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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 + + +

Volume 3 = THE GOOD CHRISTIAN

PENTECOST SUNDAY

The Grace of the Holy Ghost

"We will come to him, and will make our abode with him." St. John 14:23.

The Holy Ghost really comes to the soul that receives sanctifying grace, and abides therein as long as that soul keeps itself in grace. This truth is founded on the words of St. Paul: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. 5:5); and: "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?" therefore, "Glorify and bear God in your body" (I. Cor. 6:19, 20). What happiness it is for a soul in whom the Holy Ghost has taken up his lasting dwelling-place! What happiness for a poor mortal to be thus filled with the great God! But,

I. How can I know that the Holy Ghost has really come to me? and

II. If he has come to me, what am to do that he may dwell with me always?

I. An evident sign of the coming of the Holy Ghost is the change of the soul to a new and better state. Let each one ask himself, how is it with my heart? what does it say to me? Have I at last truly amended my life, according to the sermons and exhortations of which I have heard so many, and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost that have been so liberally bestowed on me? Today is the twentieth, thirtieth, fortieth, fiftieth time for me to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, and to pray and sing with the Catholic Church, "Come, Holy Ghost." During that time, have I remained firm and constant in the state of grace? Have I put off the old and put on the new man? Have I since my last confession experienced a marked amendment in my former bad habits? My pride used to be so great that I was unwilling to make any concession to others; have I now become more meek and humble? I was careless of my salvation, and my sole concern was to make money; has that eagerness for the world now grown less? Formerly my unmortified flesh led me into indulging in many impure thoughts and desires; in unchaste looks, touches, words and songs; in dangerous love and friendship with persons of the other sex; have I now become more pure? Have I given up associating with that person? Have I abandoned the proximate occasion of sin? Have I kept away from that house, that place, in which I used to sin before? Formerly I was in the habit of indulging in the devil's language, swearing and cursing; have I corrected that bad habit? Formerly, through curiosity, or imprudence, or talkativeness, or envy, or want of charity, I was given to talk about all that I had seen or heard of others, whereby I frequently sinned against charity and injured my neighbor's reputation; have I now become more careful in that respect? Formerly I was addicted to excessive drinking, which caused much unhappiness in my family, ruined my temporal prospects, and led me into many other sins; have I now become more temperate? Am I firmly resolved to live in a more Christian manner in

future? I used to give scandal to many by my conversation, manners, and dress, and led many a soul from God to the slavery of the devil; do I now lead a more edifying life? Is the stumbling-block removed out of the way? Formerly I was so sensitive that I could not bear the least word of contradiction, and murmured and complained at the least trial or annoyance; am I now more patient and more resigned to the will of God? I used to allow every freedom to my eyes, ears, and other senses, and in all things I sought my pleasure and comfort; have I now a greater love for the cross and Christian mortification? In a word, has my life become changed for the better? If so, then indeed the Spirit of God has come to me, and my soul is now the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, who has wrought this change in me.

But if, on the other hand, things remain in the old state; if I bring the same sins from one confession to another; if I am just as vain, impatient, unchaste, talkative, sensual, avaricious, tepid in the divine service as before; in the same proximate occasion and dangerous intimacy as before; in the same habit of cursing and swearing, the same hatred and discord, the same drunkenness as before, alas, then the Holy Ghost is still far from me! He, has not yet come to me, or rather I have shut the door against him and have refused to receive him; so that it is another spirit, a wicked one, the vain spirit of the world, the unchaste spirit of the flesh, some unruly spirit of hell that has taken up his dwelling in my heart. I will, then, do sincere penance, and drive that spirit away, and sigh forth to Heaven: "Come, Holy Ghost!" The door of my heart is open; fulfill in me the words thou didst speak to Saul: "The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be changed into another man." But it is not enough for the Holy Ghost to come into my soul; for what better should I be if he were to depart from me again? What must I do, then, that the words may be verified in me, "We will come to him, and will make our abode with him"? What am I to do that the Holy Ghost may remain with me constantly and dwell within me?

II. We mortals are wandering along a dangerous road to a long eternity, and if we are not very careful, we may easily fall, or go astray in a thousand false paths which lead to eternal ruin, and, as far as the knowledge of the soul is concerned, we are traveling in the dark, unless a light shines on us from above. The Holy Ghost is this light, for the Catholic Church sings of him "Come, light of our hearts!" Happy he who is provided with this light! As long as it shines on him, he is certain of being on the right road to heaven. But he must be careful that it is not extinguished. "Extinguish not the spirit," as the Apostle warns us (I Thess. 5:19). If you have received the Spirit of God, be careful not to lose him. Hear what St. John Chrysostom says: "The Spirit is extinguished like a light, if you do not shut the door." By the door he means our outward senses, especially *the eyes and ears*, by which the greatest number of sins find an entry into our hearts, the divine light of the Holy Ghost is extinguished, and he himself is driven out of the soul.

Christian, you have now, as I suppose, confessed your sins with true supernatural sorrow; you come down through the church from the table of the Lord filled with the Spirit of God and with devotion, zeal, and splendid resolutions for the future, fully determined to devote yourself henceforth to the service of God. I see, as it were, your holy guardian angel at your right side, calling out with joy to the other Angels the words of the Gospel, in which the divine Shepherd rejoices at having found the lost sheep:

"Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost" (St. Luke 15:6). See how beautiful your soul is, adorned as it is with the snow-white wedding-garment of sanctifying grace, with the precious garb of immortality, with the royal colors of the children of God! The Angels look on you as their brother. Heaven sees in you its heir and sovereign; God, your heavenly Father, regards you as his child; the Holy Ghost, as his bride, newly adorned and beautified. I congratulate you with all my heart! But you must go out of the church again. To-day or to-morrow you will go to that house or company in which, as you know from sad experience, you are apt to hear double-meaning words, or doubtful expressions that savor of impurity, expressions that should never be used amongst us, according to the warning of the Apostle: "All uncleanness... let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints: or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility" (Ephes. 5:3, 4). Shut the door at once stop your ears! The Spirit of God, who is now dwelling in you, will be blown out like a light, if you do not shut the door, that is, your ears; your devotion will grow cold; your good resolutions will be forgotten; you will begin little by little to laugh at that sinful conversation and to take an inward pleasure in it, and so your light will be blown out again. Today or tomorrow you will meet with those companions against whom you are warned: "My son, if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them; walk not thou with them, restrain thy foot from their paths. For their feet run to evil" (Prov. 1:10, 15, 16). Your former comrades will laugh at you, if you

refuse to join them as you did formerly; they will invite you, and do all they can to make you accompany them to that gaming or drinking house, where you know by experience that your innocence is apt to suffer harm. Shut the door at once! Close your ears! “Hedge in thy ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue” (Ecclus. 28:28). The blandishments of such companions are false syrens’ songs, that are intended to lure your soul on to the quicksands. The Holy Ghost will be driven out of your soul like a candle that is blown out, if you do not close your ears on such occasions, and persevere with constancy on the way in which you have commenced to walk. To-day or to-morrow you will meet with friends who will flatter and try to cajole you with sweet words and a pleasing demeanor; away from them at once! Keep the door of your heart tightly closed; nay, avoid the house in which you meet with such people as you would a pestilence; otherwise the light of the Holy Ghost that is in your soul will be completely extinguished.

But if the ears are so dangerous on such occasions, how much more dangerous are not the eyes, if they are not strictly watched! The devil is well aware that the most dangerous doors for us are the eyes, and therefore he tries in every way to excite our curiosity, that he may thus succeed in pouring his deadly poison into our hearts and in blowing out the divine light of the Holy Ghost. Christian soul, you are now full of this light; be careful of it! Many a pleasing object will be offered to your eyes; you will be tempted by the beauty of others, by impure pictures and love tales. Turn away your eyes at once, or else you will lose the light of grace! O eyes, murderers of the soul! when you are too curious, what a beautiful light you put out! If the whole mischief consisted in the mere fact of looking at a beautiful object, such looks would be harmless and no injury could result to the soul; but “the thought follows the look, pleasure the thought, and consent the pleasure.”

The reason of this is evident; for the image of a pleasing object is a sort of enchantment, that offers a kind of sweet violence to the will. Show to the man you wish to bribe a handful of gold; there, you say, that is yours, if you do this or that for me; and he will easily allow himself to be persuaded to accede to your wishes, and that, too, frequently against his conscience. On the other hand, say to him : I will prove my gratitude to you hereafter I will give you a handful of gold as a reward; you will not influence him half so much, because he looks on your hereafter as an uncertainty. This enchantment the devil ventured to use even against the Son of God, in order, as he hoped, to induce him to sin. “He took our Lord to the top of a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory. See, he exclaimed, see those beautiful landscapes, those wide kingdoms, those beautiful meadows and gardens, those magnificent towns and cities; all this I will give thee, if thou wilt only bend the knee before me” (St. Matthew 4:8). But why did he show the kingdoms and goods of this world to our Lord? Could he not have described them to him in detail, and expatiated on their value and beauty? But the crafty spirit knew well the difference there is between having a mere knowledge with the understanding of an agreeable object and seeing it before one’s eyes. For the beauty that one sees is already half coveted.

Even the most brilliant lights of heaven have been extinguished in that way; I mean, the holiest souls have been led into sin by an unguarded look. *Eve*, who was created in the state of sanctifying grace and full of the Holy Ghost, cast a glance on the forbidden fruit: “And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold.” Oh, the hellish serpent had already attained his object! “And she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat” (Gen. 3:6). *David*, a man after God’s own heart, chanced to see at a distance, from the windows of his palace, the beauty of Bethsabee, and at once all his light, his holiness, and his fear of God left him. *The elders of the Jewish people* looked at Susanna, and the light of God became extinguished in their hearts. O eyes, I repeat, murderers of souls! When you are too curious, what a beautiful light you put out! With reason did the prophet Jeremias exclaim: “My eye hath wasted my soul” (Lam. 3:51). Supposing even that the sight of another’s beauty does not at once cause you to indulge in an unlawful desire, do you think that the image which has once filled your imagination will so soon be expelled from it? By no means. The devil will know how to excite it again, either when you are alone, or in the stillness of the night, or even in church and when you are at your prayers.

I refer you to your own experience in corroboration of this. From what other source do the most common and most violent temptations that assail the imagination come, if not from some object that, often quite unforeseen, presents itself to our gaze? And how much more are not such temptations to be looked for, when we deliberately fix our eyes on such objects? Impure thoughts and desires are only too apt to come of themselves without provocation, and to buzz around us like flies; twenty times we drive them away, and twenty times they come

back again. What will it be when we open the door wide to them, and allow them to enter freely by our eyes? Ah, for God's sake, let us not open the gate to our enemy, nor willfully admit the seed of wickedness!

I cannot make a better conclusion than in the words which St. Paul addresses to the Thessalonians: "All you are the children of light, and children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness" (I. Thess. 5:5). Dear souls, filled with the Holy Ghost, whom you have received after a worthy confession and Communion, you are now completely renewed! Children of light, you are inflamed with the fire of the love of God; rejoice in the Lord and bless the Father of light; but be careful in future! "Extinguish not the spirit;" do not put out that beautiful light! Keep fast closed the doors of your senses, especially your eyes and ears, that the dangerous wind may not enter; fly carefully all the occasions in which you know by experience you are apt to fall; "and may the God of peace himself sanctify you in all things, that your whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I. Thess. 5:23). Amen.

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