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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

TRINITY SUNDAY

The Life Becoming the Children of God

*“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”* St. Matthew 28:19.

All we who are Christians have received this happiness, in preference to so many millions of heathens, that we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We have received a portion of the infinite nature of God, we are in close communion and relationship with the Most Blessed Trinity; relationship with God the Father, whose children we are; with God the Son, whose brothers and sisters we are; with God the Holy Ghost, by whose grace we are raised to this twofold dignity of children of God, and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

*I. By the grace of the Holy Ghost received in Baptism we are children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, therefore we must live as becomes children and brethren of God.*

*II. Children of God, brothers and sisters of Christ, what a shame it would be for us to live as children and relations of the devil!*

I. Christians, to what dignity are we raised when we are baptized in the name of the Most Holy Trinity? Do we think and believe what a high honor is thereby conferred on us? It is an article of faith; we are children of God, and brethren of Jesus Christ. We are admitted to a participation of the divine nature; do we then acknowledge that this dignity far surpasses all others in the world, no matter how great they may be? Now, if a worldly dignity requires that we should live and behave in a proper manner, how are we to live and behave as children of God? See how great you are and see what you owe. We are children of God; hence we ought to be better and purer than the Angels, since we surpass them all in honor and dignity. What would it help us to be children of God if our lives were not conformable to our dignity? Although you have an illustrious Father, yet that will not be any honor and glory for you unless you imitate him in your life. “If you are children of Abraham,” said Christ to the Pharisees, when they were boasting of Abraham their father, “do the works of Abraham” (St. John 8:39), and do not be satisfied with mere words. He says the same to us: “If you are children of God, do the works of God;” live as becomes children of God; let it appear in your manners and behavior that you are children of God.

And what sort of a life must that be? See how the children of the vain world act. They consider that life to be suitable and becoming for them which they see and admire in others of a similar condition to themselves, so that we can see how one seeks to imitate the other in everything. It is the fashion, it is the custom, others of my station do the same, they are clothed in such a manner, they have so many servants, they sleep so long in the morning, they keep such a table, they behave so and so in their visits and conversations, in society and assemblies. I am as great as they, and I must do what they do. See, that is what it means to live properly and according to one's station, in the ideas of the children of the world.

Christians! we are children of God by the grace of Baptism, in which we renounced the world and its vain works; we must live, then, differently from the world if we wish to live according to our high extraction and position. We must see, too, how others of the same station live. Now, God is our Father, Christ is our eldest brother, by him we are adopted children of God; consequently, from him we must learn the manners, customs, and usages of our lives. We must carefully examine the attributes of our heavenly Father, that we may reproduce them in ourselves as far as possible, and so be legitimate children of God. Let us live according to our descent, not for the world, but for heaven, which is our inheritance, and let us show forth the likeness of our Father in ourselves. This is the warning of the Son of God himself: "Be ye therefore perfect, in sanctity of life, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

But how? you will say, as Philip said: "Lord, show us the Father." We have never seen him, we know not what he is like. How, then, can we be like to him? Hear the answer that was given to Philip and to us: "He who sees me, sees also my Father." In me you have the image of my heavenly Father and yours. From me you shall take pattern and example, as to how you are to live and to behave according to your high dignity as children of God. Learn of me. What? To be meek and humble of heart, to be temperate and amiable with all who contradict you, to be merciful and patient. He who will come after me must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you, pray for those who persecute and calumniate you, as I have done. Then you will be really children of your Father who is in heaven. See how much is said in a few words. The life and conduct proper for the children of God is the imitation of the life of Christ.

But, alas! how few Christians there are who really practice those virtues! With what reason has not Christ himself complained: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (St. Luke 16:8). They are much more energetic and diligent in adapting and suiting themselves to the world and to their equals among the children of the world, than the others in harmonizing their lives with that of the Son of God, and with the lives of those holy children of God who imitated him. How is it with us? How are your lives regulated? "All you who are baptized, have put on Christ as a garment." When Joseph's brothers had dipped his coat in the blood of a kid, they showed it to their father Jacob, and said, "See whether it be thy son's coat or not" (Gen. 37:22). If we were now to appear before our heavenly Father to give an account of our lives, and the Angels asked: See whether that man has on the garment of thy son or not; dost thou acknowledge his life to be an imitation of the life of thy Son? what sort of an answer would be given? Ah, what little resemblance there is! How the beautiful robe, that I gave thee in holy Baptism, is soiled and torn! No, I can see nothing like my Son in that man, and, therefore, nothing becoming my children. And how would it be if our heavenly Father were to reproach some of us on account of our perverse and vicious lives, as the Son of God formerly reproached the Pharisees: I do not acknowledge you as my children; you belong to your father, the devil, whose works you do. After I had adopted you as my children, and given you that holy name, not only did you not live according to your dignity, as becomes my children, but you lived as children of the devil. What a shame that would be for us, Christians!

II. Can any comparison be made between the servitude and slavery in which a poor man serves another man, in order to earn his bread, and that by which a child of God, an heir to the kingdom of heaven, is held under the yoke of the devil? Certainly not. Now, we are the image of the true God; we become his children by adoption in holy Baptism. What reason can ever grapple with the enormity of the shame when

a child of God becomes a slave of the devil? And yet, all those who consent to a mortal sin are in this slavery, and with their own full consent and deliberation. What a shameful dishonoring of one's self and one's own high dignity! The bare idea of the son of a rich man sinking so low, through his own fault, that he is reduced to feed swine and to satisfy his hunger with the husks thrown to them, is enough to make one shed tears of pity and compassion; what a pitiful thing, then, is it not, to think that a child of the true God should, by his evil conduct and vicious life, abandon his heavenly Father, lose his eternal inheritance and become a slave to the devil, while his soul is perishing with hunger!

And how many there are who sink to that vile and wretched state for the sake of a momentary pleasure, a little money or a worthless gain. Of such as these may the complaint of the psalmist with truth be uttered: When man was in honor he hath not understood; he hath lowered himself to the senseless beasts, and is become like unto them. Their glory they have changed into the likeness of a calf that eateth hay. So he speaks of the godless Israelites, who, after having been so wonderfully led by God himself in the desert, and after having been protected and fed by him, adored a golden calf as their god. Could not the same complaint be made of most Christians? You adore as many new gods as you have sins and vices. If anger makes you violate the law of God, then anger and desire of revenge have become your god. If you look at a person with an impure pleasure, lust has become your god. Are you proud? Then pride is your god. Do you eat and drink to excess? Then your sensual appetite, your belly, is your God.

Like St. John the apostle, I cry out to all those who are still in the state of sin and in the slavery of the devil: Remember, oh, sinner, whence you are fallen; think of the honor and dignity to which you were formerly raised, and the shame and disgrace in which you are now, and, after having considered your wretchedness, resolve with the prodigal son, "How well off are even the servants in my father's house, and I am here among swine." In what an honorable position are the children of God, who love our heavenly Father, as good children ought, of whose number I formerly was; can I not return to them again, if I will? Why do I still remain among the slaves of the devil? I will arise at once, I will hesitate no longer; I will arise and return to my father, by a sincere repentance! I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not worthy to be called thy child! Receive me again into thy favor, and let me hear, to the great joy of the Angels, "I have found again my child who was lost."

But for you, my dear brethren, who are, as I hope, children of God in the state of grace, my conclusion is: Oh, Christians! recognize your great dignity, and, since you are made partakers of the divine nature, be careful not to return to your former vileness by an unworthy life. Such was the warning of the elder Tobias to the friend who was ridiculing his piety:

"Speak not so, for we are children of saints" (Tob. 2:17). Such should also be the daily teaching and warning of parents to their children, and of each individual to himself: Do not speak so foolishly; leave off swearing and cursing; away with quarrels, abusive language, backbiting, lies, and impure conversation; for we are children of God, who must speak an angelic language. Away with impure imaginations and desires, with thoughts of vengeance, or despair, or pusillanimity. For we are children of God, whose hearts must be always in heaven, with their Father, in childlike confidence and uniformity with his holy will. Let nothing of the pride, impurity, injustice, or drunkenness of the world be seen in your conduct, and avoid everything that has the least appearance of sin; for we are children of God, who must lead a holy life. Ah, Christians! do not forget who you are. Wherever you be, whether you stand or walk, in whatever you do, remember, you are the son of a King; let each of you remember and think to himself, I am a child of God. If you are alone in your own house, think, I am a child of God; my Father sees me, although no one else does. If you are in company, think, I am a child of God, and behave in such a manner that every one may see, from your conduct and conversation, from your temperance and modesty, that you are a child of God. As often as the devil with his temptations, the flesh with its unbridled desires, or other men with their evil example, tempt you to sin, forget not what you are. Think, I am a child of God; I will do nothing against God, my heavenly Father, nor against the high dignity I possess as his child. In prosperity, when everything goes on according to your desire, say, I am a child of

God; I value that more than everything else. In adversity, when the sensitiveness of nature prompts to impatience, think, I am a child of God; God is my Father and he will take care of me. My inheritance is the kingdom of heaven; it is there I expect my happiness and unending joy. And that the remembrance of this may be always before you, use these words, for a time, as an aspiration:

I am a child of God; I love thee, my heavenly Father. By this means our thoughts, words, and actions shall be such as are becoming Christians, and we shall insure to ourselves an eternal reward. If we are children of God and live as such, then we are also heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, our eldest brother, and with the elect children of God we shall one day possess eternal happiness in our heavenly country, with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

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