

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

Introit: Ps 27(26):7,8,9,1

Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, grant us always to have a will devoted to You and to serve Your majesty with a sincere heart. Through our Lord.

Epistle: 1 P 4:7-11

Paschal alleluia: Ps 47(46):9; Jn 14:18

Gospel: Jn 15:26-27; 16:1-4

Offertory: Ps 47(46):6

Secret: Lord, may this spotless sacrifice purify us and give to our minds the vigor of heavenly grace. Through our Lord.

Communion: Jn 17:12-13,15

Postcommunion: Grant, Lord, we pray, that replenished by Your heavenly gifts, we may remain always grateful for them. Through our Lord.

June 2, 1946

Azariah says:

“This Holy Mass is really entirely for you, soul of mine. For you, in this hour, for you, to illuminate your heart with rays of hope, and confident hope in the Lord, your Father, Brother, and Spouse.

“Look. It opens with the words of your inner prayer: ‘Listen, O Lord, to the voice of my prayer; my heart speaks to you.’

“Yes, your heart truly speaks to the Lord your God, and with words which do not plead for earthly needs, for physical comforts, for any of those usual requests by man, who asks the Most High for very earthly things. It is not a sin to ask for them. The Most Holy Lord Jesus Christ has taught men to ask for their daily bread. But, if one were to properly meditate on it, He placed this request—for an entirely human need—after the three sublime requests that the Most Holy Name of God may receive the honors due it, that His Kingdom may come, and that His Will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven. The perfect prayer, because it is taught by the Word, like a swallow of loving light, after having soared on high, descends with a swift wingbeat to entreat: ‘Give us this day our daily bread’; but we see that it immediately rises up again from the animal need for food to the spiritual

needs of the soul and flies, rendered light once more by the will to forgive the creature 'as we forgive those who trespass against us,' asking to be forgiven, and finishes by alighting, after having completed a cycle of perfect prayer, again at the feet of Him whom, while adoring, he has called 'Father' at the beginning, asking Him for what a loving Father can do: to defend his children from temptation.

"This prayer, without any lacuna or defect, teaches man *how, why, and for what* he should pray. But man generally does nothing but pray for ponderous material need. And if it were only for the need of bread! But how many, how many foolish, and even offensive, requests prompt man's anxious prayers!

"One who prays only for spiritual things and for the glory of God and the welfare of his brothers is like a star set aflame in the uniform grayness of Mankind. Heaven thus sees these solitary people at prayer, and their entreaty rings out in a golden voice amidst the sing-song of the jarring, raucous, poor requests of ninety percent of creatures.

"Truly, if for an instant the Perfect One were to agree to the requests of imperfection—that is, of the Humanity which willingly loves imperfection—we would see things taking place which would be sinful, for man seldom refrains from praying to have his instincts seconded, to have his vicious desires sated—or, if they did not arrive at sin, they would still be a lowering of the creature, who, forgetful of having a soul, is concerned and anxious only about giving joy to the body.

"But blessed are those who are able to pray for the spirit and for spiritual things. More blessed are those who are able to pray not even to ask for holy things, but to say, 'You, that know what is best for me, give me what's best.' Most blessed are those who come to forget about themselves and asking God to do what is best, but say only, 'I pray that what is for your glory and what may serve to sanctify my brothers and sisters may be accomplished.'

"Then the one at prayer rises to perfect prayer, to that which forgets one's *own* martyrdoms, but entreats for others. The prayer of Most Holy Jesus on the Cross, even loftier than the prayer of obedience in Gethsemane. Loftier because it is perfect charity: 'Father, forgive them.'

Lk 23:34

"When you say, 'Father, not for me, but for the good which so many

brothers can receive from it, so that this good may increase your glory,' then you touch perfect prayer. That of the creature who adheres to his God so closely that he fuses with Him and has the same desires as He: Ga 2:19-20 the good, the sanctification, and the glory of men to give glory to the Lord. The voice of your prayer is this. Your heart speaks this way to God, and God for this reason loves you as a dear daughter.

"I sought your Face and shall seek your Face.' That's it! Just so! Never imitate those who, after having sought the Face of God in the hour of need, no longer seek it when a grace has been obtained or those who, not having received a grace, no longer seek the Face of God as if He were a disliked enemy in their eyes.

"No, the life of a loving soul must be, starting on Earth, what it will be in Heaven: a continuous fixing itself in the Divinity to worship it, honor it, love it, delight in it, and grasp its Words of light, just as we angels do. In necessity? To raise one's spiritual gaze to God. In the satisfaction of grace obtained? To raise one's spiritual gaze to God. In sorrow? To raise one's spiritual gaze to God. In solitudes? To raise one's spiritual gaze to God. To receive help, to thank Him, to share your joy with Him, to have someone showing compassion for your sorrow, so as not to be alone.

"Oh, the joy of being able to keep one's gaze established in the Divinity! Maria, this is the blessedness of Heaven. You see. To fulfill the final touch of the most agonizing and complete Passion of the Redeemer it was permitted that the Divinity should conceal itself from his spirit. And then the Willing, Heroic, and Silent One in pain cast forth the cry of his complete sorrow: 'Father, why have You abandoned me?' Mt 27:46 Mk 15:34

"Oh, if we were to enter deeply into the immensity of pain, the completeness of pain which that cry contains! Heaven trembled at it; the Divinity had to force Itself to resist, not to have mercy, so that *everything* would be made up for, *everything* fulfilled in the expiation of the Humanity *which had abandoned God by following the Tempter*; the Angels trembled before the unfamiliar appearance of the Divinity, for the first time unmerciful, and they wept, meditating and comprehending fully what an abyss of sin Lucifer and the other rebels had achieved in instituting Evil and provoking the consequent sufferings, culminating in those of the Great Victim; they superadored the most

obedient and meek Word, comparing Him to all that was, is, and will be created; and even in the reign of Darkness that cry produced a trembling and exterminated the last tenacious thought that they might one day be forgiven.

Mt 27:50-53

“No, the Earth came unhinged, and the veil of the Temple was torn; the tombs were opened at the loud cry with which the Martyr surrendered his spirit. But it was the horror at the deicide accomplished, the sign given the incredulous and hateful, the start of joy of the just men who were waiting which made the Earth shake, the Veil tear, and the just emerge from the tombs. Oh, while the cry of perfect abandonment shook spirits, *all* spirits, and crushed them in an anguish which had never before existed and never will exist again! For abandonment by God, not being able to fix oneself in God, is the greatest trial for the living and the greatest punishment for the deceased. And here it was not only the trial given to a creature, it was not just the Man who found Himself separated from God, but it was the Word no longer in contact with Thought, it was the Son separated from the Father. God the Son, with perfect love, who no longer felt the perfect love of God the Father and desolately loved alone.

“You, soul of mine, are a victim, but you are not the Great Victim. This desolation is therefore not given you. You have known it so as to understand it; you have consummated it to relieve so many brothers and sisters of the desperation of human ferocity; you have had it at the proper time. No longer now. Lift up the gaze of your soul. Look. Take delight.... And sing the alleluia with me. The Divinity keeps you under its loving gaze, as the hen does with her chicks. Recollect yourself under this blessed radiance.... Let us pause: you stop writing, and I'll stop speaking, and let us worship....

“And now, emerging from the Most Holy Fire, entirely strengthened, purified, set aflame, and willing, say the word of the prayer: ‘O God, make me have a will always devoted to You and let me serve Your Majesty with a sincere heart.’ Yes, may your will never prevail. May it never know weariness or soil itself with compromises or be diminished with reflections aimed at judging whether the Most Holy Will, according to human judgment, gives you orders which do not strike you as the best.

“Always have this real faith that God does nothing but good things.

Act. And even if you do not understand at once the reason for an order, act. And even if the order seems dangerous to you, act. Serve with a sincere heart. And that's all. Good, devoted, faithful servants never censure the orders of their lords. They always submit themselves to their judgment, which, for good servants, is always perfect. Now you are not, indeed, serving a king, a prince, just any lord of the Earth, who, however good he may be, is always subject to error, but you are serving the Lord God Omnipotent, Wise, Good. Therefore, with the calm of one who knows that he is commanded by someone who does not err, listen and act according to his will. Is it an order that gives you joy? Do not grow proud, but act and adore, praising Him, the Lord. Is it an order which torments you? Do not be disheartened, but act and love, obeying Him, the Lord.

“Let us now listen to the Apostle Peter, the great and good Simon of Jonah, who formed himself with a constant and painful effort of good will to become worthy of his Master, without calculation about the future, with the only stimulus of giving joy to his Rabbi and God. Let us listen to the man who was able to turn everything he humanly experienced in himself into a gift for his future ministry, making the human spiritual through the force of love. And he became the father of peoples, the pastor, master, and helmsman of the Church, but, above all, the father, a father of most gentle and firm paternity for all the children whom his Jesus had entrusted to him with the three recommendations after the three professions of love: ‘Feed my lambs and feed my sheep.’ And Peter, the apostle and pastor, speaks to you, little lamb of Christ’s flock. Listen. Jn 21:15-17

“Be prudent and watchful in prayer. But, above all, constantly have charity among you, for charity covers the multitude of sins.’

“He had well understood the lesson of his Lord as an adult Israelite! And he transmits it to his children and brothers who are not perfect, who need continual absolutions for their faults and who do not always have the absolver ready. For death lies in ambush in a thousand ways, and every moment may sound the roll-call before the eternal Judge. Here is the absolver, then—love. Every sin, every omission, and every imperfection—what is it but a momentary or persistent collapse of love in man?

“Mortal, obstinate, impenitent sin is the persistent collapse of love,

the coma, the mortal agony ending in eternal death. Venial sin is a less profound collapse, but it still keeps the soul in a state of numbness. Imperfection is even less. If involuntary, it is scarcely a momentary sagging of loving watchfulness. But a man would die asphyxiated even if he paused too often in breathing, and so a man would die as a result of limitlessly repeated pinpricks as well. He would not bleed to death but would die of exhaustion to the point of agony. And it is no different for the spirit. One must confirm it even when one is wounded with slight punctures. And the absolver that confirms, that also keeps people ready for the roll-call, so that they will not have to fear, is love.

“To make up with love for the more or less serious collapse of love which has occurred. To reconquer the God lost with love. Love for one’s neighbor offered to God so as to have God burn up your faults with his Love and cover them over with his Mercy towards the humble, which recognizes love and restores it with the suitable means, the creature’s wretchedness which so easily stains his soul.

“In this life and the other, faults not deserving damnation are made up for with love. When the spirit has learned to love in such a way as not to offend Love any longer, it is then blessed.

“Do not fear sudden death or the judgment of God. They are not things which cause fear. But fear not fulfilling Charity. Sins against charity provoke God’s sternness. And only one who must meet with that sternness ought to be afraid of death. Others ought not to. Whether it comes slowly or like a swift streak of lightning, it does no harm to the spirit continually washed by charity.

“Charity ought to be so great in you that even a simple gaze should be a caress for your brothers because it is so full of love. And, truly, when God is so alive in the spirit that He is entirely one with the creature, the human eye becomes that source of peace, of affection, whereby whoever suffers feels consoled, whoever is alone feels himself to be with a brother, and whoever doubts reaches faith, for, as in the time of the early Christians, the one that converts is love.

“See how they love one another!?” the pagans would say among themselves. And with this simple and sublime means the Christians made more numerous and convinced proselytes than if they had spoken in learned fashion from dawn to dusk and conducted disputations

and exerted pressure.

“Practice hospitality...without backbiting.’ That’s it—Peter names *one* of the material forms of love for one’s neighbor. But the same counsel is valid for all. Charity must be silent, modest, understanding, and prudent. Our Most Holy Lord Jesus said so: ‘May your left hand not know what your right hand is doing.’ And not just for alms, but also ^{Mt 6:3} for other types of help for misfortunes on a higher level—that is, moral and spiritual ones—charity *must be able to act and remain silent* so as to be free from all dross, for even mere surprise—the intimate thought ‘What’s going on with my brother?’—injures charity, though only slightly. Never judge, not even in your hearts, for the Divine Eye also descends into your hearts and reads. Do not swell with pride, saying, ‘I am holier because I do not have these things which diminish my brother.’ Not holier. More fortunate. More protected. And why? On account of your merits alone? Would it not be a great merit instead to think humbly that God spares you because you are the most imperfect of all, and He does not want your ruin?

“And now, specifically for the voices, here is the word of Peter: ‘Let each one, according to the gift received, place it at the service of all the others as good dispensers of the multiform grace of God.’

“You, voices, have had the gift of receiving the most holy words to pass them on to your brothers. Now then, do so with joy, humility, diligence, and generosity.

“You that are directors of the voices have received the gift of guiding these instruments. Do so with joy, diligence, charity, patience, and heroism. Do not remain seated, saying, ‘The Lord will act.’ You have been told not to tempt the Lord and not to be useless servants. If you remained inactive, waiting for the Lord to act, you would tempt God ^{Dt 6:16} and be useless servants, no longer with any savor to your salt, no longer good for preserving what God has entrusted to you, which should always be protected, for God speaks to the spirit of the ‘voices,’ but the voices are not only spirit, but also flesh and intellect. Watch and keep vigil so that flesh and spirit will not be seduced by the Enemy, who observes them to tempt them, defeat them, and bring them to decline. ^{Lk 17:10} Do not lead the ‘voices’ to pride by exalting them. Do not lead the ‘voices’ to weariness by leaving them without aid. Do not lead the ‘voices’ to decline by leaving them alone. Do not fail in charity towards the ‘voic-

es.' *Their cross is made of heavy lead, and everything serves to make it heavier.* If they did not have love, they could not carry it. Do you wish to make it worse with the boulders of indifference, incomprehension, sloth, and excessive waiting for supernatural aids? God has made you pastors *of these, too.* God has made you brothers *of these, too.*

"Do you hear Peter? Then was the time when the 'voices,' by God's just decree and through the ardor of the early Christians, who truly loved with heroism, were frequent. Here is Peter, who says, 'If one speaks, let him speak as one who sets forth the oracles of God; if one exercises a ministry, let him do so through the virtue communicated by God, so that in everything God will be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is glory and rule forever and ever.'

"The voices cannot appropriate for themselves the words they receive. That would be sacrilegious theft. The priests who are directors of the voices, and of all other souls, cannot for any reason refuse or conduct their ministry with weariness. Because that would mean disdaining the virtue communicated by God to his ministers. And anyone who either abused or left his gift inactive would be committing a sin in the eyes of God.

"The aim of everyone wishing to be just is to give glory to the Lord. And to the Lord give glory, for everything you are, in the ways of Goodness, is because He gives you the means to be such.

"And you, soul of mine, rest in the promise of Our Most Holy Lord Jesus: 'I will not leave you orphaned. I am going, but I shall return, and your hearts will be glad.' Rest in the prayer of Christ: 'Father..., in coming to You I do not ask that You remove them from the world, but that You save them from evil.' The Consoler is about to come, Maria. He is preceded by the prayer and the promise of Most Holy Jesus. He is coming! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"

And, after having adored and praised his Lord, St. Azariah says to me, "Tell Mariano¹ to understand the words supernaturally." Nothing more....

1 Father Mariano De Sanctis, of the Order of the Servants of Mary, who for several years took the Eucharist to the infirm Maria Valtorta