? Why, then, should you be so anxious to anticipate in this life the miserable state of eternal damnation? What is most to be deplored in this evil habit of cursing and swearing is that it is increasing daily, and infecting souls that were hitherto innocent. Therefore I say:

II. This vice gives more scandal than any other sin of the tongue. In the strict sense of the word that language is called scandalous which gives or can give others an occasion of sin. Although there are other sins of the tongue which are far worse and more sinful in themselves, yet there are none which give more occasion to evil than the sins of cursing and swearing. The young learn it from the old, and that without shame or scruple, and without any one being astonished, much less shocked at it. Wherever you go, from morning till night, you may hear horrible imprecations. (So common is it that people are ashamed of it no longer, and it is considered as something to be proud of when one is a master in the art of cursing. Even little children, almost before they are able to speak plainly enough to ask for a piece of bread and butter, and certainly before they know how to make the sign of the Cross, or to say the “Our Father,” sometimes know how to curse and swear and, when they get into a passion, to call down all sorts of imprecations on those who vex them) Pliny writes that a child was once born in Rome with all its teeth perfect, and that the people were thunderstruck at this prodigy and looked on it as a bad omen. But what was there to wonder at? Nowadays enough children of that kind come into the world who have sharp teeth on their lips and tongues even before they have the full number of teeth in their upper and lower jaws, and who know how to curse long before they have learned their prayers. They curse their own parents, or at least give vent to their anger against them by secret murmurs and ill wishes. But, after all, that is

not surprising; the poor children hear nothing else at home. Their fathers curse, their mothers curse, their brothers and sisters, and servants, and neighbors curse; in a word, they hear nothing else. What, then, can the poor little ones do but talk as they hear others about them talking the whole day long? If my father and mother speak that way, they think, and my brothers and sisters, and every one else in the house, there can be no great harm in it. So those young lambs follow the rest of the flock without shame or scruple, firmly believing that they are doing right.

Therefore, woe to those who curse, on account of the scandal they give! So general is the scandal given by wicked and profane tongues that this vice is no longer looked on as shameful, and is left as a legacy to one's children and children's children, and is thus handed down to posterity. With reason does David compare such foul-mouthed people to open sepulchres, from which an effluvium arises that poisons the atmosphere around. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they acted deceitfully; the poison of asps is under their lips." And of whom does he say this? Of those whose "mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Ps. 13:3). But woe to the "man by whom scandal cometh!" A twofold woe to him who by his profane tongue helps to introduce and spread the scandal in a community! For if in the judgments of men he is looked on as an incendiary, who, by not watching his own fire carefully, is the cause of a widespread conflagration; how will it be with him who is caught in the act of setting fire to other people's property? But that is what those foul-mouthed people do every day. They are not satisfied with uttering curses themselves; they must teach innocent souls to follow their example, and thus they spread the inextinguishable fire of a bad habit, not only in their own families, but in the whole neighborhood. Woe to them when their angry Judge will call them to account and inflict vengeance on them for the souls they have stolen from him and made the prey of hell!

And woe to you, parents, fathers and mothers, who are given to cursing and swearing! Every time you make use of such bad language you commit not merely one sin, but as many sins as there are children or servants listening to you, who thus learn from you to speak in the same hellish manner. Ah, parents, woe to you, I say again, whether you are in earnest or not with your curses and imprecations! You should, at all events, remember that you are the occasion of much sin to others. Think of this, and think of it often; this one consideration alone, the harm you do those under your care, should make your hair stand on end with horror. Poor, unfortunate children, how I pity them when they are taught such lessons by their own parents; when those who have given them temporal life deliver them over to eternal death! God has entrusted them to you as his own beloved children by adoption, and he has laid on you the strict obligation of bringing them up with the greatest care for his honor and glory; of teaching them how to know, praise, and bless God; but you teach them to curse and swear. God has entrusted children to you, that by your teaching and good example you may bring them up to dwell in the land of the Angels in heaven, there to praise and bless their Creator forever; but you prepare them from their very cradles to become companions of demons in the land of lost souls, where they will curse and blaspheme their Creator forever. You teach them the language of hell, even before they are sent thither. What a fearful account you will have to render! It were better for you to have a millstone tied round your neck, and to be sunk into the depths of the sea.

An eternal malediction is in store for those who have the habit of cursing: "He loved cursing, and it shall come to him" (Ps. 108:18). He need not trouble himself about it; what he loves shall fall to his lot, when that terrible Voice shall thunder forth in the valley of Josaphat: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (St. Matthew 25:41); that is, for those who take sides with the devil during their lives. Then will he look for a blessing, but will not find one for all eternity: "He would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him" (Ps. 108:18).

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