



LIVING WITH CHRIST.

ST. THOMAS SEMINARY

VADAYATHOOR, KOTTAYAM

LIVING WITH CHRIST

Meditations for Priests, Religious & Layman

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Preface

'Living with Christ' is a book of meditation, in introducing it to the public, I am glad to say, it is an attempt at sharing of spiritual experience.

True Christian life has all along been a sharing of the abounding goodness of God, made manifest in the love of His son Jesus the crucified Saviour, and in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father to complete the work of salvation.

These meditations, first given to the clerics of the St. Thomas Ap. Seminary, for retreats and days of recollection, were uniformly well received. This publication therefore, is a handing out of what has been tried and found good. Factually it is a response to requests from many good souls, clerics and religious.

Very scriptural in content, these meditations are both modern in spirit and very practical in their application to life-problems. The book will therefore be a sure guide to a deeper knowledge of, any intimacy with, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The compiler and associates will feel richly rewarded, if in the use made of these meditations, souls are brought nearer to Christ, our great Brother and Benefactor. Hope the book will be well received and rewarding.

Msgr. Francis Kalassery.

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Living with Christ

Part-I Annual Retreats

A

The Eve of the Retreat (With our Blessed Mother)

Thoughts:

- “Come apart into a desert place and rest a little” (Mk 6/31)
1. “Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth”—
Samuel to God (1 King 3/10)
 2. “Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee”
—Jesus to Simon. ‘Master, say it’—Simon
to Jesus (Lk 7/40)
 3. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do”—
Saul to Jesus (Acts 9/6)
 4. And I?—Not with the worldliness and self
conceit of Simon, but with the Simplicity
of Samuel and generosity of Saul: “Lord,
be frank with me and help me to be frank
with Thee”
 5. And then?—The Lord calls me to become
“a faithful priest according to His Heart”
like Samuel and “a vessel of election” like
Paul.

Remember:

1. Christ prays for His Disciples: "Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth" (John 17/70).
2. The anxiety of Holy Mother the Church:
 - a) St. Pius X: "One thing more than all others pre-occupies me; it is the desire to see the clergy quite worthy of the duties they discharge"
 - b) The decree of Vatican II on *priestly training* begins: "Animated by the spirit of Christ, the Sacred Synod is fully aware that the desired renewal of the whole Church depends to a great extent on the ministry of its priests." Decree on the ministry and life of priests: "Holiness does much indeed for priests in carrying on a fruitful ministry."

First Day - Foundation

Patron: St. John Mary Vianney

Consider:

The Three Breathings:

1. at my first birth to life—"The Lord God breathed into his face the breath of life and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2/7)

2. at my rebirth to a new life: "unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn 3/5)-the priest *breathes* into the face of the infant and says: Get out unclean spirit; give place to the Holy spirit-
(baptism ceremony)
3. the third breathing-"when he had said this, he breathed on them and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20/22).

Consequence:

1. First life: man-matter and spirit joined together; man and yet beast
2. Second life: Christian-nature is raised; spirit is changed; supernatural and yet natural.
3. Third life: Priest-man is raised; God and yet man.

Remember:

1. You are a man - so be led by reason
You are a Christian - so be led by faith
You are to be a priest - so become Christ.
2. Before trying to become a saintly priest be a good man and a full Christian.
3. Decree of Vatican II on priestly training has: "by a wisely planned training there is

also to be developed in the students a due human maturity . . . they are to be formed in strength of character, and, in general, they are to learn to esteem those virtues, which are held in high regard by man and which recommend a minister of Christ. Such virtues are sincerity of mind, a constant concern for justice, fidelity to one's promises, refinement in manners, modesty in speech, coupled with charity.

Examine:

1. *My relations with God* "In Thee, O Lord, I live, move and have my being" (Acts 17/28). what place has presence and will of God in my life? My fidelity to spiritual exercises? My love for prayer? My trust in Divine Providence?
2. *Esteem for my priestly vocation:* Am I grateful to God for my vocation? How do I express this gratitude in daily life? Do I aim at an intimate companionship with Jesus?

Readings:

Psalm 22.

Imitation of Christ Bk 1/20; 3/9; 3/47.

II Day—Compunction

Patron: St. Augustine

Thoughts:

1. "Peccatum meum contra me est semper"
David

2. "A deep sense of sin is a good starting point of a holy life" St. Ignatius
3. How ugly I was?...." St. Augustine
3. "Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.... When I am weak, then am I powerful" (II Cor. 12/9-10)

Therefore:

1. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another; so that you do not do what you would. They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh; with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal.5/17,24). "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast away" (I Cor 9/27).
2. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." "Thou shalt never wash my feet...." St. Peter.
3. Sin is a contradiction in the life of a seminarian and yet "I must have the courage and sincerity to admit that I am a sinner."
4. Pius XII: "The beginning of christian perfection stems from humility..... the

knowledge of our own weakness ought to induce us to meditate on the words of Christ "without me you can do nothing."

Examine:

1. Am I really conscious of my weakness and unworthiness? If I am, what do I do to make myself strong and worthy? What trouble do I take to conquer myself? How is my particular and general examine of conscience? Have I real horror of sins? even of venial sins? How do I resist temptations?
2. Do I, in practice, believe in a life of mortification and penance?—Food, dress, sleep, desires, likes, love, hatred....?

Readings:

St. Luke 18/1-27

Imit. of Christ. 1,21,23;24. III,52.

III Day - Conversion

Patrons: Saints Peter and Paul.

Thoughts:

1. I am a sinner; Jesus is the friend of sinners; so Jesus is my friend.
2. My sin is a great wound inflicted on Jesus. But there is a greater wound I can inflict

on Him that is, to doubt His mercy and yield to despair.

3. "In Te Domine, speravi; non confundar in aeternum" (Psl. 70/1).
4. "The mercy of God is the very greatness of God" – St. Augustine.

Therefore:

1. "My grace is sufficient for Thee" –
The Lord to Paul. (II Cor. 12/9)
Hence Paul says: "I can do all things in Him who comforteth me"
2. I leave the past to the mercy of God; the future to the providence of God. I live the present;
3. I am called to be a saint; I can be a saint; I will be a saint.

Examine:

1. Am I determined to reform my life?
2. In what does this reform consist? My fidelity to spiritual exercises? Faithful observance of the rules? Sincerity with my superiors? My relations with my companions? A little more serviceable in community? My weekly confession? frankness to spiritual Director?
3. Is there any particular sacrifice, the Lord asks of me? Any undue attachment to any

object or person? Am I shirking any duty or avoiding any person?

4. What are the resolutions I should take? Are they practical and particular?

Readings:

St. Luke 7/37-50;15/-

Imit. of Christ: 1,1;25; III, 30.

IV Day-Reform

Patron: St. John the Apostle

Thoughts:

1. Decree on Priestly Training says: "Here (in major seminaries) the entire training of the students should be oriented to the formation of true shepherds of souls after the model of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd"
2. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ, Jesus" (Philip:2/5) "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Therefore:

1. *To be a teacher:* (1) I must study first-How earnest I am about my study? Do I give studies that sacredness which is expected from me? On this depends the salvation of so many souls.

(2) In teaching and preaching actual *poverty* is expected from me. "Freely have you received, freely give; do not possess gold or silver nor money in your purses," "The servant is not greater than the master".

2. *To be a priest*: (1) "A pure victim, a holy victim, an immaculate victim"—how precious and beautiful a virtue is my *chastity*? What means do I use to preserve it?

(2) I must "know how to exercise the work of salvation through Eucharistic sacrifice and other sacraments." How is my relation with the Holy Eucharist?

3. *To be a shepherd*: (1) To command I must learn to obey. *Obedience* was the source of glorification to Jesus; so is it to a priest and a seminarian. "He humbled himself becoming obedient unto death even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also exalted Him" (Philip: 2/8-9).

(2) I am to be ordained priest for others. "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto; but minister and to give His life a redemption for many" (Mk 10/45)

Remember:

1. Priesthood demands from me the highest

possible sanctity. This sanctity consists in doing the will of God in every detail of my life. "I do always the will of Him who sent me."

2. I am obliged by my priesthood to live a life of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

Readings:

St. John 15/-

Imit. of Christ: II, 1; 7; 8.

The End of the Retreat

(In the Sacred Heart of Jesus)

1. "Abide in Me and I in You....He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit" (John 15/4-5).
2. "I am with you all days"
 As teacher - in the Bible: Use the Bible.
 As priest - in the Eucharist: Live the Eucharist.
 As shepherd - in the Church: Love the Church.
3. "Jesus is the fruit of the fertile virginity of Mary"
 "Mary is in travail until Jesus is formed in us."
 As a seminarian I grow in Mary unto Jesus.
 Jesus my Love! Mary my Mother!

B

First Day

Day to realise better our Destiny

Thoughts:

1. There are two parts in our Sacred Vocation
 a) A call to the dignity and powers of the priest-hood

b) call to the sanctity required of our priest-hood. This call is the *soul* of our Vocation

2. We may have many occupations but only one preoccupation - to be man of God. We may have many cares but only one worry - to become holy; we may have many interests but only one attachment - to the God of our heart or to the Heart of our God.

3. He whom God knows is famous enough; he whom God loves, is rich enough; he whom God helps, is powerful enough. Hence let us live, and work only for God and His interests. St. Augustine

4. Three Spiritual Equations we must ever remember to live a holy life worthy of our Vocation: (a) Sacredotium=Sacrificium. (b) We cannot do more than God's

will: but we shall not do less. (c) Our life must be guided by divine standards – “*Perfectus ut Pater celestis pefectus est.*”

5. There is only one failure in the life of a priest – the failure to be holy: all else, is at best, waste of time and loss of energy, and perhaps “brilliant dis-order.”
6. True priestly greatness consists in living for God and working for Him alone – worldly greatness is but a caricature and cartoon of all true nobility.
7. Leave the past to God’s mercy, the future to His Providence but make the present – which alone is at our command – and act of God’s love. We cannot do more but should not do less.

Examine:

1. My earnestness – to please God and Him alone?
2. My faithfulness – to daily spiritual exercises?
3. My ambitions – are they holy, and priestly – or worldly and selfish?
4. My motives – are they selfish or purely natural?

5. My judgements - do I view things and events from a supernatural point of view?
6. My deeds - do I act on impulse or guide my actions by Spirit of Faith?
7. My affections - are they purely natural; are they too distracting. Am I supernatural?
8. My talks and thoughts - Do I sin against charity by gossip. Do I make efforts to guard my tongue. Do I allow my thoughts and desires to wander?
8. My ideals - are they high and holy. Do I renew and revive them often?

Reading:

Imit. of Christ Bk. I Ch. 22,23,24.
Bk. III Ch. 26&31.

Second Day

Day to hate more deeply the obstacles to our Destiny

Thoughts -

1. There is only one true evil in our life - the evil of sin.

2. Sinful pleasure is but sugar-coated poison.
3. A healthy independence from all created things for the love of God is the one means to obtain the freedom of the children of God.
4. God is not in need of any special thing to reach you. Why should you be, then, in need of any special creature - to love and serve Him?
5. Sanctity consists in three things:
 - a) deep convictions about supernatural values and standards
 - b) will - power to translate these convictions daily into deeds
 - c) spirit of prayer
6. Compromise in spiritual life leads nowhere. Remember that sacrifice is happy only when *generosity* is complete. i. e. when selfsurrender is total.
7. It does not take so much time, as courage (will-power to make efforts perseveringly) to become holy.
8. Holiness is first and foremost, based on purity of heart or absence of sin, mortal and venial.

Examine:

1. My spirit of faith – Do I live by faith and reason; or do I allow myself to be led by feelings?
2. My attitude to sin – Do I endeavour to avoid every deliberate fault?
3. My temptations – What temptations attack me often or impress me deeply. Do I resist always or do I fall?
4. My reactions – Am I easily discouraged or do I easily give up my resolutions.?
5. My intentions – are they pure enough? Do I view everything before God.?
6. My selfishness – what selfish desires, thoughts and calculations prevent me from giving my best to God?
7. My repugnances – are they not usually based on feelings, and resulting from pride, jealousy etc.?

Readings:

- Imit. of Christ – Bk. I Ch. 1&20
 Bk. III Ch. 9&10

Third Day

Day to reflect on the positive means to reach our Destiny

Thoughts:

1. This life is but a prologue and a preface; the real volume is to follow.
2. Christ is the way, the Truth, and the Life. If there was another way, an easier way, a truer way to holiness, Our Lord would have shown it to us. Now, He taught us only one way—that of the Cross, of mortification and suffering.
3. This way of the cross means also constant death to self or persevering self-denial and hatred of all worldly standards.
4. Jesus knows all: can do all: and loves me. Let me, then, follow Him unreservedly.
5. It is one thing to know the truth: another thing to be convinced of it: and in convictions, there are degrees. Deepen our convictions through mental prayer and strengthen our will through frequent self-denial.
6. A spiritual outlook on all events and things will bring balance of mind and purity of conscience.

Examine:

1. My love of Christ - Is it personal enough

- also in deeds to such an extent as to make it pervade every detail of my conscious life?
2. My obedience - Is it prompt, entire, constant?
 3. My charity - Is it universal and supernatural or, partial and exclusive.
 4. My work - Do I practise purity of intention?
 5. My efforts - Do I sincerely make efforts to improve my spiritual life?
 6. My courage & will - to make sacrifice; to persevere
 7. My confidence - in Superiors and guides.
 8. My interest - in the progress of the church; in the work and needs of my diocese.

Readings:

Imitation of Xt.

Bk. I. Ch. 25

Bk. II Ch. 7 & 8

Bk. III Ch. 1

Bk. IV Ch. 18.

Fourth Day**Day to confirm our Resolutions****Thoughts:**

1. Follow Christ promptly, generously, perseveringly, thoroughly and lovingly.

2. Christianity is the triumph of the failure of the cross, and vice versa, the failure of the triumph of this world. Thus, the wisdom of the folly of the Cross is the centre of Christian asceticism.
3. Purity of heart (sinless life) and generosity of spirit (spirit of sacrifice) build up all holiness.
4. No one can serve two Masters; either he will hate the one and love the other or, he will sustain the one and despise the other—Mth, 6. 24.
5. No gains without pains – is also true of spiritual life.

Examine:

1. My resolutions of the past – Did I keep them or did I soon forget about them.
2. My particular exam – Do I perform it faithfully and perseveringly.
3. My confessions – Am I regular? When preparing, do I think about the resolutions previously taken?
4. My mortifications – Do I simply follow the line of least resistance, or do I try earnestly to conquer myself?
5. My view of my vocation – Do I realise its responsibilities and the obligations I have to make myself fit for the same.

6. My courage - My will to persevere, to implement my resolutions.
7. My prayers - Do I try sincerely to acquire the art of, and a taste for prayer.

Readings:

Imitation of Xt.

Bk. II Ch. II & 12

Bk. III Ch.17 & 34

Bk. I Ch.25

Bk. III Ch.23 & 50

C**I Meditation**

God is love (I Jn. 4, 16)

The Retreat is a personal encounter with God. For a fruitful personal encounter, we must know:

- The nature and character of the other person
- His relationship with us
- His personal attitude towards us

You are going to be God's priests and ambassadors: ambassadors must represent faithfully the one who sends them. Hence they must know:

- God's intimate life

- His thoughts and sentiments, to use the human language.

Therefore, we shall ask ourselves this question "what is God"? We are fortunate, for God Himself tells us "what He is"

- God is love

Read Is. 49, 15 and Jer. 31, 3 and I Jn. chaps. 2,3 and 4: God insists that He is Love and only Love.

Read also Ps. 136 (135) and Wisd. 11,21-26,28

- God's nature is love.
- Hence love is the source of all his actions and interventions in our history.
- If God is God and deserves to be praised, it is precisely because He is Love

Read also Lk. 15; 23, 29-43 and I Cor. 13, 4-8

- In these passages we can clearly see the characteristics of God's Love
- There is no greater Lover Than God

Read Eccli. 35, 17-21

- In this passage, we see how God is interested and involved in each one of us His children. He does not take rest until He satisfies fully our true human yearnings and aspirations.
- Christian, how fortunate you are to know

that you have such a God, who loves you most tenderly.

- Priests of God, great is your privilege and responsibility; to represent and reproduce in your person God-Love.

Prayer (1st Conference)

Ps. 141 (140), 2: Let my prayer be counted as incense before Thee,
And the lifting up of my hands
as an evening sacrifice.

Read also Ps. 63 (62), 1; Ps. 42(41), 2; Tim. 1; 2, I Act. 12, 5; Eccli. 35, 21. Rev. 5.8.

God is Love

- Love, by its very nature, implies "Offer and Response."
- Hence, interpersonal communication
- Awareness of a mutual, personal, loving and interested in-each-other presence.
- Instinctive self surrender and unconditioned trust.
- This awareness of God's personal loving presence, spontaneous self-surrender and unconditioned trust constitute the Spirit or essence of Prayer: it is this attitude that is called Religion.
- Results: a deep sense of joy and peace, whatever may be the circumstance of our life.

: Strength in the hours of extreme weakness

: courage in hours of uncommon trials and dangers.

- But man is made of soul and body:
- Hence, vocal prayer is demanded by our very nature, but it must be the true expression, outward expression of the above described Spirit of Prayer.
- Vocal prayer, without the above mentioned Spirit of Prayer is only lip-service, most displeasing to God.
- Man is an individual
- Hence individual prayer
- Man is a member of society
- Hence community prayer and worship: the best form of which is the eternal Sacrifice of Christ: Holy Mass
- Value of prayer
- No true prayer is useless
- Prayer is a force that changes the face of the universe and adds something new under the sun.
- Every man of prayer is a healthy powerful Lung in the body of Christ, that pumps up a fresh life giving Blood, that gives health and strength, growth and perfections to the whole Body.

II Meditation

God love is three in persons

“O Lord, although he has sinned, yet he has never denied the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; but he has always firmly believed”

(Rom. Rit. Ordo commendationis animae)

Read and meditate on: *Col.1,15-17; Heb.1,3*

God is love:

- Love, by its very nature is not solitary
- It demands plurality of persons
- In order that Love may exist, there must be at least two persons.
- But, true love is always fecund: hence a third person is absolutely necessary.
- Consequently, since God is Love, in this God, who is one in nature, there are three persons. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- Hence, he who believes in the ‘Trinity’ believes that God is by nature Love.
- And he who really believes & Confesses that God is Love, cannot be condemned.

Read *Col. 1,15-17; Heb. 1.3.*

- Paul speaks here of God the Son, whom he calls “the image of the Father, the first-born of all creation, the cause of all

creatures; This Son of God is before all things, the be-all and end-all of all things."

- And whenever Paul speaks of the Son of God, he speaks of Him as the glorious Christ-man, to whom he unequivocally attributes the above-mentioned epithets,
- Paul refers always to the concrete historical God-Christ: Man.
- Hence the topic here is:

Christ-Man as the cosmic creator and Mediator.

Christ-Man as the mystical Redeemer our Mediator.

Consequently, God the Father, begets eternally His Son as the Word-to-be-Incarnate. There was no moment, to use a human language, when the Son was not the word-to-be-Incarnate = Christ-the-Man.

But the Word-to-be-Incarnate has no meaning independently of us as we are. Hence we are involved in the very eternal generation of the Son. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the Word-to-be-Incarnate. -Hence along with the Father, through Christ, we are involved in the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: God-Love: What a consoling

revelation! With God the Father, through God the Son-Christ in the Holy Spirit

2nd Conference:

Sincerity

Heb. 4, 13: "And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eye of him with whom we have to do."

Read and meditate on Ps.138 (139), 1-18

God is Love

- Love demands interpersonal communication
- mutual awareness and response
- This response in man Spirit of Prayer or Attitude of Friendship or inward communion with God
- Love demands *total offer* and *surrender*: nothing is reserved
- Love demands total openness: nothing hidden and secret
- Love demands total immediacy: nothing and no one in between
- only in these circumstances, there can be a true interpersonal communication.
- The sum total of all these circumstances = Sincerity
- Sincerity

- with God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- With ourselves
- With others.
- Sincerity with God; to accept God as He has revealed Himself to us through Jesus Christ.
- Sincerity with ourselves: to accept ourselves as we are
- Sincerity with others: to accept them as they are
- Sincerity with God, with ourselves and others=*Humility*

Then and then only, man accepts and respects himself as the Image and likeness of God.

Sincerity is an indispensable social virtue for those to whom it has been revealed that they are the Images of God's own nature in Christ

III Meditation

A God-Love and I

Eph. 1, 3-12 (Read and Meditate on it)

God Is Love:

- Love, by its very nature, demands plurality of Persons.
- Hence, the Blessed Trinity

- The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who eternally love one another.
- *In this Eternal Love, I am personally involved*
- *In the Very Generation of the Son, I stand involved*
- For the Father generates His Son as The Word-to-be Incarnate:
Christ the Man Because of Whom I Now Exist: I am intimately connected with him in his very eternal generation.
- The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Word-to-be-Incarnate: Hence, my relationship with the Holy Spirit from the very beginning, in eternity:

Conclusion:

As I am now a concrete individual and a Christian, from eternity I have been caught up in the eternal life and love of the *Three Divine Persons*.

B Whence and Who am I

Wisd. "God made man imperishable: He made him in the image of His Own Nature
Wisd. 2, 23

Christ, the image of the Father: read
II Cor. 4, 4; Colos. 1, 15-18; Heb. 1, 3.

Man, the image of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit): *read*: Gen. 1, 26-27; Rom. 8, 29.

God is Love

- Hence plurality of Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The Son is born of the Father: the Son is, then, the image of the Father
- And the Son is eternally born of the Father as the word-to-be-Incarnate-*Christ-the-Man* (So Scripture, that is God Himself tells us)
- Hence Christ-the-Man is the image of the Father
- And the phrase "Christ-the-Man" has no meaning apart from men, i. e. apart from *Me as I am Now*. Hence, my personal and eternal involvement (by God's positive wish) in the intimate life of God.
- Because of Christ-the-Man, *in* Christ-the-Man, *through and by* Christ-the-man, and *for* Christ-the-Man, *I am what I am*
- Christ-the-Man and I; and Christ-the-Man: and I *never one without the other*.
- Hence, I am the image of Christ-the-Man
- Consequently, the image of the Father the image of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son as Christ-the-Man.

- Therefore, the whole man, body and soul is truly the image of God, the image of His Divine Nature.

Hence, 1) Whence am I? I am from God, from the Father, the Son as Christ-the-Man and the Holy Spirit.

2) Who or what am I? the very image and likeness of God. Man, see how God loves you!

A) Social Consciousness

Read and meditate on: Gal.6,10: I Cor.12,12-30 (in particular v.26)

Eph 4,25: Rom.12,3-13.

God is Love

- Love demands interpersonal communication
- No interpersonal communication without mutual awareness
- Hence God wants from us a loving awareness of His Loving Presence
- As we are in the Loving Presence of one and the Same God,
- We must be aware of one another's equally loving presence, for things equal to the same thing are equal among themselves and our conduct must be according to this mutual awareness.

- Hence, a) Regard and respect for the others,
- b) Respect for what they are, for their ideas, respect for their customs that are good,
- c) Strict watch over my own conduct, lest I disturb, obstruct or harm God's images
- d) I will ever remember that I am not alone and that I must do to others what I want others to do to me.

B) Responsibility

Read & meditate on: I Cor. 4,1-2: Math: 24,45-51

Maths: 25,14-30; Lk.12,42-48; 19,11-26.

God is Love

- Hence conscious loving interpersonal relations.
- Hence my prayerful attitude towards God
- Hence my sincerity 1) to God, 2) to myself, 3) to others.
- Hence my social mindedness or consciousness
- I am not alone and I am not meant to be alone
- I am part of the whole

- Others are God's images as much as I
- Others are as important in God's plan
- My life, my conduct, my actions must be such as not to disturb, obstruct or harm others.
- Hence "Responsibility" is another virtue I must cultivate
- It comes from the Latin word "Responder"

It implies a) the awareness of my functions and those of others

b) the good will and determination to act as I should in the circumstances I find myself, whether I am alone or with others.

c) Constant effort to integrate my actions with those of others so as to obtain a harmonious functioning of the One body of Christ for the glory of God.

IV Meditation

Man is the image and likeness of God

Results or effects of this truth.

Ps. 8, 5: You have made him little less than God....

Read and meditate on Ps. 8, 3-9; Eccli. 17, 1-14; Rom. 8,29.

God is Love

- Because God is Love man is God's image-
through Christ in the Holy Spirit
- Hence, the whole man, body and soul, is
the image of God, who is one in nature
and three in persons
- Just a little less than God
- He has Intellect and Will (free will)
- He has operative faculties
- He rules over brute-creation
- He lends to creation his mind and his
heart
- He is a microcosm - he is the universe
itself.
- Everything is for him and he for God

I Cor. 3, 23: the world, life and death, the present and the future, are all your servants; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

- But man is all this because God wants
him to be so
- Love likes to give and give to the full
- Love identifies itself with its object: God
cannot identify Himself with anything,
which is not the image of Himself.

Tagore: Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.

4th Conference:

Kindness

Rom. 12,16: Treat everyone with equal kindness
 Read and meditate on I Cor. 13, 4-7; Rom. 2,11;
 Eph.6,9.

I Thes.4,9-12;Colos.3,25

Lk 18,9-14; James 2,1 (Read it well)

God is Love

- Love demands interpersonal communication
- Sincerity for a true interpersonal communication
- Sincerity a) With God
 b) With oneself
 c) With others
- God is sincere with us individually and collectively See Jon. 31,3
 Rom.2,11; Eph.6,9; Colos.3,25; James 2,1
- Sincerity with God and with oneself leads to sincerity with others
- But insincerity with others is an infallible sign that one has no sincerity with God and with oneself.
- Sincerity is humility and leads to kindness
- Kindness = to have regard for others as they are
 = to treat others as they are
 : Images of God.

- Fruits or effects of this kindness
- sense of ease, joy and peace in one another's company
- mutual trust and respect: hence progress and well-being
- Neither superiority nor inferiority complex
- Complete absence of Pretence and Dissimulation
- Yes is yes and No is no.
- Mutual respect and esteem.

V Meditation

The End of Man

Why am I here in the world? What is the Meaning of life for me?

Rom. 8,28-30: With all those who love Him
. . . . He shared His Glory.

Read and meditate on Rom. 8,21-30: I Cor. 10,31
Jn. 14, 6: Is. 43,7: Is. 48, 11: Is. 6,3 & Ps. 19,1

God is Love

- Love is not a need or want
- Love is a superabundance - an overflowing to something else.
- Love is not receiving, but *giving and giving only*
- God created us to His image and likeness because He is Love

- Not because He needed us
- But in order to give and to share
- *God* made *Man* little less than Himself.
Cfr. Ps. 8
- Hence, everything is below man; not worthy of him
- And God created Man to His image and likeness in order to give him, not something that is below man, but something that is above man.
- Man is just little less than God: hence only God is above man.
- God, therefore, created Man in order to give *Himself* to man.
- God is the only end or goal for man.
- That is, Man is meant for the Glory of God
- Glory means visible personal Presence
- The Glory of God - God Himself in Person
= God - Love
- Hence, away from God, man is out of place: like a fish out of water.

Tagore: Away from the sight of Thy Face, my heart knows no rest, no respite, and my work becomes an endless toil in a shoreless sea of toil.

St. Augustine: Our heart is restless, until it rests in Thee!

5th Conference

Purity

Philip: 1,10. This will help you to become pure and blameless

Read and meditate on Philip. 1,9-11: Colos.1,22:

Eph. 1,4:

II Petr. 3,14. Gen. 1,21-22.15-31,

Rom. 1,18-32

God is Love

- Man is *the* image and likeness of God
- God enters into partnership with man
- interpersonal relations
- Virtues necessary
 1. Sincerity
 2. Social Consciousness
 3. Sense of responsibility
- Brute-creation reflects God's perfections
- God's imperfect image
- Has its own function and use: to be at the service of man
- Man has to use it according to his nature
- and according to its nature.
- Man is given *the use only* and *not the abuse*
- Purity means, therefore, to behave as God's image and likeness, with a prayerful attitude, with sincerity, with a sense of social consciousness and responsibility and

to make use of all things for our good and perfection and *not to abuse them*

- Hence Abuse = Impurity
- Purity-a) *in thought*: to think of things and persons as God thinks of them: as they are in their nature as made by God. With respect and reverence.
- b) *in words*: to speak of things and persons as God speaks of them with respect and reverence
- c) *in looks*: to look at things and persons as God looks at them with respect and reverence.
- d) *in actions*: to use things and persons as God uses them with respect, reverence, in the right time and right place as demanded by their nature, as perfect images of God as regards persons and as partial images of God as regards brute-creation.
- Hence Purity means Self-Respect and respect for others in thoughts, words, looks and actions.

VI Meditation

The Incarnation

Read and meditate on: Jn.1,1-14; Jn. 3,16-18;
John 15,13-14; I Jn. 4, 9-10; Gal. 4,4-5

Gal. 2,20: Phillip. 2,6-7.

Gal. 4,4-5=When the appointed time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law, and to enable us to be adopted as sons.

- Christ's Incarnation -1. Union with man
 -2. My redemption
 -3. God's eternal plan realized for us in time and space.

God is Love

- True love is fecundant never sterile
- Hence God-Love created us as His images and likeness in, by, through and for His Son as Christ-the-Man.
- True Love longs for Union: love that falls short of personal union is not true love.
- Hence, Christ's Incarnation: mankind's longing satisfied.
- True Love is constant: Love is strong as death.
- True love, if necessary, *restores and enriches* heedless of the cost
- Hence, Christ's Passion and Death on the Cross
- "Now He showed how perfect His Love was!" Jn. 13,1.

6th Conference

Brotherly Love

Math: 22,37-40 Jesus said:

You must love the Lord Your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind; This is the greatest and the first commandment.

The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets also.

Read and Meditate on 1) Rom. 13,8-10

Cor. 13,1-13: Gal. 5,13-15- I Thes. 4,9-12:

2) I Jn. 4,11-12: I Jn. 4,20-21: I Jn. 2,10:
I Jn. 3,14: I Jn. 3,18: (deeds)

3) Jn. 13,34-35 (read it well) Jn. 15,17: Jn. 15,17: Jn. 17,21-23 (three times !)

4) Lk. 10,25-37 (the good Samaritan)

Jn. 4,5-9 (You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?)

God is Love

- Hence, He has created *us all* to His own image and likeness

- Hence, He has communicated to *us all* His One and the Same Divine Nature and life

- All Men and Women are Equally Partners with God in His Life and nature

- Hence, all equal in the sight of God
- We must be sincere with God, with ourselves and with others,
- In order to be really sincere with others, I must esteem and love all men without any distinction.
- Paul says, "All baptized in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ: and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3,27-29)
- Hence, I must love all
- It is a debt: I am bound to love my neighbours as I am bound to love God
- Love of neighbour is a sign of the Love of God
- if it is present, then God's love too is present
- if it is absent, God's love too is absent
- Love of neighbour is a sign that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, sent into the world as its Life.
- Love of neighbour must be in deeds and not only in words.
- The non-Christians must be able to say, "See, how the Christians of India love one another: their religion is truly divine:"

VII Meditation

A) My Baptism and Ordination

Math: 28,19: Go.... Baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 13,3: Then....they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Read and meditate on: Ga. 1,3, 26-27:

Colos. 2,12: Rom. 6,3-4.

Ga. 1,4,6-8: Eph. 3,19: Eph. 13-14.

Recall to mind Eph. 1,3-12: Colos. 1,15-16

Baptism the greatest event in my life

God is Love

- Out of Love, God chose me in Christ from all eternity
- chose me to be His son with Christ and in Christ
- Because of Love, Christ-the-Man came and died for me on the Cross
- And all this took place before I came into space and time
- In my history, God-Love and I met on the day of my Baptism
- Mutual total surrender and acceptance
- My personal intimate Union with the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit

- I became God's partner in His Own Life
- I became God's son—His true image
- I became a member of the Family of God
- Flesh of his flesh and bones of his bones.

B) God's True Presence

Read and meditate on: Gal: 2,20 (think over and over): Jn.14,20:

Jn.14,23: Jn.14,17: Eph. 2,4-6 (read it well)

God is Love

- I live, not I, but Christ lives in me;
- True Love seeks intimate personal Union
- not for its own advantage.
- True Love seeks to communicate itself in person-its very Life
- God is True Love
- Hence, He unites Himself with me on the Day of my Baptism and remains so united to me as long as I wish it.
- He communicates to me His One Life: I live but not I: God lives in me.
- God and I have one and the same divine life
- Hence I am a humano-divine being
- My actions too are humano-divine
- They are the actions of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

But this life is at present in a stage of growth

- God gave it to me and I must, with His help, make it grow.
- This divine Life-Sanctifying Grace-God Himself in Person.
- The degree of my participation in this Divine Life depends on me
- God wants me to have as much of the Divine Life as I wish
- It is enough to really wish it - and we have it.
- The continual growth of this life = merit
- My glory in heaven depends on the degree I possess this Divine Life.

Faint Example: A piece of black cold iron, when put into a furnace, becomes bright red, full of fire: the fire and iron are one.

7th Conference

Zeal: Sign of True Life

Rom. 1,14-15: I owe a duty to *Greeks just as much as to barbarians*, to the *educated just as much as to the uneducated*, and it is this that makes me want to bring the Good News to you too in Rome.

Read and meditate Act. 17,16: I Cor. 9,16
(meditate deeply on it) Math. 28,16-20:

Mk.16,14-18

God is Love

- He shares with me His own life
- A new live Being=The "I-Christ" humane-divine Being
- Life . . . its characteristics
- a live being
 - a) Feeds itself
 - b) Grows
 - c) Multiplies or propagates itself.
- Self-propagation is another sign of true life - self evident truth
- Any form of life tends to propagate itself
- If it does not, it dies.
- I am now the Live I - Christ Being: No other life is greater than this
- Hence, it naturally demands to be propagated
- Hence, our duty to make Christ known and accepted by all men
- A true duty, from which we cannot escape.
- A life-long duty
- For the fulfilment of this duty, we *must be ready to do anything, to suffer anything and to go anywhere!*
- Remember your duty: *to preserve, to increase and to propagate the divine life with the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit.*

8th Conference

Spirit of Work

Read and meditate on Gen 2,5-15; Prov. 6,6-11; Prov. 28,19; Eccli. 22,1-2; I Cor. 9,1-23; Act. 20,35; I Thes. 4,11-12; 5,14; II Thes. 3,6-12; Gen. 2,15: God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it.

God is Love

- Hence, God creates and will ever continue to create
- Man is God's image and likeness
- He is God's partner in Life
- He is God's partner in Works: man is called upon to continue God's work and improve.
- For this task, man has intellect, will and operative faculties.
- Man is meant to Work
- Work is according to his nature
- Work, then, is noble.
- Had not even man fallen into sin, he would have to work, for work is a participation in God's privilege of creation.
- Manual Work is good and noble
- Whatever it is, it ennobles man
- It gives him dignity, respect, freedom, joy
- It makes him resemble God in His infinite capacity to give

- To give is more honourable than to receive.
- We must be examples for our countrymen
- Work=Good Use of the things given us by God

VIII Meditation

Sin * Death * Judgement * Hell

Read and meditate on 1) Gen.3,1-24:

Ps.54(55),12-13;

Eccli.15,11-21: Eccli.21,1-4; 23,16-30:

Is.1,2-3: 1,10-17: Is.1.18

Lk.15,11-32. Jn 19,6 (Kill him)

2) Wisd. 2,23-24: Rom. 5,12: Rom. 6,23:
James 1,13-15

3) Hebr. 9,27: Rom.14,11-12:
Matth. 12,36-37: Mt.25,31-46.

4) Matth.25,41: Matth.13,28-30:
Lk. 16,19-31: Mk. 9,42-48.

1) Ps. 54 (55) 12-13: Where it an enemy who
insulted me, I could put up with that!
Had a rival got the better of me,
I could hide from him

But you, a man of my own rank

A Colleague and a Friend

To whom sweet conversation bound me
In the house of God?.....

God is Love

- Hence, He created us all to His image and likeness

- He makes Himself our end and goal
 - He gives us His Own Nature and His Life
 - He makes us One with Him
 - He makes us His children and heirs
 - We are humano-divine beings
 - But by sin we lose everything
 - What is sin - 1. The wanton rejection of God
 - 2. And turning to a creature
 - Nature of sin - Pride and Rebellion: Man says "No"! to God's love
 - Want of a prayerful attitude, sincerity etc. etc.....
2. Rom. 6,23: The wage paid by sin is death.
- Man, the image and likeness of God, is not meant to die, but to live with God and in God forever and ever.
 -God made man imperishable..... Cfr. Wisd. 2,23-24
 - What is death? Complete Death=of soul and body
 - The death of the sinner....despair and loss.
3. Hebr. 9,27: Men only die once and after that come judgement....
- No one can escape this judgement
 - How will it be done? By illumination - man will see himself as he is

4. Matth. 25,41: Go away from me to the eternal fire.....
- Hell exists.....
 - It is a state of indescribable torment and suffering
 - It is the sinner's eternal No to God, Who loves him still.
 - Man is meant for God and he sees it, but he says "No"! all the same, and he does this out of sheer malice and wickedness. He willingly remains obstinate in his sin and rejection of God's love.
 - Hence his torments - hence the fire
But he who loves God cannot go to hell.

9th Conference

A) Christian Optimism

God saw all that He had made and indeed it was very good! Gen. 1,31

Yes, Lord, you love all that exists;
You hate nothing of what you have made;
For, had you hated anything,
You would not have framed it! Wis 11.25

1. *Introduction:* reference to creation through Christ, in Christ, and for Christ.
Created to the Image of God, which is Christ
2. As all are patterned in Christ, they cannot but be good

- Everything that God has made is good and holy
- Good: everything according to its nature as intended by God
 - : everything has a meaning and a purpose, though we may not see them clearly.
 - : everything for Man, Man for Christ and Christ for God cfr I Cor. 3,22.
- Man created to the Image of God, that is, Christ
- The whole Man: body and soul
 - : nothing evil in the human body: everything in accordance with God's will, which is most holy.
 - : Hence, respect and reverence always and everywhere.

B) The Practice of Virtues

Because of the above truths, the practice of the different virtues is most natural, such as charity, humility, patience, purity etc....

- Charity: esteem and regard because of the image of God
 - : readiness to help, to console etc....
- Humility: to accept oneself and others as we are ? neither more nor less.
- Patience: to accept others as they are

- Purity: to know things and persons as God knows them
 - : to think of things and persons as God thinks of God
 - : to see things and persons as God sees them
 - . to speak of things and persons as God speaks of them
- : Impurity: the abuse of all the good things God has made.
- Forgiveness; because we are members of one body, Christ.

IX Meditation

A) Suffering

Colos. 1, 24: It makes me happy to suffer for you as I am suffering now, and in my own body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of His Body, the Church.....

Read and meditate on: II Cor. 1, 3-7: II Cor. 4, 8-11: Philip. 3, 10: Hebr. 10, 32-39: I Peter. 4, 12-16:

Suffering: 1) No Solution for those who are not in Christ

2) For those who are in Christ

- a) Visible sign of God's eternal Love
- b) Mark of honour, distinction and privilege
- c) Undeniable certificate that they are Christs'

partners in Divine Life, in His redeeming presence in the world.

God is Love

- He has made me to His own image and likeness
- He has modelled me on His Son Christ-the-man
- He has made me live one and the same life with and in Christ
- Christ redeemed the world by His suffering and death
- I am co-redeemer with Christ
- If I am co-redeemer with Christ, I must suffer with Him
- Hence, once justified in Christ, my sufferings are no more penalties for sin, but acts of positive Love of God and redemption for the world in Christ and through Christ.
- But his is an honour and a privilege.
- Readiness to suffer is an infallible sign that one is alive in and with Christ. To suffer is to re-act in the physiological sense. Reaction is a sign of life.
- Hence, the just do not suffer for sins, but because they are alive in and with Christ, because they do not live with their own life, but with the life of Christ.
- In baptism, we have paid everything for

our sins: in Baptism we truly suffered and died with Christ for our sins. Ever afterwards, we live, we work, we suffer, we die, in order to redeem the world, in order to preserve, to increase and to propagate the Divine Life in us and in others.

B) The Death of the Just and Heaven.

Read and meditate on Rom. 6,3-11: Rom. 6,20-23
II Tim. 1-10: Apo. 14,13: I Cor. 15,54-57.

II Tim. 1,10: He abolished death and He has proclaimed life and immortality through the Good News.

God is Love

- Hence, He gives to us His own Life - Man is meant to live for ever.
- By sin, man lost this life and immortality
- Man does deserve to die in the full sense of the word.
- But because God loves him, God substitutes Himself for man
- Christ died for him on the Cross
- Christ's death is man's death due to sin
- But God leaves man free to make Christ's Death his own
- as payment for sin.
- It is in Baptism that we, in our history, make Christ's death our own death, which we pay for our sins.

- My Baptism is my death for my sins and as this death takes place in Christ, my payment is complete. I am no more in debt, no more a slave and a dead man, but a free and fully alive man in Christ, a live man destined to live forever.
- But what about the event that we usually call Our Death?
- It is no more death or penalty for sin
- It becomes Christ's redeeming sacrifice
- Christ died not because of His sins, for He had none
- He died to redeem His brothers and sisters.
- Likewise, once justified in Christ, I die to redeem
- Christ's death=Act of Adoration, Act of Worship to the Father
- Likewise, once justified in Christ, my death is a pleasing Act of Adoration, of Love and of Worship
- My death is no more death but life.
- My Death=Christ's redeeming Death
- Hence, it may be in pain and Suffering, according to the will of God
- But this pain and suffering are Christ's pain and suffering
- Hence, they are not a debt for sin, but an act of love and generosity offered to God and to the world that needs redemption.

- In the Death of the just, we shall clearly see the value and utility of our life - nothing in our life is useless: whatever we have done, whatever we have been, now appears in all its Christ-like splendour: it fills us with joy and contentment.
- This is Our Heaven
Happy are those who die in the Lord.

Part-II Monthly Recollection

Theological Virtues

A. Faith

1. Virtue of faith

Patron - St. Thomas the Apostle

Ejaculations - "My Lord, my all"; "Lord, that I may see".

Private Sp. Reading - Rom.3/21-31; Heb.XI;
Imit. III 30, 39; 59

Thoughts - 1) Our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou perhaps would have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water" (Jn.IV.10) "If thou didst know!" - This is the out-come of faith. It is an assent of the mind to turth. Under the influence of divine grace and of our will, this theological virtue inclines our mind to assent firmly to reveled truths, because of the authority of God.

2) Jesus always enquires before performing any miracle, "Dost thou believe?" - Again, He asks the disciples: "Whom do men say that the Son of man is?...But whom do you say that I am?". And Simon Peter answered: "Thou art

the Christ, the Son of the living God”
(Mt.16/13-16).

3) “The mystery of salvation is to be presented to the students.this will also help them to make their faith the foundation and the inspiration of their whole lives and will give them the strength to embrace their vocation with personal dedication and a joyfull heart” (D. T. P. No. 14). “The students must learn to live according to the evangelical ideal, to deepen their faith, hope and charity” (Ibid. No. 8).

The Sanctifying power of faith

Fatih, thus bringing us into communion with the divine thought, has an important part in our sanctification.

1) It is the beginning of justification. “God’s way of justification through faith in Jesus Christ, meant for everybody. .” (Rom.3/22). “Eternal life is knowing thee, who art the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (Jn. 17/2).

2) It is the foundation of the spiritual life. The deeper the foundation, the higher the edifice may rise without danger to its stability. So Christ always tried to strengthen the faith of His disciples. The council decrees insist upon the same in the case of seminarians and priests.

3) It is the root of sanctity. Faith furnishes the soul with a rich-life-giving sap; it also lends solidity to the soul to withstand the spiritual storms.

4) It unites us to God and makes us share in His thoughts and in His life.

5) It is a source of strength to the soul because:-

a) It shows us what God has done and what He is incessantly doing for us; (b) it keeps before our eyes the eternal reward for all our labours and sufferings; c) it reminds us that since God is our strength and support, we have nothing to fear inspite of the attacks of the devil and the world. "And this is the victory which overcometh the world: our faith" (I Jn.5/4).

6) It is a source of comfort in life and death, because it reminds us of the doctrine of the communion of Saints.

7) It is a source of manifold merits-the act of faith itself is highly meritorious. Again, faith renders meritorious our other acts.

How to practice the virtue of faith

1) We should not allow ourselves to be led by the spirit of the world: "By living in the world, let priests know how not to be of the world, according to the word of our Lord and

master. By using the word as those who do not use it, let them achieve that freedom where by they are free from every inordinate concern and become docile to the voice of God in their daily life" (D. M. L. P. No. 17).

2) We should shun intellectual pride and should not refuse to accept what lies beyond our comprehension.

3) We should humbly thank God for His great gift of faith and that all the more at the sight of so many unbelievers.

4) Pray fervently to, "increase our faith" and make often acts of faith.

5) Try to perform all the spiritual exercises with full attention and devotion so as to manifest and stabilize our faith.

6) Study well the sacred sciences and also the secular subjects in order to get rid of ignorance and intellectual pride, the great obstacles to faith.

7) Try to view everything in the light and with the spirit of faith. "The just man liveth by faith". Read the Gospel with attention and relish the maxims of Christ and be happy to follow Him.

8) Strive as much as possible to propagate this faith by prayer, by words, by example and above all by charity.

How do I foster the spirit of faith

1. Do I remember constantly the saying of the Bible: "without faith it is impossible to please God".

2. Do I remind myself often of the presence of God?

3. Have I the habit of seeing God dwelling in my soul?

4. Do I offer all my actions to God by good intention?

5. Do I profess with great reverence the "mystery of the Church?"

6. How far I am successful to behold God in my superiors and brothers and in all those with whom I come in contact?

7. Is my faith vivid enough to see the providence of God in all the daily events of my life here-in all the rules and regulations? In the food and boarding? in sickness and health? in success and failures? in honours and humiliations? in abundance and in want? in rest and work?

8. How do I behave in the chapel? before the Eucharistic Lord? during the spiritual exercises.

9. How far am I convinced of the truths that a single venial sin is a greater evil than all

the evils' of the present life? the supernatural merit granted even to the smallest act of virtue is worth more than all the wealth of this world?, my vocation is one of the most precious graces that God can give me?

10. Do I often thank God for the great gift of faith and pray fervently with the Apostles "Lord, increase my faith".

2 The Dimensions of Faith

Patron: Christ the 'Amen' of the Father

Invocations: { 'Lord, to whom (else) shall we go?
You have the words of eternal
life. (Jn.6, 68f.)
'Lord, increase our faith.' (Lk 17,5)
'Lead, kindly light! (Newman)

For personal reading: Epistle to the Hebrews,
chs 11-13

Morning Meditation: 'The Heroes of Faith' (Hebrews ch. 11)

Second Meditation: The Dimensions of Faith

1. The Biblical man can be defined only in the light of faith: The Bible as such is not trying to Prove the existence of God. It is the other way round: The Bible is the product of faith. It tells us of a God who follows up man with very special concern. This interest of God in man amounts to be a mystery (Ps. 8)

The mystery is that in the Bible man is created in the image of God; man is a unique creature (Gen. 1, 26ff.). Man's worth shines forth only when he is compared to God himself and his Christ. Apart from God, the mystery that is man falls and he becomes an idol. Autonomy means death for him (Gen. 3, 3). Our era seems to fall back into this self-cult of man by making himself the rule of his behaviour.

2. **Faith that is knowledge:** This is a very significant aspect of biblical faith. Faith is based on history and therefore it has its roots on this earth itself (Ac 10, 36 ff.)

3. **Faith as hope:** Though faith has an empirical aspect, its transcendental element cannot be overlooked. Man has to go out of himself in order to discover him fully. This invisible world is his at present only through hope. Under this aspect faith and hope are identifiable (Heb 1, 1; 2 Cor 5, 7; Eph 2, 8; Rom 8, 24).

4. **Faith as certainty:** Heb 1, 1 invites us to think of this important dimension of faith: '... makes us certain of realities we do not see.'

5. **Faith as truth:** That which renders our faith so certain is the aspect of truth in it. We can rely on it because it is true and its object intransient and eternal (2 Cor. 4, 18b).

6. **Faith that invites to obedience:** Faith makes us to say 'Amen' unreservedly because it is before truth that we bow down our head by so doing. And, Christ is in the full sense the 'AMEN' of the Father because he was most true and obedient to his heavenly Father. We can also share this 'amen' through him (2 Cor 1, 20).

7. **Faith that is freedom:** Because faith is truth, those who live by faith live in freedom and enjoy it: 'Truth shall make you free.' (Jn 8,32). It is not a freedom that does away with law, but fulfills it (Mt. 5, 17).

8. **Faith and love:** The law of love in the Bible has to be understood in the light of the covenantal relationship of God to man. Understood thus, the first commandment cannot but be the love and service of God. It is through a compassionate and forgiving love that God meets man in the Bible. Man has to meet his neighbour also on the same terms (Dt 5, 10; 6, 5; Ps 121 6; 144, 20; Mt 10, 37; 22, 37 etc.)

9. **Faith as vocation:** God of the Bible is essentially a God who calls. This call in general is a call to work for salvation. Hence the intimate personal aspect of the same. Yet, the corporate or communitarian aspect of the same should not be minimized. This is the vocation and privilege in faith of Christianity-to be the witness and sacrament of salvation of the world.

There are also special vocations in this witnessing community of Faith. Priest-hood is an important vocation in this respect. If Christ himself did not assume it on himself of his own accord (Heb 5, 5f), we should be also quite disposed in our hearts to take up this vocation only if we are called. Hence any adacious attempt to appropriate it by any and every means would be disastrous to oneself and to the community of faith.

10. Faith that reforms: If we are called, then the accompanying aspect is that we are 'sent'. If we are 'sent', we have to be faithful to the one who sends us. Christ could perfectly claim this. He could say that he communicated to men only what he saw by his Father and was commissioned by him to be communicated to men. Even of the Holy Spirit the Scripture testifies that, he as the 'sent of Christ, gave to the world only what he had received from him. (Jn. 17,6; 16,14; 14,25).

A call that is lived by faith will be marked by heroism. It will reform but all reforms will be genuine only in so far as it promotes the mission entrusted to us of converting the hearts of men to God and not taking them away from the source of life. Let us test our enthusiasms and see if we are pulling down or building up by

our impatience for change or by anticipation of changes. 'I have guarded them and none of them is lost (Jn. 17,12b.)

In order to be an effective reformer, the first object of reform should be ourselves. Reforms inspired by our own convenience and popularity are not to be relied upon and are apt to strike back on ourselves sooner or later. Let us anticipate thinking, but let us not anticipate action. No reformer who is a genius would do otherwise. Let us not hesitate even to disappear from the stage even without seeing the fruit of our thinking in action, but see it only from afar as Abraham and other heroes of faith in the Bible: 'These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar....' (Heb 1,13).

11. Faith that endures: Our faith can make us also signs of contradiction: 'the world hated them because they are not of the world' (Jn. 17,14). But ours is a faith that celebrates even death (Eucharist) because ours is a leader who did not find his end in the tomb.

12 Christ the author and pioneer of our faith: This is perhaps the most important dimension of the New Testament faith that Christ is the guarantee and leader of our faith. In this sense faith and salvation converge (Heb. 2,10; 12,2; Jn. 14,1;

Rom 10,9, etc.) Faith is above all his gift and so to be increased by growing in His company through prayer and good works.

To ask oneself:

1. Am I making these dimensions of our Faith the subject of serious reflection often?

2. Does it help me to grow in the conviction of the demands the Christian faith has upon me?

3. Am I inspired to go deep into one or other of the above aspects of faith and see that by so doing, even the unbelief in me can help me to grow in belief?

4. Do I appreciate the aspect of faith as the gift of God and try to foster it by prayer and other good works?

3 To Bear Witness To Christ

Patron—St. Thomas the Apostle

Ejaculation—My Lord, My God.

Private Sp. Reading—St. Jo. 5/30-47; Acts 1/6-9; Imit. 11. 12.

Read—Seminary Rules on Spiritual training; on Relation with others.

Thought: 1) "You shall be witness to me to the end of the Earth" (Acts 1/8) This was the great mission-given by Our Lord to His Apostles.

They were sent to preach the Gospel to all the nations and to confirm it by their very life.

2) The Heavenly Father was the first to bear witness to His Divine Son who was the "Revelation of the Father", through the patriarchs and prophets in the Old Testament. In the Gospels we find the Father speaking to the world only three times and all those times He was bearing witness to Christ: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him" (Jo. 12/28).

3) The Holy Spirit was bearing witness to Jesus through St. Elizabeth, and the holy Simon and Anna in the temple.

4) St. John the Baptist was specially sent to announce to the world the coming of the Saviour: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He was for testimony, to bear witness to the Light, that all might, believe through him" (Jo. 1/6, 7). "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

(Jo. 1/29).

5) The whole life of all the Apostles bear witness to Christ and they finally sealed it with their blood. The charity of Christ presseth me" (St. Paul).

6) The holy martyrs and saints who are

"the glory of Christ" were living witnesses of Him.

7) It is the duty of every christian, by virtue of his Baptism and Confirmation, to bear witness to the saviour by his life. "Since Jesus, the Son of God, manifested His charity by laying down His life for us, no one has greater love than he who lays down his life for Christ and his brothers. From the earliest times then, some Christians have been called upon-and some will always be called upon-to give this supreme testimony of love to all men, but especially to persecutors" (Const. Church no. 42).

8) As a seminarist I am all the more bound to witness to Christ according to my special vocation. "They should so live in His paschal mystery that they will be able to initiate into it the people entrusted to them" (Training for priesthood no. 8).

How to bear witness:

1. We are to stand witness to Christ by following Him closely, by living His life. "As my Father has sent me I also send you."

2. He is our example and model which we have to imitate in all details. "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also do."

3. This is done by practising the virtues of Jesus. St. Paul says: "Imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 4/16). "The students should learn to live according to the evangelical ideal...so that by the practice of these virtues...they may safeguard and strengthen their vocation and grow in zeal to win all men for Christ"

(Training for priesthood no. 8)

4. As Christ makes himself one with us, (He is the head of the mystical body whose members we are; He is the vine and we the branches), try in all earnestness to feel, act and live with Christ in full identity. "The life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me" Gal. 2/20).

5. Ask yourself often together with St. Paul: "Who will separate me from the charity of Christ?" And exclaim with St. Thomas: "Let us go and die with Him" (Jo. 11/16). "The students may learn to live in intimate and constant communion with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit" (no. 8).

6. Try to shed the light of charity on the truths of faith - ie. see Christ in all, love them and help them as much as you can. "They should seek Christ also in the bishop who sends them and in the people to whom they are sent,

particularly the poor, the little ones, the sick, the sinners and the unbelievers" (No. 8).

7. With your full heart and soul pray fervently for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ and prepare yourself to become a good apostle. "If any one love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16/22).

8. Be encouraged by the promise of Christ; "I will confess you before my Father who is in heaven if you will confess me before men."

Self examination

1. Am I fully conscious of my duty to bear witness to Christ?

2. Do I feel happy over this sublime duty and find delight in my priestly vocation?

3. How am I fostering my love towards Jesus by observing all His commandments and counsels?

4. Do I find delight in gaining, the special graces of Jesus through the different sp.exercises?

5. Am I earnest in studying the mysteries of Christ and in imitating them?

6. How much do I desire to live and labour for my Lord and make others to know and love Him?

7. Do I find Christ in my superiors, brothers and in all those whom I deal with?

B. The Hope of Salvation

Patrons—The Immaculate Mother of God and St. Francis Xavier.

Private Sp. Reading – Rom. VIII, Ps. 21. 2 Mach. VII
Imit: 1. 25.

Ejaculation – Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in you. Lord, I have trusted in you; I will not be confounded. My God, my all.

Thought – 1) St. Paul exhorts the Thessolonians to hold fast to “the Hope of salvation.” In this holy season of Advent Our Holy Mother Church announces the glad tidings of the first coming of our Lord with His salvific mission. Thus our hope in the second glorious coming of the Saviour is confirmed. Let us prepare ourselves to go to the celestial abode for the eternal union with the ‘Emmanuel’ (God with us).

2) Hope is a theological virtue that makes us desire God as our highest good, and expect with a firm confidence eternal bliss and the means (remission of sins and help of grace) of attaining it, because of God’s goodness and power.

3) Hope, while showing us the perfect object of our happiness detaches us from worldly honour and pleasures; none of them is perfect enough to satisfy us. They are not at all per-

manent. We know this from our own experience which casts a shadow upon our joy even when we possess these goods. "Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas."

4) Hope unites us to God by elevating our souls from creatures and bearing them towards heaven. This is finally effected through a happy death when the Heavenly Bridegroom comes to lead the beloved soul to the eternal bliss. "I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am, there you also may be" (John 14/3).

5) Hope imparts efficacy to our prayers and obtains for us all the necessary graces. "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you" (John 16/23).

6) Hope is a source of fruitful activity, because it begets holy desires to possess God; it increases our energies through the prospect of a reward which is far in excess of our efforts; it infuses into us that courage and endurance which give us the assurance of success, in spite of all the cares and troubles of life. "Every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things. And they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one" (I Cor. 9/25). So says St. Paul "we are saved by hope", (Rom. 8/24) and we are to attain that salvation by the same hope.

7) The decree on the training for priesthood also emphasizes the need of developing this virtue in the following words: "The students must learn to live according to the evangelical ideal, to deepen their faith, hope and charity, so that by the practice of these virtues they may acquire the spirit of prayer. . ." (no. 8).

How to foster our Hope -

1) Meditate often and attain strong convictions about the power of God, His goodness and the glorious promises He has made to us. "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him given us all things? who shall accuse against the elect of God? God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died. Yea, that is risen also again; who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Thus from the part of God our hope is absolutely certain.

2) We are to be fully conscious of the part we have to play in our salvation and should try to fulfil it in every way possible.

a) We should be on our guard against presumption and despair. We should not expect from God Heaven and the graces necessary to reach it without our taking the means He has

ordained. This is to forget that if God is good, He is likewise just and holy. Again we should not through pride, tempt God by rushing into occasions of sin.

Despair is another sin against Hope. We may be frequently tempted, tortured by scruples and at times overcome in the struggle. Still there is no room for despair. We should stand fast and fully abandon ourselves to the grace of God.

b) Try to acquire detachment from the goods of earth. As St. Paul says, let us "seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3/1-2).

c) Entertain a filial confidence in God, relying on Jesus who has become the centre of our lives. "To be with Jesus is a sweet paradise." In failures and in success let us raise our hearts to heaven and hold fast to our Hope in Our Lord.

d) Let us imitate the saints who were eager to leave this life for eternal bliss: "I long to have done with it and be with Christ" (Philip. 1.23).

e) Pray fervently for the great gift of final perseverance through the merits of our Divine Saviour.

Self examination:

1. How do I consider this holy season of Advent? Is it in the light of eternal salvation and celestial bliss?

2. How do I foster the gift of Hope? Am I led by its spirit in all my actions?

3. Am I disturbed by any trials and difficulties of life? Am I easily led to despair?

4. What do I think of the very many crosses and miseries of the saints and of the people around me?

5. Am I too much attached to the pleasure and success of this life, so as to think very little of Jesus Christ and Heaven?

6. Am I fostering any worldly ambitions about my future?

7. Do I often think of the vanity of this world and the dangers thereof?

8. Am I in the habit of seeking my consolation and happiness in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord?

9. How do I relish my daily spiritual exercises?

10. Am I delighted to suffer a bit as to gain for eternity?

11. For what all graces and gifts do I pray daily? Is the gift of Heaven the foremost and oft repeated?

12. How much do I long to reach the eternal home?

C. Charity

A few Readings on Fraternal Charity

St. Matthew	XXII,	36-40-	The great Com- mandment
„	XXV	34-46-	At the Last Judgement
„	V	38-48-	Love Your Enemies
„	V	21-22-	Punishment for words of anger
„	V	23-26-	First reconciliation, then....
„	XVIII	21-22-	Forgive 70 times seven
„	VII	12	- as you wish to be done to you
St. Mark	IX	34-41-	Humility, charity, avoid scandal
„	XII	29-34-	The Greatest Com- mandments
St Luke	VI	27-29-	Love of enemies
„	VI	30-38-	Dis-interested Love
„	X	25-37-	The Good Samaritan

St. John	III	16-17-	The Love of God
„	VI	36-40-	the Father and His desire for our sal- vation
„	X	14-17-	Xt. the Good Shepherd
„	XIII	1-17,34-	Xt. washes His dis- ciples feet
„	XIV, XVI		- Discourse at the last supper
„	XVII		- Christ's prayer for his disciples
Acts	II	44-47-	The first Xtian com- munity
Rom	VIII		Our justification, strong hope and love of God.
„	XII, XIII		Our unity and mutual love
„	XIV		Cautions against judging
„	XV		Exhortation to unity
I Corinth.	VIII	9-13-	Avoid scandal.
„	XII		Mutual assistance as members of one body
„	XIII		The primacy of Charity
II Corin.	IX		The Ministry of almsgiving.

Galatians	V	13-26-	Serve on another in Charity
Ephesians	II	13-22-	Christ has made us one.
„	III	14-21-	Our life in Christ rooted in Charity
„	IV		- Exhortation to unity and charity.
„	V	25-VI	8- Mutual duties
Philipp.	II	1-12-	Unity and humility
Colossi	VII	8-25-	Charity, bond of perfection
Thessalonians	IV	9-10-	} Exhortation of Charity
„	V	8-15-	
St. James	III, IV	11-12-	Admonition against evils of the tongue.
I St. Peter	IV	8-11-	Exhortation to Charity.
I John	II	7-11-	Light and Charity.
„	III	1,14-24-	Charity sign of our life.
„	IV	7-21	} Exhortation to Charity.
„	V	1- 4	
Additional Readings from Spiritual Works			

The Primacy Of Charity In Christian Life

“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another” (John XIII, 35). “...if I have no charity, I am nothing” (1 Cor XIII, 2).

The following pages are meant to help us to examine ourselves and to take proper resolutions for charity in the light of the teaching of the Gospel. We wish to be "men of God", perfect men of God, furnished to every good work (2 Tim. 3/17). We have to be furnished in mind and heart to instruct others both by word and by example.

Let us go to the Scripture. "All scripture inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice" (ibid 3/16).

Perhaps the point which we treat here is the 'first infirmity of the weak ones and the last infirmity of the noble ones'. For, we after all, forget that charity is the first value in Christian moral life that it is the Theological love of God and our neighbour that gives true meaning and inner animation to our moral activity and to all virtues.

Significance of the word charity (agape)

We take charity in the scriptural meaning of the word. According to Fr. Spicq, O. P. who has made detailed research on the significance of the word agape (Gk. for Charity), charity is not just the same as 'love', too often steeped in sentimentality. It is rather 'predilection'. It means 'to welcome with cordiality and generosity.... a benevolent disposition willing the good of others.... a

noble love full of *reverence* for its object. It is capable of affective eagerness and *tenderness*. Such a love brings happiness, joy delight. There is interest and felicity in agape! To say Charity, is to say bliss....

In the Old Testament

Love of God the essence of the Law (Dt. VI, 4-9). The gratuitous and jealous love of Yahweh chose the people of the Alliance among all others, and demanded in return an exclusive love. Not only must Israel abandon all idols, but all their activity without exception must be consecrated to Yahweh.

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength”. (Dt. VI, 4-5).

The whole heart, soul and strength clearly signify to a superlative degree, *all the resources* – affective and effective – which man is capable of employing. The I love of Yahweh is the totality of human activity towards God.

This law became the favourite prayer of the devout Jew. It became as it were the essence of the Old Testament. Our Lord called it the greatest of the commandments (Mt. XXII, 38-40)

and the doctor of the law agreed (Lk.X, 27). (It is to this law that Christ has assimilated the law of the love of neighbour).

The Jewish neighbour (Lev. XIX 17). Love of the neighbour is not yet explicitly associated with the love of Yahweh alone, either in the Decalogue or in Deuteronomy. It appears among other orders and prohibitions in Leviticus.

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart....not be mindful of the injury of thy citizens. Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself”
(Lev. XIX, 17 Sq.).

The neighbour is any member of the Jewish community (Lev. XIX, 34). With the prophets, the insistence on love for the neighbour becomes clearer, and is more and more identified with the insistence for love for Yahweh.

“....deal thy bread to the hungry....Then shalt thou be delighted in the Lord.. And I.... will feed thee with the inheritance
(Isaias, LVIII.)

“Your iniquities have divided between you and your God.....for your hands are defiled with blood (Isaias LIX, 2, 3).

Man had to await the coming of the Son of God to understand the *nature* of true charity, and consequently that it is the *Same Charity* that loves God and the neighbour and that the neighbour is *every man*.

The New Testament

1) The Great Christian Commandment:

(Mt. XXII, 34 - 40).

"Which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said to him:" Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.... This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets"

(Mt. XXII, 36 - 40).

The new idea here is — Jesus unites to the great commandment of the Law (the Shema), that of loving others. — "Who is my neighbour?" (cf. Luke, X, 29); Christ makes it clear that the neighbour to be loved is every man, not only a Jew, but even, for example, a Samaritan (Luke, X, 29 - 37).

— Christ declares the two Commandments to be similar. He places them in a category apart, that transcends all precepts, even of worship, since the whole Law and the Prophets

issue from, and depend on it (kremannumi). Since the "objects" are infinitely different, the similarity must come from the nature of agapan. The criterion of fraternal charity chosen by Our Lord to illustrate the last judgement (Mt. XXV, 31 - 46), shows yet more clearly the importance of love for our neighbour, and affirms that, in a mysterious way, God is treated in the way we treat others (Mt. XXV, 40, 45).

"This love is so deeply rooted. . . it has such a force, such energy, that it can govern the whole moral life."

These two precepts of love which are but one, are the summary, the principle of the Law; and likewise, the Law and the Prophets "have no binding force, no religious meaning, but through them."

In this way the whole moral life is at one and the same time religious (cf. James, 1, 27), social and supremely personal, the opposite to formalism (cf. Luke, XI, 42); it is the "royal law," as the first written document of the New Testament asserts (James, II, 8).

2) Universality of this love

(Mt. V, 38 - 48; Luke VI, 27 - 38).

The Christian must love without taking into account antipathies and natural limits of

any kind (including national ones when necessary). It is a matter of a determined will to do good (Luke, VI, 27, 32, 35), completely disinterested (Luke, VI, 30), in imitation of our Heavenly Father (Mt. V, 45). Christ already reveals the true scope of this love....it is charity, because it makes man love as God loves (Mt. V,45). It leads to a perfection resembling that of God (V.48); it is only possible, in fact, because it makes man a son of the Father (V.45). For it is not a "natural" love of which publicans and pagans are capable (VV. 46 seq.) it is extra-ordinary (V.47). It is the declaration of the crucifixion of self (Luke, VI,29). Is not "disinterested" love, a love of others more than of self, since it rises above personal interest?

We can now see why we must love our enemies, those who, naturally speaking, do not deserve our love. It is to imitate the free gift, the liberty of God's love for the sinner. It does not depend upon the lovableness of its object; it is a generosity that gives rather than a desire to possess. By that very fact it has no limits, it is universal.

3) Intensity and nature of this love.

A) It is to be in imitation of the Father's love. Read (Mt. V, 45,48.) "That you may be the children of your father who is in heaven,

who maketh his son rise upon the good and the bad...." (V.45). "Be Ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (ibid). 'God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son that whosoever belives in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting' (John III, 16). "He hath first loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us; we also ought to love one another" (I John IV, 10,11).

B) In imitation of Jesus' love for us:

"Having loved His own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (and to the supreme limit John XIII, 1). His testament is exhortation to brotherly love. "I give you a *new* commandment: love one another....as I have loved you" (John XIII, 34). His love is equal to the love of the Father for His Son. "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you" (XV,9). "This is *my* commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (XV,13). Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (XV,13). Death is the supreme and last expression (XIII,1) of this charity. That is the characteristic trait of the Christian. "By this shall they know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another."

C) This unity by love expected in us is to be similar to the unity in the Holy Trinity (John XVII, 21-24). "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. . . . that they may be one as we also are one (John XVII, 21-22). The world should say: here is a brotherly love and union which is not of this earth. Its inspiration and strength is from heaven (application to our ministry). The great revelation of Christianity is the manifestation of this great love for one another; to put on a level and in continuity and charity of the Father, Son and disciples.

The great doctrine of Christianity is that the trine God sent the Son who became man that man may become God, that men may be united among them and with God with that love which is in God. Our love for one another becomes a theological virtue. The love of God which we profess in our prayer should reveal itself in our relations with men.

D) It is inseparable from our Love of God.

"He who loves God, loves also his brother" (I John IV, 21) and like wise, "he that loves not his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he sees not" (I John IV, 20). More

over "every one who loves him who begot, loves him also who is born of him," (V, I) that is to say all his Children.

It is not difficult to realise that our charity towards our neighbour can be just as theological as our love for the Father. In both cases, God loves through our hearts, and this love reaches the divine in the Father and in his children.

How is such a love possible for us?

The Epistles of St. John and St. Paul are extremely revealing in themselves on this point. Such a love is possible because a christian, by his regeneration in Christ, shares divine life. "God is love" (I John IV, 7s.. 10 - 12, 16). Love of Christ is the continuation of the Father's love (John XV, 9s). This unique movement of love, born in the very bosom of the Holy Trinity, breaks forth in the incarnation of the Son, in his acceptance of death "for the life of the world;" this movement is communicated to the Christian also, is consummated in him, to return to God whence it came. This love is both *life*, stream that communicates itself (I John V, 20) and *light*, entirely spiritual brightness (1, 5). Remember the prayer of our Lord, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me *may be* in them and I in them" (John, XVII, 26).

The Christian therefore, "is" love also and must love by his nature and conversely, "every one that loves is born of God" (1 John IV,7).

We share in the Trinity as *Children* "begotten" in His Only Son. As the one *Mediator* reveals the Father and His unseen love, so are we in our filial life of brotherly love, *mediators* of divine charity. It manifests the divine mission of Christ and of the Church in the eyes of the world. Hence the words of our Lord "That the world may know that thou hast sent me." Love of God and love of neighbour are not just means to attain God but is the out-come of a life united with God. It is the expression of divine life in us. Acts of Charity blossoms forth like flowers from buds or plants. It is not a burden but perfection. We tend to it if we are true to our life, like natural buds as opposed to artificial buds.

Rom. VIII, 31 - 39. We are spurred to intense love, for we have learned of the love of God who is "for us", who "spared not even His own Son". Christ is He Who "has loved us." We are, loved with the love which the Father bore His Son. In the same way the Christian is he who "loves God". He has been chosen in Christ to reproduce His likeness (Rom. VIII, 29).

In consequence Christian life consists in living according to Charity; in "doing the truth in charity" (Eph. IV, 15) which is nothing else than imitating God (Eph. V, 2). The love within us is true participation in that love which God has for man. Man's response to this love is faith *animated by love*, because it is giving of ourselves to a loving Person Who gives Himself for us. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us...." (Eph. V, 1, 2).

Thanks to this Christian activity of love, Christ builds up His Mystical Body in charity (Eph. IV, 16) and this Body, *the Church*, which Christ loves as the bridegroom loves the Bride (Eph. V, 25), is a *community* of brethren (cfr. 1 Pet. II, 17) more closely united than a family by blood relationship; "loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, with honour preventing one another" (Rom. XII, 10)

It is undeniable that the text pre-supposes a new ontology: the union of the mystical Body and our incorporation in it as sons (huios: Gal., III, 26-28); the *koinonia* (community) of brotherhood which is the result (Eph., IV, 16); the flow of life which makes the Body grow (Eph. IV, 15). This charity is a basic reality

which builds up our Christian being, and in which we can become ever more deeply rooted (Ep., III, 17).

Fraternal agapes, the free fulfilment of the Law

(Gal. V, 13-26).

“For you have been called to liberty, my brothers. Only, do not let this liberty become an occasion (for satisfaction) for the flesh, but let charity make you the religious slaves of one another. For the law with all its precepts is fully observed by one: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” If you bite and rend one another, take care not to destroy one another. I insist on this: walk in the spirit.... if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.... The fruit of the spirit is charity, peace.... there is no law against these. Those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions” (Gal. V. 13-24, Trans. C.SPICQ)

Freed from the old law (V. 13, 18; cf. infra law-love), we are animated and led by the Holy Spirit (V. 18, 25). This new life results in deeds; it undertakes the strict obligation of serving the brethren (douleuete V. 13; cf. Rom. 6, 18), but freely, since the obligation is accepted through love (v. 13). Fraternal charity and the virtues which flow from it without being really distinct from it, are the fruits of the Spirit (V. 22).

Loving our neighbour thus means fulfilling the law and satisfying all its obligations.

Making allowances for the vehemence of his enthusiasm, which was intent on stressing the importance of brotherly love, without explicitly recalling love for God, but taking it for granted, the apostle's thought can be summed up thus: when under the guiding influence of the Spirit of love, life is visualized as "a complete and lasting service of our neighbour," it is not possible to do other than keep the commandments and practise the virtues, both towards God and towards self; for charity so perfect, which makes us live by Christ, has crucified the flesh and its desires (v.24). There is freedom from the yoke of an exterior law (the Torah), because we are urged by an interior spiritual force, which is a personal love: the Spirit. The crucifixion of the flesh...the interior enemy opposed to the spirit is really a deliverance (cf. Rom., VI,6) and in itself a proof of love, in imitating the cross of Christ, the supreme proof of love (Gal, II,20).

Verses 13-14 can be considered as "the specific definition of Christian "spiritual" morality, and its novelty in opposition to Judaism. It is liberty in the face of the Law, and in its opposition to ego-centric paganism

directed towards perfection of the subject. It is a charity of brotherhood.”

Summary of the Precepts (Rom., XIII,8 - 10).

We take it for granted that the text has been studied, and only quote these essential passage:

“He who loves others fulfils the law by this very fact. . . .all the other (precepts are summed up (anakephalaioutai) in the words: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. . . . Fullness of the law, therefore, lies in charity”. (Trans. modified from SPICQ).

St. Paul has spoken earlier of love for God and the spiritual sacrifice it demands (XII, 1). That is taken for granted here.

Fraternal charity “resumes” every precept, just as Christ “resumes” all, or brings all under one Head (Eph., 1, 10) to form His plenitude (Eph., IV, 10), and therefore charity is the new (ana) point of convergence, at which is culminated “the principle of harmony” from which depends, apparently, not only the Mosaic Law (honomos), but the whole moral law (nomos) of which St. Paul gives four not exhaustive examples. “The law culminates in love. . . the virtues. . . . have no meaning and even cannot be practised without agape, or they would be lifeless, as a body without a soul. This touches

the essential in Christian morality which is based entirely on love.... This is not far from the theological thesis of charity, the "form of the virtues".

This fraternal charity is an inexhaustible debt; we can never "get away from loving". A life of charity extends indefinitely.

Bond of perfection (Col., III, 12 - 15).

"Put on, therefore, as the chosen ones of God, holy and beloved,.... But above all (Put on) charity; it is the bond of perfection." (Trans. SPICQ. Read the whole text).

Stripped of the old man, clothed with the new, the Christian is called upon to have a special bearing of humble kindness, compassionate and approachable. Charity is the girdle which holds together and perfects these virtues. Or better still "all the virtues will be woven together and adjusted by the divine thread of charity. They will only have real value and existence in and through this love which gives them consummate shape and beauty".

In this passage, agape seems to be love for God as well as for the neighbour (cf. gratitude V, 15).

Divine anticipation in our glorious being (I Cor. XII, 31-XIV,1). The whole hymn should be studied. It is assuredly the most important text in the New Testament on charity.

Again, the object of charity is God and the neighbour, or rather, the neighbour, but transcendent, issue of the love of God within us, and through us of the love divine which God allows us to share.

As to its nature, charity is a free gift from God like the charisms, but so much above them that it is "the only religious reality here below that reaches the perfect age, beyond death. One of its properties is to belong to teleion (V.10, perfection) so that it seems to belong more to celestial than to human nature." One is tempted to see in it the Holy Spirit, so powerful and personal is charity; but it is possessed by man (XIII,1-3) like faith and hope, although greater than they; it must be considered a created dynamism (a habitus, as a theologian puts it) which flows from God into man (cf. I Cor., VIII,3) and which makes us love others as God loves them.

Its effect in us is to constitute our "being", therefore, "our Christian action." Without it, I "am" nothing (V.2, cf. I Cor.I,30) secundum

esse gratiae (St. Thomas), and I can "do" nothing that is, I have no merit, nothing gives me any (XIII,3). Christian "being" is made of this relation with God on one side, and with our neighbour on the other. . . . That is why Christian morality is nothing but the development of this love. It consists in living conformably to what one is."

Result of this charity

1. Intimacy with the Holy Trinity. Any one who proves their love by keeping the commandments, receives as a permanent gift the presence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Cfr. John XIV 15-23).

This unheard of intimacy comes from the unity of the disciple with Christ, the only way to the Father (John XIV,5). Being the unity of the life of one organism (XV, 1-8) it *shares* the unity of the life of the Trinity. "That they may be one as we also are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (XVII,22). In this, Christ wishes to make His disciples share in His glory (XVII,22,23), in his work of communicating the love in the Trinity, (XVII,23). This revelation is a source of perfect joy to His disciples (XIV,28. cfr. I John, IV)

2. It helps the practice of every other virtue and the observance of the whole moral

law. They have no meaning and even cannot be practiced without agape, or they would be lifeless as body without a soul. (see above page)

3. It helps one to be perfect and happy. Charity is the bond of perfection (see above page)

4. It leads to the building up of the community of brotherhood: "...doing the truth in Charity we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body, being compacted and fittly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity" (Eph. IV, 15-16). This charity is a basic reality which builds up our christian being and in which we can become ever deeply rooted (Eph.III,17)

5. Heavenly reward:

"If thou wouldst be perfect....give (thy possessions) to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (Mark X,21). Recall again the words of blessing at the last judgement....

6. Brotherly love which is in this life "a way" (I Cor., XII,31) truly reaches the *end* for which it exists. Brotherly love itself is eternal,

because love itself is eternal, because it is participation in the love with which God cherishes His elect for ever.

Natural Virtues

Grace elevates nature - does not destroy it. Misguided by an abstract idea of 'the Supernatural' or by unwarranted fear of 'the natural' one may lose sight of the importance of natural virtues, the quality and duty of being human.

Pope Pius XII of happy memory, in an exhortation given on 23rd Sept. 1951 to the Discalced Carmelites on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of their International College at Rome made a very significant reference to this subject.

In this age of technology when men are too much immersed in the mechanical world, there is a great danger of us considering ourselves and our mutual relations in a purely mechanical way. Pius XII in his Radio Message of Christmas 1953, called it a sort of materialism and warned the world of its grave dangers.

Coming back to the importance of natural virtues, in his Lenten discourse of 1955 to the

priests of Rome he said that in our labour for the renovation of individuals, we must begin in *prudence*, continue with *constancy* and bring it to the goal with *courage*.

In 1955, while blessing the foundation stone of the Spanish College (Seminary) in Rome, he referred to the three aims of an ecclesiastical institution of formation. (a) it must be, first of all, a house of spiritual formation (b) then, a centre of higher studies and (c) a hearth place of a formation that is human.

Right concept of a formation that is human is so necessary in the present day (a) as a remedy against misguided concept of self denial (b) protection against the dangers of naturalism which try to justify all its demands on humanism (c) as a link of dialogue with all, even those who do not share with us our supernatural principles.

True virtue is often misconceived as vice and vice as virtue. One glories in being a "realist" to the extent of closing one's eyes is everything other than the visible universe and to the life beyond the present; another one, under the title of "idealist" take no stock of realities as they are; the man who lets loose his anger and other passions are praised as "courageous" while one who controls his nerves or emotions is misunderstood as "timid" or

“apathetic.” The “talkative” or “licentious” is praised as a “sociable” while one who is reserved is thought of as an unsociable animal; a cautious man is considered as not having “human touches”; one who has no principles to hold him is often praised as having an “open mind” and others as “scrupulous”. One can cite a series of examples where virtues and vices are often misinterpreted.

**Certain passages in S. scripture exhorting us to
kindliness and concord**

**I Christ's Compassion for
the afflicted**

Mt. IV, 23, 24
 VIII, 5-7;
 VIII, 16-17
 IX, 36
 XI, 28
 XIV, 14
 XV, 32
 XX, 30, 32, 33, 34
 Mark I, 40-42
 Lk. VII, 11-15
 Lk. XIII, 11-13
 Jn. XI, 32-36
 Heb. IV, 15
 Heb. X, 24
 Heb. XIII, 1.

II Mercy to one another

Job. VI, 14
 Ps. XXXVI, 21
 Ps. LXXXIII, 12
 Prov. XI, 17
 Prov. XIV, 21, 22
 Prov. XXI, 3
 Prov. XXII, 9;
 Prov. XXIV, 29
 Osee. VI, 6
 Zach. VII, 9
 Mt. IX, 13
 Lk. VI, 36
 Mt. XII, 7
 Eph. IV, 32;
 Col. III, 12
 James 11, 12, 13
 I Pet. III, 8.

Regard for each other

Phil. IV/8-18
Col. III/12-14

III Forgiving injuries

Mt. V.43-47
Mt. VI.12;14,15
Mt. XVIII.32-35
Lk. V.132,33, 35;
Lk. XXIII.33,34
Rom. XII.20,21
Acts. VII, 58,59

IV Living in Concord

Gen. XIII, 8-9
Ps. 132/1
Rom. XV, 1,2,5,6
I Cor. I.10; X24,33
Phil. I 27
Phil. II.2-4
I Pet. II.1-2
I Pet. III. 8-9

V Evil conversation

Ps. 33/13-14
Prov. X, 32
Prov. XVIII,7,21
Ecl.28/29
Eph. IV, 29.

VI Exhortation to avoid detraction

Lev. XIX.13
Prov. IX. 24.

VII Deceitfulness

Ps. 5. 7;
Ps. 11.4; 30.19; 40.24
Prov. 8.13; 15.15; 28.10

VIII Good conversation

Eccl. 40/21
Phili.1/27
ITim. IV/12

IX Kind words

Prov. XII, 25
Eccl. XVIII, 15-17
Mt. XII, 37
Eph. IV, 32
Col. III, 12.

“Peace be to you” our watch word.

Certain basic needs

The development of natural virtues is closely allied with two other features. First, *emotional maturity*. The ability to make emotional adjustments is a basic quality necessary in every walk of life. Emotional maturity is the attainment of "sweet reasonableness"; it means a well integrated personality; it means the possession of certain qualities that enable one to preserve peace within himself and to live and work harmoniously with others. A few questions to ourselves will make the matter clear

A second acquisition is a mature will. To be able to make calm and reasonable practical judgement, and to persevere in such judgements is a great thing. Such judgements are to be made within a reasonable time. For this it is necessary to have an ideal and to have clear perception of the *principles* comprised in that ideal. Fidelity to these principles and consistency in that do not destroy the freedom of the will but helps the person to exercise his practical judgements free from bias, whether internal or external; he makes prompt decision based on the fundamental principles and resolutions he has formed after due deliberation or enlightenment. Such persons become men of character, of personality;

the nobler the principles and fidelity to the same; the nobler the character. The education of the will helps man to follow the "law of the mind" rather than the "law of the members." This involves control of passions; repeated exercises of "acts of will" even in ordinary things strengthens the wills. Elevation or reinforcements of motives give additional strength to each exercise.

What is Courtesy?

We know more or less what courtesy is; instances are many in daily life. But it is difficult to define what courtesy is. Why? Because it is not just a single quality or particular virtue, but a happy combination of natural and acquired qualities which render the person possessing it pleasing and refined in his dealings with others.

'Natural' because it is deeply rooted in human nature. The goodness of human nature demands it. 'Acquired' because it permits enrichment by cultivation; it is not only the expression of what is best in human nature but also fidelity to certain universally accepted laws which regulate the manners, and customs and to the social conventions.

Different kinds of People: There are people who seem to be '*born for etiquette.*' Such people

can easily become 'accomplished gentlemen' in their behaviour and give good satisfaction to all who approach them. There are others, on the contrary, who seem to be *too slow to catch the rules of right behaviour*. They too can, however, by diligent efforts come up to that nobility of behaviour which renders their dealings pleasing enough, and consequently be counted fit even for the royal court, the word from which courtesy is derived.

Courtesy is *not the privilege of a particular class* nor is it for certain occasions only. It has its place and importance everywhere and with all. Courtesy is nobility; but one need not be a descendant or member of the noble class, to be courteous.

In all classes, we will also notice people who seem to be careless or '*too blunt*' in their dealings. Such persons may not notice the delicacy of behaviour in others, nor the want of it in themselves. There are, again, others who are *too sensitive* that the least want of etiquette is enough to up-set them.

Why should we be courteous: Draw the lesson from nature: Courtesy is noticed even in nature. The universal harmony witnesses it. It has been an object of delight to the poets and a field of research to the scientists. Whether all of us

notice it or not, there is *harmony in nature*, adaptation of one to the other, mutual complementing and mutual respect. The sun that rises in the morning, the flowers that pay homage to the sun, the stars that brighten the night, men who bless the stars, seasons that succeed one another, the whole creation, we should say, palpitates as a whole. Just look up the leaves of a single branch, examine the tuft of a cocconut tree and see how beautifully the leaves arrange among themselves, how the whole thing conspires smoothly and peacefully, work and attain their end each helping and giving place to the other. The material order is related to the spiritual, the most common to the most rare and the less hidden to the more hidden. A thinking mind can find *concordance in their seeming discordance*.

Now what about this particular order of beings, man the noblest of creatures in the world? Evidently courtesy is expected of us in a *higher degree* than what is seen in the rest of the universe, because we are higher beings endowed with the faculties of *higher knowledge* and greater ability. Courtesy that is expected of us is of an ethical order, rising from a deep *sense of responsibility*. The more we are educated the more should this sense of responsibility also develop in us and reflect in our conduct. *For the conduct of a man is the mirror in which he sees his image.*

Justice and Charity

Courtesy is largely and essentially the sincere expression of justice and Charity. *Of justice* (of course in a broad sense), which asks us to give others their due. . . . not to exact too much from others. . . . etc.e.g. dealings related to respect money *Of charity*, because it is the overflow of goodness which we should possess and communicate to others. . . a visit, a general word, a small help. . . . "St. Thomas Aquinas, with his great acumen, calls this quality "affability", the ability to get along amicably with our fellowmen. The key thought then, as now, was consideration and thoughtfulness for others.

St. Thomas attributes this quality of affability, or friendliness, to the virtue of justice. He says in part: This virtue of affability is a part of Justice, being joined to it as to a principal virtue (for example: the branch to the tree). Affability regards a certain debt of equity, namely, that we behave pleasantly towards those among whom we dwell. Therefore, it behooves us to exercise a certain regard towards others in our mutual relations, both in deeds and in words, so that we behave towards each other in an agreeable manner. Hence, the need of a special virtue that maintains this harmony of relationship. This virtue we call "friendliness" (Q.114; 115; Part II-II).

So St. Thomas recognized that affability and friendliness are closely allied to good manners and to consideration of the rights of others" (Social Manual for Seminarians' p.xi-xii). It is the *sincere* expression of charity and justice. An insincere show of courtesy is a false coin. You can be very liberal with the same. But its sound will soon disclose the mean metal. No one will appreciate it; the recipient will return it with reproof. There is no man so repugnant as one who praises you on your face and throws mud at you from the back. And there is nothing so pleasing as a sincere expression of goodness in a person. A child's smile is more sweet than a politicians laughter. Again, courtesy is a quality which has its root in the *heart*. That is why the society appreciates your good conduct, your modesty, your gentlemanliness, in short, your sense of justice and charity more than your skilfulness, physical powers, personal beauty, ornaments etc.

Not only is an insincere show of courtesy repugnant but is also difficult to keep up. *The mask will easily fall.* You can't act a comedy for a long time. The beard will fall off, the sweat will wash down the paint of the face. There are more things passing through the brain and heart of a man than what his mask can hide. The fox

king will easily reveal his identity. *Hence if you want to be courteous try to be so from the heart.*

Courtesy, therefore, is considered as an instrument which is to be sounded by the soul. . . . A bugle . . . a drum . . . a gong . . . how are they sounded? . . . only the sincere expression of goodness can sound the instrument called courtesy.

Courtesy is an art: The art of making ourselves pleasing to others. Whether we have to deny or affirm any thing, we can do it in a way pleasing to others. Instances . . . ; Now, no art is mastered without effort, without the effort aiming at the maximum. Even when acquired, no art is exercised properly unless sufficient diligence is shown. The art of being courteous needs extraordinary diligence; no wonder that even those counted as masters in courtesy turn discourteous at times. How many daily instances there are; at home, in the places of work, on the way, in the bus, in gatherings, where men fail to be courteous enough.

Courtesy is a virtue: (A virtue is the facility possessed to do good things). As a virtue it can be attained only through difficult paths and by long time. Did we say it is a virtue? Yes. But that is not quite correct. It is a combination of many virtues, nay, of all social virtues for example.

Respect of one's own dignity - as a priest, an official....

Respect of elders, teachers, benefactors

Charity - doing to them as you would others to do to you....

Humility: Holding ourselves where we should be, not imposing ourselves, our presence, our views, our preferences on others.... Courtesy is not only the fruit of many other virtues but also the nurse of many virtues. For it has an educative value, in this sense that without much force it keeps one in continuous self control.

Courtesy is called a social virtue because it makes relations between men very easy and pleasing. There is nothing so unbearable, be it at home, in school, in Church or in an office, as dealings with men who have no sense of politeness. There is a saying that what provide men are not matters of principles as manners of dealings.

Just because it is a virtue and so estimable a one, it costs to acquire it. It is deserving of reward and praise before God and before men. All expect everybody to be pleasing and good. But few take the trouble to acquire this virtue, to cultivate this art.

It is by the practice of courtesy that we should show our esteem of it.

Courtesy in a Priest:

If "the urbanity is the flower of humanity" (Joubert), this flower has to be collected among the elect. "He is not sufficiently a man who is not sufficiently polite". Do we not hear at times "so and so is a brute". How can one teach man to be a man unless he is a man, ie. has acquired the virtue of courtesy?

"It is an essential part of your apostolate that you acquire good manners in order to secure the respect of the public and the confidence of the laity".

"The general public expects you, and rightly so, to have a certain affability in your behavior, combined with modesty and graciousness. Anything short of this will startle the people and reflect unfavorably upon your ministry."

"If you are not alert and do not give close attention to the social conventions during this period of time, you will undoubtedly develop graceless, plebian, or even offensive manners. These undesirable traits will correspondingly impede your effective service during your active years of ministry. It is a rule of society, a fact of life, that persons are judged by externals. You will not be exempted from this critical appraisal."

“Common sense must be the final factor which governs your application of conventional rules to particular circumstances in your social life as a young priest.” (Social manual for Seminarians by Rev. Thomas F. Casey & Rev. Leo. C. Gainor, O. P., Pages xii, xiii).

We do value our profession, we covet it, we expect others to esteem our person. But we are not fully logical. If we do esteem (and expect others also to esteem our person) we must honour our honour and pay homage to it with candles that shine and flowers that please and these constitute courtesy.

“A man is known from his look” (Eccl.19.26). The way one speaks, laughs, walks, dresses, reveals him (Eccl.19.27). Think of the great Saints and Acharyas of old. What pleasing pictures have authors drawn of them.

Affability of character counts much in a priest and it has a decisive value for the success of his work. A priest of great learning and skill: but unfortunately he may get nicknamed after animals! You may have the best intentions and ardent desires to do good. But if a smile does not find place on your lips, if sweetness is not light up on your face when you are in contact with your people, you will never be approached unless by hard necessity and many fishes will

escape your net. How many occasions there are when they call upon your courtesy and you are found wanting it. Do not give them the impression that you are a volcano to be guarded against. Say a calm "no" when you have to say a "no." Do not break your nerves on those who seem to be hard or your patience on those who are too slow to catch your advices.

A Group Dance: Indeed it is not easy to observe always all the principles and rules of movements. But if only each one does his part well the result will be immense joy and happiness to the spectators and also to those who take part in the dance. That is what is expected in an educated society.

Five Rules to become Courteous

First: In order to fight any battle whatsoever, you must esteem the object you are aiming at. No one makes a sacrifice for nothing. The more beautiful the ideal to be attained, or the more attractive the field to be conquered, the more willingly do we make sacrifices for the same. Hence esteem more and more the value of courtesy. Thanks to the courtesy of others we can present ourselves in society and benefit of the good will and kindness of men. Thanks to our own good-manners we can win the heart.

the esteem and sympathy of others; thanks to the conventions which help us all to work smoothly for our common purposes. The acquisition of success demands sacrifices, imposes abnegation and mortification of several of our inclinations. No sacrifice is too much to acquire that finished, cordial and spontaneous ways of dealings. An esteem of the result will give them the strength necessary to face the battle. Therefore the first rule to become courteous is: To esteem True Courtesy.

Secondly: The happiness of a family, the progress of a community, the success of an enterprise may very seriously be affected for want of good manners in one or the other of the members. Where nothing is wanting to make every body content, to live up to the ideal of all virtues, to attain the zenith of wellbeing, there may perhaps be wanting just one thing, the desire to live in mutual agreement. The whole combination goes to the four winds. You may get the best singers for a group music, you may arrange a good procession. What will be the result if just one is not accommodating? If only they will be able to work together for a happy success, or carry peacefully a burden which has become too heavy!

Sometimes just a smile would be enough, a single token of approval a small but sincere

offer of help, the request of a favour to restore the order disturbed. Now for this, we must perceive clearly what the lack of courtesy can cause to undo the serene relations we have with him. That will help us to avoid the rapture to avoid it at all cost. Hence the second rule to acquire true courtesy. Perceive clearly and be afraid of all that we might do contrary to true courtesy.

Thirdly: Know the rules of etiquette For, besides what is suggested spontaneously or otherwise by the good nature in man, by the laws written so to say in the heart of every man, there are rules of conduct that are conventional, handed down by tradition. These are not so difficult to learn. Have our eyes and ears open to the conduct of well bred men gather these from books or ask others, given occasions.

Fourthly: And a very important one, is to have respect for others and appreciate sincerely everything that is good in them; their qualities their works, their struggle against their own difficulties and deficiencies If you fail to find anything that command your respect, remember, another time you yourself may be the victim of such fall or mistake you now notice in another. Once we are accustomed to think well of others, have

confidence in their good will and esteem them more than ourselves, courtesy becomes very easy.

The Secret of Success

First Secret: Try to give as much joy as possible to everybody who approach us for anything whatsoever.

May be we are unable to render them the service they expect of or comply with their wish. But still we can behave in such a way that they are not put out, that they do not feel unhappy for having approached us.

Even in regard to the service we render, we can and we must render it in such a way that we give them as much joy as possible. This, to everybody, in all things.

The mere attention not to annoy another is a great thing; but it is not enough. We have to take positive efforts to render the life of our neighbour happy. This is achieved in ever so many small little instances. Our relations with others are so numerous and often least noticed. But still they are very important. If the teeth of our little wheel falls properly with the wheel of our neighbour we are the first to benefit out of it.

The greatest joy is the collective joy in society. The joy of individuals must get into

and fit in with the joy of the society. Joy when shared is redoubled; sorrow diminished. Do not disappoint others.

Second Secret: Temper injury with the oil of patience. Never hurt back. We do not gain anything by hurting others, but we gain much by patience. If we are angry with another, it is we rather than others that is hurt by that. We should have so much patience, with all, in every circumstance, in spite of everything - criticism reproofs, despisings etc.

Basic Christian Virtues

D

1. The Evangelical Ideal

Patroness - Our Lady of the Assumption

Private Sp. Reading - Imit. III. 31; St. Matt. V.

Ejaculations - My God, My all; Jesus, My Love; Mary, My hope.

Thoughts - 1. "The students must learn to live according to the evangelical ideal." This statement in the Council Decree on the training for the priesthood is the foundation of the formation of the seminarists. The truths included in this

statement are explained thus: "The students may learn to live in intimate and constant communion with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit."

2. The Divine Saviour presented God as the ever loving Father, to the prodigal world. The parable of the prodigal son can be more correctly called the parable of the merciful father. He exhorts us to "be children of your father in heaven" (Matt. 5/45).

3. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jo. 13/35). Love of God and love of man are not two independent principles. They cannot be separated from each other. Here we find the basic originality of the ideal of the Gospel; ie, the place of honour which love of neighbour holds in its doctrine - the second commandment is "like to the first."

4. Jesus preached the Gospel of the kingdom of God: "seek you first the kingdom of God and His justice and all these things be given you besides" (Matt. 6/33).

5. The sermon on the mount is the ethic of the kingdom of God. It simply removes our favourite distinction between what is compulsory and what is free. It does not allow man the

feeling of having done enough: "Be you perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." It is intended for all those who desire to follow Christ.

6. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Lk. 9/23). Self-denial is the practical way to grow in the spirit of the sermon on the mount. The Christian self-denial is directed primarily not against the passions but against "selfishness", in so far as "I" stand in the way of witness for Christ and the Gospel: "Who loses his life for my sake and for the Gospel will save it" (Matt. 8/35).

7. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1/8). To foster the spirit of the Gospel we are constantly being helped by the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us as He was in Christ.

How to follow the ideal of the Gospel

1. Realise fully that you are a beloved child of the Heavenly Father and try to live in His presence.

2. Lovingly thank Him for creating, redeeming and preserving you with all love and care. Being grateful for the priestly vocation, try to realise a full dedication.

3. Pray often to our Heavenly Father to create in us the same dispositions which Christ cherished towards Him.

4. Be fully conscious of the kingdom of God which is in you, lovingly formed by the Father through the merits of the Son in the Holy Spirit.

5. Imitate with full zeal Our Lord to do the holy will of the Father in everything: "I always do what is pleasing to Him."

6. Give up all that in any way hinder you in serving and loving God.

7. Foster the spirit of the Beatitudes as far as possible.

8. Pray often to the Holy Spirit for His light and gifts and co-operate with His inspirations.

9. Fully confide in the holy providence of God and accept with joy all that He provides you with: "Therefore do not be anxious saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear. Your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all."

10. Imitate our Mother Mary who remained always in union with Jesus fostering the spirit of the Gospel.

Self-examination

1. Do I try to say "Our Father" sharing the same sentiments as of Our Lord who taught it?

2. How do I realise the indwelling of God and His Kingdom in me?

3. What attention do I pay to the building up of the true brotherhood desired by Christ?

4. Do I often adore, love and thank God in union with Christ?

5. Am I conscious that my vocation is to imitate Christ in loving and serving God?

6. Do I find any worldly aims developing in me against the spirit of the Gospel?

7. How do I practise self-denial in my different dealings?

8. Do I keep constant union with Jesus while fulfilling my duties?

9. Am I in the habit of praying to the Holy Spirit to gain grace to overcome the spirit of the world?

10. How do I conform myself to the holy will of God?

11. Am I often consoled and strengthened in seeking the kingdom of God by the glory of Our Lady.

2. Celibacy

Patron - St. John the Apostle

Private Sp. Reading - Imit. I. 13,21; I Cor:7

Vat. II Decree on Priestly Training: n.10.

Ejaculations - My God my all; Jesus, my Love!
Mary, my hope.

Thoughts - 1. "There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it", (St. Matt. 19/12).

2. Chastity is the beauty of priesthood - "The perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven is held by the church to be of great value in a very special manner for the priestly life" (M. & L. of priests no. 16).

3. It is a special gift of the Father to dedicate oneself, body and soul, to His service - "Outstanding among them (divine counsels) is that precious gift of divine grace which the Father gives to some men so that by celibacy, they can more easily devote their entire selves to God alone with an undivided heart" (Const. Church no. 42).

4. It makes one a true spouse of Christ crucified - "By choosing this state and "renouncing the companionship of marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, they devote them-

selves to the Lord with an undivided love in close accord with the New Covenant”

(Train. for Priesthood no.10).

5. It makes him a Father to all - “By this law of celibacy, the priest so far from losing the gift and duties of fatherhood, rather increases these immeasurably; for although he does not beget progeny for this passing life of earth, he begets children for that life which is heavenly and eternal” (P. Pius XII. Menti Nostrae).

6. “It is a stimulus for pastoral charity and a special source of spiritual fecundity in the world” (M&L.P.16). “The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs how to please his wife” (I Cor. 7/32, 33).

7. It is the strength and glory of the church - “It is celibacy which has kept catholicism green up to the present day” (Gandhiji)

8. It is a source of great glory in heaven - “They give, moreover a living sign of the world to come, by a faith and charity already made present, in which the children of the Resurrection neither marry nor take wives”

(M. & L. P. no.16).

9. Therefore, “the students should deeply realize how gladly this state should be embraced

....as a gift of God....to which they should be happy to give a free and generous response, by the grace of the Holy Spirit inspiring and assisting them" (Training no. 10).

10. But on the contrary, "how horrible to see a priest that should send forth in every direction the light and odour of purity, become sordid, fetid and polluted with sins of flesh?" (St. Alph. Liguori).

11. "The effects of this impure vice are: blindness of the mind, hatred of God, attachment to the present life, horror of future life"
(St. Thomas).

12. The impure priest gives great scandal and causes the ruin of many souls and finally leaves this world impenitent for eternal damnation.

13. "Therefore whenever young seminarians show evil tendencies in this regard and after a due trial, show themselves incorrigible, it is absolutely necessary to dismiss them from the seminary, at least before they receive holy orders" (P. Pius XII).

14. So this choice should be made with much prayer and consultation. "To the unmarried....I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it

is better to marry than to be aflame with passion" (I Cor. 7/8,9).

How to practise the virtue of purity

"Every care and solicitude must be used to have seminarians appreciate, love and preserve chastity, because the choice of the priestly state and perseverance in it depend in great part on this virtue. Being exposed to greater dangers, chastity must be solidly possessed and proved at length" (P. Pius XII).

1. As "Chaste virgins of Christ," priests are victims of divine love. So by fostering an intense love for God the Father and for Jesus, our Crucified Saviour, we can persevere and advance in the virtue of celibacy. "My beloved to me and I to Him." We should also entrust ourselves in the hands of the Bl. Virgin, the mother of priests.

2. Humbly confess the fact that we are carrying this precious treasure in earthen vessels and earnestly seek refuge in our Lord, the High Priest, who can understand our infirmities, who too was tempted.

3. Fly away from dangerous occasions so that we way not tempt ourselves.

4. Be very frank and faithful in disclosing our tendencies to our spiritual director.

5. We should strive in all earnestness to mortify our external and internal senses and offer them daily to the S. Heart through Mary. "But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway"

(I Cor. 9/27).

a) Mortify especially our taste, our sight and touch. "More than ever, O Lord, I consecrate my hands to Thee. These hands will touch, hold and handle Thy Body and Blood. I want to reverence these hands and honour them as hallowed instruments dedicated to thy service (Fr. Perreyve).

b) Control the memory and the imagination against obscene thoughts and images. "Let not the temple of the Bl. Trinity become a place where demons shall dance and sirens make their dens" (St. Jerome).

c) The heart also should be mortified lest it may go after worldly affections. "We imagine we love persons for God's sake, while in reality we love them for the sake of the pleasure we experience in their company" (St. Sales).

6. Try to avoid idleness by an earnest application to our duties. "Idleness hath taught much evil" (Eccl. 33/29).

7. "Brahmacharya is the control of all the organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ and allows all the others free play is bound to find his effort futile. To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste stimulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands and then at the same time to control the only remaining organ is like putting one's hands in the fire, and then trying to escape burns. . . . it is thus a sign of polite breeding to walk with ones eyes towards the ground and not wandering about from object" to object (Gandhiji, Young India April 29/1926).

Self-examination

1. Do I know fully well the obligations of celibate life and also the duty, dignity and privileges of married life?
2. Have I an ardent desire to preserve virginity?
3. Are there any wilful falls in thoughts? words. . . .?, and deeds. . . .
4. How far have I succeeded in overcoming them? Am I fully confident that I will be able to lead a sinless life?
5. Am I disturbed often by violent temptations against purity? and how do I get over them?

6. Do I successfully mortify all my senses?
Am I attracted by obscene pictures and books?

7. Do I foster any inordinate friendship?

8. Do I find delight in life in the seminary amidst all my different duties?

9. Do I foster an ardent love towards my crucified Jesus and desire very much to labour for the salvation of souls?

10. How do I love to receive the Eucharistic Lord and to visit Him in the Bl. Sacrament?

11. Have I a special devotion to the Bl. Virgin, St. Joseph and my Guardian Angel; and do I daily pray to them to preserve me in chastity?

12. Do I try earnestly to gain the necessary graces and strength from the daily spiritual exercises to get over the temptations?

13. Do I in all sincerity explain to my Sp. Director all my difficulties and act up to his instructions?

14. Do I take all possible remedies against impurity as against any malignant disease?

3. Practice of Obedience

“And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. . . . And Jesus

advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men" (Luke III, 51, 52). "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. II/ 8)

Obedience is a supernatural, moral virtue which inclines us to submit our will to that of our lawful superiors, in so far as they are the representatives of God (Tanquery).

I. The foundation of this virtue

I. The Divine Programme: God has a purpose in creating the world; to this end He directs everything; He has set laws and these laws direct everything; inanimate beings, living beings, animals and rational beings, all are thus directed, each in its own way, to the end God has in view. This law, known also as the (*Cosmic law*) natural law (and laws of nature) has *its force on every creature, every instant*. Our entire existence and activity is condensed in the prayer "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". As *rational creatures* we are all the more obliged to this submission, for we have received more from Him; being *children of God*, in the supernatural order we must obey our heavenly Father as Jesus Himself did; being *redeemed* from the bondage of sin and death, "we no longer belong to ourselves, but to Jesus Christ". Submission to 'God's will becomes a

characteristic virtue of those who have followed the *priestly vocation*, a vocation which implies a series of invitations from God and our whole hearted response to these invitations.

God's will takes precedence over everything else; it is our greatest honour and distinction to do it. "Love thy Lord Thy God with Thy whole heart...etc. "If you love me keep my commandments".

2. How does God manifest His will? The earnestness to accomplish God's will leads us to the desire to know His will. Now, excepting miraculous and mystic cases, the divine will is manifested through what is called *secondary causes*, which are:

i) Variant *situations* of each one's life and the *events* that accompany them, (all regulated by divine providence)

ii) special manifestation by *Revelation*—divine positive laws—as contained in the Bible

iii) private manifestation through internal personal *inspiration* as contained in the dictates of the conscience

iv) The *spoken will* of God, expressed in clear terms through the human agents which alone is able to indicate the divine will with certainty in moments of doubt.

The fourth way is a *blessing and remedy* is this phase of our Redemption after the fall. Before

the fall man was privileged to hear the divine voice: and thus to know the divine will clearly. But with the fall he lost that privilege. God now employs human agency with a double purpose: to help us (out of his *mercy* to know His will and to allow us (out of *justice*) to make reparation for our pride, through the humiliation of submitting ourselves to God's representative, a man, himself covered with the defects of men.

3. The Superior, a representative of God:

This is true of all obedience. Necessity of order and unity of direction postulate authority in every society. Whatever way the authority is constituted "there is no power but from God" (Rom. XIII, 1). This is so true that to render obedience to lawful superiors is tantamount to rendering obedience to God, and "to disobey them is to provoke condemnation" (cfr. Rom XIII, 2). In the Church it gains greater force for reason of the divine institution of the Hierarchy and the priest's special obligation to obey the Bishops. This obligation stands even if the will of God is manifested through a superior in a subordinate rank.

4. The proximate foundation for obedience:

Under what title does a particular order deserve obedience? True, some superiors have

such good qualities that they easily “command obedience and respect”; or some orders are said to be so evidently right that everyone feel a “must” in obeying them. If the Superior lacks those moral qualities which he should possess or if the particular order does not seem to be the opportune one, should it be obeyed and that for God’s sake? The answer would be that, excepting cases where the order is intrinsically bad, the order of a competent Superior given within his power has to be obeyed under the title of his legitimate authority and not on the evidence of the intrinsic merit of the order. Moreover the latter is no objective criterion which can be applied with certainty. The acceptance of the qualities of the Superior and the appreciation of the reasonableness of the order are too relative and vague and may vary from subordinate and even for the same person from time to time as often as private interests vary. Of course, it is up to the Superior to conform his order to the good pleasure of the Lord, making use of all such means (dialogue with the subordinates or higher superiors included) as prudence and other virtues suggest. Should they fail in this, they are responsible before God and before those who have invested them with the authority. The duty of the subject is to obey, this is a duty before God.

9 (Of course, if a particular order is seen to be

quite inopportune, charity may induce a subordinate to enlighten the superior respectfully on matters which had escaped his notice. But this does not warrant any resistance to the order).

To the classical objection, how can God sanction an order which is eventually inopportune and therefore dangerous (which is not the same thing as intrinsically bad) one may reply that God does not exactly *approve* the order as His own, but only *permits* it; He wills indeed its execution by the subject. This is to evade the greater danger which would rise if the reason for obedience were placed in the intrinsic value of the order, values which are often so obscurely perceived or wrongly interpreted. Thus viewed, the spirit of obedience rests on safe ground and is saved from constant objections that rise both in theory and in practice, knowingly or unknowingly, from the armoury of search after the intrinsic value of the order. Such objections started from the beginning. "Why did God command so." The legitimacy of the order has a more secure application in ecclesiastical matters than in civil affairs.

5. External and Internal Forums: The principal enunciated above, asks for a careful statement regarding authority in the two forums, internal, and external. In the church, the same individual

subject to direction in both forums. *Obedience in its strict sense is of the external forum.* Act contrary to orders in this forum would often constitute a formal sin against obedience. As for the internal forum, an act of conformity is called *docility* (eg. to the spiritual director). This conformity has indeed a great value, is a submission to the most intimate and efficacious influence of the *spirit*. However acts contrary do not directly constitute disobedience, but may, be a sin against prudence, humility etc.

6. **Fruits of obedience:** The seminarian who is able to see in the order given by the Superiors, the voice of God for him, is said to have the eye of faith, in other words, to have faith in obedience.

) Even supposing that a particular order insisted upon is objectively less prudent or less opportune, the subject, in so far as he obeys it, contributes to the growth of the sense of discipline so necessary in every society: the maintenance of this sense of discipline has such valuable advantages to the society that it is to be guarded even at the cost of disadvantages which a particular inopportune order may cause. The subject, besides, acquires a personal merit for his faith in obedience. Often, as experience confirms it, God blesses with special blessing such "painful and difficult obediences" and

makes up for the deficiency. But we should not expect it to be a universal feature. God does not work miracles every time those in authority make mistake in giving order. If the subordinate has the obligation and responsibility, before God, to execute the order with all docility, the Superior who gives the order also has the obligation and responsibility before God to give the right order in the proper manner. God may guide the superior to improve upon the imprudent orders once given and make up for the mistakes that have occurred.

II Grades of Expression of the Superior's Will

We shall avoid here detailed analysis and subtle distinctions. Three grades are clear: the Superior may manifest his will as a formal precept or as just a will or desire. The former may oblige us under sin, grave or less grave sins according to the nature of the matter. The latter may not oblige us under sin, but is still his will and God wants that we should follow that will. Precisely because it is not a precept, fidelity to such a manifestation of will has the special value of surrender to God's will out of love. For love seeks not just the avoidance of sin or displeasure. It seeks to satisfy every desire of the one whom we love.

It should also be noted that the will expressed merely as a desire, is not less important than that which is expressed as a strict precept. There is no difference between the two except that the Superior does not want to bind the subject's conscience under guilt. All the same the spirit of obedience induces the subject to comply with the Superior's will manifested this way too. In order that, however, the will manifested by the Superior as a desire, may duly represent a divine invitation, it must be expressed clearly within the sphere of legitimate power.

There can be three ways of expression (other than by precept) of the Superior's will.

a) Though the superior could manifest his will by a formal precept, and it is in his competency and he would take the responsibility of the consequence, he does not give it as a precept because he does not want to burden the conscience or weigh on the freedom of the subordinate with penalty. Therefore he expresses it only as his desire.

b) The Superior, though he feels competent to give a formal precept in a particular case, does not do it so because he is not so sure of the situation and does not want to take the entire responsibility.

c) The Superior cannot give it as a formal precept because the matter is not strictly within his authority (for e. g. a Bishop in the organisation of the private spiritual life of a priest; a parish priest in the apostolic concept of an assistant parish priest etc.)

Only in the first of these three cases is the will of the Superior to be considered as an expression of the will of God in relation to particular act or acts. (e. g. rules of the Seminary are such; not binding under sin but still clear manifestation of the will of those in authority). The other two cases, are to be complied with in all possible docility and with an earnest desire to conform as much as it is found possible. Love of the Superior and sense of prudence and responsibility should direct the subordinate in such situations.

III Grades of obedience

Whatever be the grade of expression the order of obedience may meet it in three ways:

- a) by material execution
- b) with loving willingness (conformity of will)
- c) with conformity of mind (judgement)

The first way, viz. material execution, is not sufficient; the second way is necessary and

per se sufficient even for supernatural merit. The subject in this case has faith in the need of obedience, though, it is possible that the subject sees the order as inopportune or less wise (the intellect cannot but affirm truth as truth and false as false)

However, making allowance for certain special cases of exceptions, agreement also of the mind is an integral element which perfects obedience and is of great importance. In fact most people find themselves in a dilemma and excuse themselves from obedience. Just because they think this particular element seem to be lacking. The difficulty arises often due to wrong or insufficient ways of approach:

Conformity of mind and action is necessary to realise psychic unity and this psychic unity must be respected. The mind must perceive the act of obedience as reasonable. Now, reasonableness of the action here and now enjoined upon can be perceived in two ways: directly when the subject perceives the intrinsic fitness of the action in itself: obedience in this case becomes easy and spontaneous, indirectly, when the subject, though unable to grasp the intrinsic fitness of the action (may perceive it imprudent) still perceives that the order of the competent superior should be followed and

that this is God's will for him. Here is a case of reflexive perception of reasonableness. This is enough for psychic unity. There is also an indirect way of assuring oneself about the reasonableness of the order in itself. Excepting cases where evidence militate to the contrary, the subject can presume the superior's view to be more correct than his own and this mainly for the following motives:

1) The superior is, as a rule, more experienced may have thought over it sufficiently well and is a wiser person.

2) has the grace of state. God helps him to give a proper order and me to obey properly.

3) has a more complete picture of a given situation and finds the act reasonable in that background. He may have special reasons which he may not and sometimes cannot communicate. The particular order, though in itself unwelcome, may be a remedy to prevent a greater evil which at present is not known to the subject.

4) The superior is less emotionally affected than the subject who may find himself in a tussle with the difficulties involved in the execution. The superior, is in a better situation to evaluate the fitness of the order.

These considerations will help the subject to follow the order and where the grade of command is of a lesser one, to hold a benevolent orientation, capable of imprinting the seal of humility on the act of obedience. This seal of humility has a great value in obedience. In fact, the most intimate rebellion of the "Ego" ("I") and its proud obstinacy, is in the rebellion of judgement, namely, in the presumptuous criticism drawing force from the apparent justification of the claim of "truth", of "evidence" as it appears to the subject. The original sin was one of this kind: pride of the head—to know good and evil.

One sees also that the four reasons mentioned above to justify presumption in favour of the order given by the superior are easily acceptable to the humble man who is aware of his limitations and is prepared to grant to others certain superiority of judgement.

Mere material execution offers an obedience that has no life; submission of the will animated by faith, makes it a true and supernatural one; conformity of judgement renders it humble. The third grade is the most acceptable one and a true remedy against the pride of original sin.

4. The Spirit of Poverty

Patron – Jesus in Nazareth

Private Sp. Reading – Luke 6/20-36; Imit. I. 22.

Ejaculation – My God and My All.

Thoughts – 1. As St. Bernard says, our Divine Saviour was born poor, lived poorer and died the poorest. Jesus Himself brings it to our notice thus: “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man has no where to lay his head” (Matt. 8/20).

2. Our Lord extols the merits of poverty: “Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 5/3). The special mission of Christ was to preach to the poor: “He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor” (Lk. 4/8). Jesus identifies Himself with the poor: “As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me” (Matt. 25/41).

3. The Eternal High priest wanted his first priests to leave every thing and follow Him: “Every one of you that does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14/33).

4. The Apostles were asked to lead a life of poverty: “Do not possess gold nor silver nor

money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats nor shoes nor a staff" (Mt.10/9-10).

5. The Second Vatican exhorts the priests to imitate Christ "Who being rich became for our sake poor, that through His poverty we might be rich" (2 Cor. 8/9).

"Indeed, they are invited to embrace voluntary poverty. By it they will be more clearly likened to Christ and will be more devoted to the sacred ministry"...."They should not regard an ecclesiastical office as a source of profit; nor should they spend the revenue accruing to it for the advantage of their own families." .."What remains beyond the (decent livelihood) they should devote to the good of the Church or to the works of charity" (priests: no. 17).

6. Love of wordly goods is an obstacle to our spiritual perfection. "No man can serve two masters, God and mammon" (Matt.6/24). "The soul which remains attached to the least thing will not arrive at the liberty of Divine Union"(St. John Chrysostom).

7. Avarice is "the root of all evil." It endangers our priestly vocation as well as our eternal salvation. The sad fate of Judas confirms it. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven".

The attachment to riches develops pride and disobedience as we place greater confidence in our riches than in our God. It also leads us to sensuality and sloth, for when we have money and love it, we either wish to enjoy the pleasures that money can procure or if we forego these pleasures, our heart clings to the money itself.

8. Avarice makes our priestly ministry fruitless. The priest may even fail altogether in the discharge of his duty from neglecting those ministries which bring him no material gain. "Too often indeed, he will be a hindrance rather than an instrument of grace in the midst of his people. On the other hand a priest really detached from earthly goods becomes a veritable father of the poor and works among his flock marvels recalling a Cure of Ars, a Don Bosco and so many others"(P. Pius XI).

How to practise poverty

1. Try to achieve a profound conviction that wealth is not an end but a means given by God to provide for our needs and those of our brethren. "Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6/19,20).

2. Meditate often on the words of St. Augustine: "He is too avaricious for whom God is not sufficient".

3. Study very closely the example given by Our Lord at Bethlehem, at Nazareth and on Calvary.

4. Be fully convinced that you are called to a life of detachment and to seek only the salvation of souls.

5. As a member of the Church, which is particularly "The church of the poor" (P. John XIII), you are bound to partake of her poverty. So remember that you have no right for any special conveniences of life.

6. As you are called to become a father of the poor, be convinced, that you are bound to practise the virtue of poverty even now in the seminary.

7. Be content with the necessaries and despise all superfluities.

8. Take a reasonable care of your clothes, books etc. and learn to economize.

9. Think of the poverty and misery of the people outside and try to keep a sympathetic heart for them.

10. Do not forget that cleanliness should always accompany poverty.

Self examination

1. How do I like the virtue of poverty?

2. Do I receive humbly and thankfully what is given to me?

3. Am I dissatisfied with anything that is given to me?

4. Do I ask what I need as a poor man and not like a master?

5. Am I careful not to waste or spoil the things I make use of?

6. Do I keep a correct account of my money?

7. Have I any superfluities?

8. Do I find pleasure in helping others in their needs?

9. Am I ashamed to admit my poverty?

5. Humility as Basic Christian Attitude

Greek *tapeino's* and Roman *humilis* meant petty, base, servile. In the Old Testament there are occasional passages which are profound exhortations to humility. e.g. Ecl.2/1-6;3/19-24; 10/7,14-24; Prov. 16/18,19; Osee 5/4; Isaias 19/12-24. There are many prayers, notably in the Psalms charged with the most beautiful sentiments of humility.

2. The Humility of Christ

The ideal of humility is revealed in its perfection only in the example and teaching of Christ. "Who being in the form of God,....

thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names: That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. II 6-12).

There is a two fold tendency in the virtue of Christian humility: toward those who are above us and toward those who are our equals and inferiors. The first one is the response of created being to Creator, a recognition and affirmation of utter dependance on God. The second aspect, characteristically Christian, is the humility of the Superior Person toward the inferior. Christ in his humanity showed the highest example of both of these tendencies, of dependance on God and gracious condescension to mankind. Christian humility has thus become true recognition of the transcendence of God and the imitation of the grand and unique movement of God in Christ. Christ freely renounces His majesty and exaltations

and dwelt among men as one of them, in order to be the free and blessed servant of every man and of all creation.

In Christ is revealed the tremendous novelty that humility does not spring from baseness or inferiority but flows from the heights above, from the divine bounty to man. In the words of St. Augustine, it is God "Who descends from heaven by the weight of His Charity."

3. Manifestations of this humility

As it was for the incarnation so too for the entire life, we have in Jesus the example of the incomparable union of the two tendencies involved in humility, humility which is profoundly conscious of the transcendence of those above and humility which stoops lovingly to inferiors. In His humanity He showed the humility of the creature before its Creator, of the child towards the Father. He showed at the same time that God does not fear that He shall suffer loss, if, in His love, He stoops down to His creatures. Only pride seeks presumptuous superiority.

The truly great and noble follow the bold way of love for the little and the least.

Let us reflect a while over some of the striking manifestations of this humility.

Examine our attitude in circumstances which have some resemblance with the circumstances which Christ faced.

i. **The Incarnation** Phil. 2/7 "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness or men....", Hebr. 10/17 "When He cometh into the world, He Saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast bitted to Me; holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said: Behold, I come; in the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will, O God", see also Hebr. 12/1,2: "Let us run by Patience to the fight proposed to us, looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, having joy set before Him, entered the Cross, despising the shame." It was this very humility which made him so gentle, so engaging, so mild and so full of divine compassion in his intercourse with us, men, even with the greatest sinners (Meschler). Application....

ii **The nativity** "And she brought forth her first born Son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2/7).

Consider the poverty, humility, desolation, obscurity of the surroundings. Still it was the greatest event in history, birth of the King of all time! Application....

ii Flight into Egypt. Mt. 2/20,21:

What a depth of abasement there is in the creator thus feeling before his creature! God respects the freedom of His creatures and leaves them full play for their actions, without however altering His decrees (Meschler) Application....

iv The hidden life at Nazareth (Luke 2/51,52)

“And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject to them. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.” A life of obscurity; in a lowly place (Nazareth); with people of ordinary status; engaged in ordinary works....every thing so humble that no one could have taken any notice of his hidden greatness and mission. Truly he “went down.” My attitude....?

v Baptism in Jordan Mt. 3/13-17....

But John stayed him saying: “I ought to be baptised by thee, and comest thou to me? “And Jesus answering said to him: “Suffer it to be so; for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice. The God - Man had become as one of the people; and had witherto subjected himself to the whole law; now he wished also to receive baptism. It is well worthy of note that the first public act of Jesus is an act of unfathomable humility, self abasement and penance”(Meschler) My attitude...

vi Against the Temptation by Satan (Mt. 5/1-11)

The temptation of Christ in the desert by Satan brings into clear daylight the profound opposition that exists between the standard of Christ our Lord and that of the devil. Christ was tempted to misuse his miraculous powers. The scheme proposed by Satan was, on the surface, seemingly for the good of Christ's mission among men; in reality, however, it was all a ruse, directed to the devil's own purposes, and was thus rejected by Christ. Let us listen to St. Matthew's account.

vii Miracles. Almost all of them are worked out of compassion for the weak, the low, the needy. The power is attributed to the Heavenly Father... explicitly in words, or implicitly by His prayer, Christ tries to avoid publicity. Good is never to be done for the purpose of obtaining honour, now ought we to procure ourselves honour from it.... Humility and unselfishness are often revealed in the quiet and unobtrusive manner in which he performs them, in his acceptance of the assistance of the Apostles and again in his refusing to let the people to make hero of him, in their gratitude (f. i. at the multiplication of the loaves). My attitude in doing good.....

viii The slow and gradual manifestation of His divinity.

He charges the apostles not to reveal it until

the Son of Man be risen from the dead
(Mt. 16/20; Mk. 9/10).

ix The washing of the disciples' feet. (John 13/1-17)

"Then after he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, being set down again, he said to them: 'know you what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also. . . . If you know these things, you shall be blessed-if you do them.'" Who can compare himself to our Lord? And yet He performs in person this office of love and humility. And upon whom? Upon His Apostles and servants. And in what does this service consist? In washing their feet that is to say, performing the lowest and most servile office, that was usually done by slaves. No wonder Peter resisted it.

Here is a lesson of loving humility and humble charity. We must have both. Humility without charity is like the bright but cold light of the moon; charity without humility is but a transient flame, and often but veiled selfishness. It is the union of these two virtues which characterises the Church and Christianity.

x **The Agony in the Garden and throughout the Passion**

The silence during the mental and physical pains inflicted, the reviling at the foot of the cross, in fine, the way he faced every detail of the passion is clear proof of his boundless humility and striking example for all mankind.

Patience with which he continued to preach and do good inspite of unceasing opposition of His enemies who tried to misinterpret his words and actions. They hated me without reason”

(John 15/25).

Service “I am in your midst as one who serves” (Lk: 22/27). In his perfect obedience to men, in his respect and love for the sinners and publicans, in a vocation of Charity toward men in all their needs his was a life of service.

Obedience Incomparable is the mingling of humility with obedience, for humility and spirit of obedience belong together. Humbled himself becoming obedient unto death on the shameful tree of the cross (Phil. 2/8).

4. Christ wants us to learn of him

Christ wishes us to join with Him in His humility. Elevated as we are by grace and the divine worship, we can follow Him in the path He treads, the path of loving service for the least of creatures and obedience to the heavenly Father.

How? The very providential visitations and dispositions which God imposes or permits through the best of His creatures become the occasion of both humble service to men and perfect obedience to God.

The humility of Christ is truly unique and utterly different from the humility of mere men in one point: it is neither the humility of a mere creature nor the humility of a sinner. Thus it lacks the most compelling motives which we possess. And yet, it is supreme humility. How? The actual dynamic force of humility, its force of gravity, is *love*. Christ is infinite love. Moreover, Christ by taking upon himself the punishment of our sins, and through His humility raising us from the degradation of sin to the royal dignity of the Kingdom of God, has taught us also of our double debt of humility.

Instances of his teaching

In how many ways does the Lord try to bring home to the disciples the value and need of humility!

With a stress equal to the new commandment "love one another as I have loved you" he says: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt. 11/29). The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord.

“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord....” (Mt.10,24-25). Hearing that the Apostles disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest, he called them and said, “If any man desire to be the first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all” (Mk. 9/34;10/43; Luke 22/24-27).

The Washing of the Apostle's feet too was occasioned by such a dispute.

ii) Imitation of his humility is the obiding basic condition on which the whole worth of our discipleship depends. “If any one wishes to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt.16/24; Mk.8/34/38; Lk. 9/23-27).

One has to be converted and become humble like a little child to accept, to enter, to be of any worth in the Kingdom of heaven

(Mt.18/1-4;10/15; Lk. 18/16,17).

iii) Humility is the foundation of our exaltation. It was so for the humanity of Christ. His humility was the mentorius cause of our own exaltation. We too should imitate Him. “Who ever exalts himself will be humbled who ever humbles himself will be exalted.” Reference to the self exaltation of the pharisees (Mt.23/5-12)

to those who sought higher seats at the banquet
(Lk. 14/7-11).

The Destruction of Jerusalem, the non justification of the pharisee in prayer are other instances of the same truth.

iv) Reflect again on the gentle warning contained in the Words of Christ "I confers to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to the little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight" (Mt. 11/25,26; Lk.10/21). Only if we possess the spirit of humility are we capable of learning from Christ. Think of the shepherds at Bethlehem, the apostles of humble occupations,....Gospel "preached to the poor." We can share in the wisdom and grace of Christ only in so far as we are humble. How impressively He advises us not to make a show of our prayer, of the good works we do etc. The Father who sees us in secret will reward us in secret. Otherwise we receive only earthly reward (Mt.6/1-9).

v) The Beatitudes too are eloquent testimony of Christ's witness to humility. "Blessed are the poor in spirit....Blessed are the meek... they that mourn....they that suffer persecution for justice sake....when they revile you...."
(Mt.5/3-10).

He that will save his life, shall lose it; he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it (Mt.16/25) Christ who wishes that we participate in his humility in order that we may participate also in his glory.

vi The Gospel presents to us several persons whose humility is so pleasing to God.

First of all *Mary the Mother of God*. Reflect on her humility expressed at the Annunciation ("the handmaid of the Lord") / in her visit to her aunt Elisabeth, / in the hymn of divine praise which she sang on that occasion / at the misunderstanding of Joseph her spouse / at Bethlehem / in the temple presenting herself for the ceremony of purification, / in her humble works at Nazareth, / during the public life of our Lord and finally at the foot of the Cross. Next to Jesus there is no brighter example of humility.

Then, St. Joseph; his humble attitude during the period of suspicion, at Bethlehem, flight to Egypt and at Nazareth.

St. John Baptist, "He must increase I must decrease." "I am not fit to unfasten his shoes (Mk.1/7,8). After me comes one mightier than me...." He persuades his disciples to follow Jesus.

Elisabeth: "who am I that the Mother of the Lord should visit me (Lk.1/43).

St. Peter: "Depart from me, O Lord for I am a sinner"

The shepherds, Mary Magdalen, the centurion (Mt.8/8) the kannanite woman, Zachaeus, the woman with the issue of blood, the lepers who called from far....

The figures in the parables: the repentant prodigal, the public can at prayer, Lazarus at the gate of the rich man etc....

The history of the Church and her daily life records. Millions of heroic souls who followed and follow the path of humility chosen by the Master.

The Epistles

Though a bit slowly, the Apostles caught the lesson very well. By word and example they tried to inculcate it into all.

St. Paul.

"I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void...." (I Cor. 15/9-10) "What hast thou" he asks (I Cor. 4/7) that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hast not received it."

"To me the least of all Saints' is given this grace' to preach among the gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ...."(Eph. 3/8).

Raised up once to the visions and revelations of the Lord, he says "For such a one I will glory but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me' there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me; My Grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches in necessities, in persecutions, in distress, for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am powerful".(2 Cor. 12/5-10).

The Apostle glories in nothing but in the doctrine of the Cross, folly for the Greeks and stumbling block for the Jews. He counts divine folly wiser than the wisdom of man, divine weakness stronger than man's strength. (I Cor. 1/18, 25-31; 2/2; 4/7-14). we are no better than pots of earthenware to contain the heavenly treasures which are far Superior to our own nature (2 Cor. 4/7-11). The attitude of the creature to the creator is well expressed in his

exclamation "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it. Way hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour"? (Rom. 9/20,21)

He exhorts his beloved Christians of Philippi "Fulfil ye my joy, that you be of one mind, having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment. Let nothing be done through contention, neither by vain glory! But in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves: Each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God." (phil. 2/2-5) Here follows the well known description of Christ's self abasement. The same exhortation for mutual respect and concord is given in Rom. 14/19 and 16/17,18; "Be servants to one another in love" (Gal 5/13). In Gal. 5/20 he indicates contention, envy, selfish ambition etc. as manifestation of the lower nature which those who belong to Christ must crucify; he exhorts gentleness in correcting faults of impulse "considering thyself least thou also be tempted".

Questionnaire for a special exam. on pride

1. Pride of Superiority

Is manifested by:

- a) An overbearing attitude: Have I a Superior attitude in thinking, speaking or acting?

Have I offensive, haughty ways of acting or of carrying myself? Do I demand recognition?

Do I use the word "I" so much as to make it offensive?

Do I desire to be always first? Am I ready to seek and accept advice? Am I prove to be little persons places or things? What have I done to correct overbearing attitude?

b) A critical attitude: Am I prone to be critical of persons, places and things? Am I uncharitable Do I speak ill of others? Have I lied about others? Am I given to speak about the faults of others? Do I listen to others who speak ill of others? Do I seek to place blame on others, excusing myself? Do I ridicule others? Am I jealous? Am I envious wishing evil to another, rejoicing at his failures? Do I carry small dislikes or even more serious ones? Is there any one I dislike to speak to? What have I done to correct this critical attitude?

c) An argumentative attitude: Am I prone to argue? Have I a Superior, "know-it-all" attitude arguments? Do I think that others are quite wrong? Do I refuse to give consideration to what they state? It is hard for me to yield a point? Do I try to see both sides of a question? Do I argue in my own defence, even when I know

I am wrong? Do I insist on having the last word. Have I tried to argue reasonably and without a raised tone? What have I done to correct his argumentative attitude?

d) *An angry attitude:* Do I easily lose my temper? Does loss of temper make me sullen, unkind, uncharitable and critical? Do I get angry because of opposition? Am I so set on winning games scoring high positions that I get dejected when losing? Do my mistakes make me angry? Does a correction of any kind make me angry? Is it a particular person, or place, or thing that arouses my temper? What have I done to correct faults against meekness?

II Pride of Timidity

Do I think, speak and act timidly. Have I shy eyes and shy manner? Am I easily embarrassed? Do I recognize my weakness as they really are? Do I try to hide them? Do I fear ridicule because of them? Am I shy about doing things in public? Do I try to get out of them? Do I compare my talents to those of others and feel exalted or dejected? Do I understand that God has given me what I have? Do I bury my physical, mental or spiritual talents or I try to develop them? Am I so afraid of mistakes as not to try at all? Am I open and frank to

Superior? To my Confessor? Am I afraid to be pious? Obedient? Charitable? Humble? Mortified? Studious? Do I stay with the crowd be it right or wrong? Does shyness lead me into deliberate wrong? Am I afraid to correct others? What have done to correct pride of timidity?

III Pride of sensitiveness

Am I easily wounded? Am I suspicious? Distrustful? Do I misjudge, mis-interpret others? Do I accuse others of being unjust and unfair to me? Do I allow innocent fun at my expense? Do I think that others do not like me? That I am unwelcome in the company of others? Am I moody? Am I hard to get along with? Am I willing to accept advice, correction, help? Do I get upset when I feel I not sufficiently attended to? what have I done to correct pride of sensitiveness?

IV Pride of complacency or vanity

a) In Sp. affairs:- Am I subject to vain glory? Am I vain in thoughts, in words, in acts in regard to spiritual affairs? Am I vain about my meditation? Mass? devotions? etc. Am I vain about my virtues such as obedience, mortification, penance? Does vanity enter into my confessions, directions? monitions? Do I act piously? seek

strange devotions? Do I love to speak about my goodness? Do I criticize the spiritual life of others? Do I pray God for help in all my undertakings? Do I thank Him for all my success?

b) In my internal behaviour:- Am I vain in thoughts, in words or in acts concerning my mental ability? Do I have distractions of vain glory? Do, I day-dream in a heroic way? Am I vain about my memory? My imagination? My knowledge? Do I ask questions for the purpose of showing my ability? Have I a conceited way of explaining things to others? Do I speak about my mental ability? Am I earnest enough to do all things for the glory of God? How shall I correct my deficiencies in this matter?

c) In external affairs:- Am I vain in my actions? looks? vain about my personal appearances? dress? vain in the way I speak? walk? Am I vain about my health? vain in my games? vain in singing? Am I vain about the things I use? Do I glory about my success? about my family? What have done to correct this vanity in external affairs?

Positively

How do I stand in relation to the example of humility set by Christ and his teachings on this matter? With what reverence do I honour

God, conform myself to His will, obey Superiors out of love of God? What patience do I show against difficulties, sufferings, privations and especially humiliations?

Have I a desire to love the cross and love humiliation, in union with Christ and out of love for Him?

Am I prepared (i) to accept myself with all my deficiencies, (ii) to accept others knowing me for my real worthlessness and, (iii) to be treated for what I am? "Then we attain complete self effacement, and God alone lives and reigns within us."

6. Cleanliness of Heart

"Blessed are the clean of Heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5/8)

"by their fruits you shall know them"

(Mt.7/16)

1. The Holy Season of Advent

Preparation for a more intense application of the graces of the first coming of the Lord, in order that we may be found pleasing to Him at His Second Coming.

The Church in her Liturgy reminds us of the preaching of John the Baptist: "Repent, for

the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 3/2). "Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight his Paths"(Mt.3/3). The words of the prophets of old are echoed and summed up in these words. The salutary response to the preaching was repentance and baptism of penance. That made them clean. We have to enter into their spirit that we may be made clean.

Christ came to the world to cleanse us from sin:
(read Tit. 2.11-15)

2. Preparation for the Feast of the *Immaculate Conception*. The Immaculate Lady was prepared as the fitting receptacle to receive the Word of God from the bosom of the Father. She would help us to clean ourselves and to prepare to receive the Lord in all humility and hope.

3. The concluding functions of the *Vatican Council*: 5th-8th Dec.

The Council wishes to see the Church as Christ wished her to be; "Christ loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5/25-27). Let us try to respond to Christ's wish.

These thoughts serve as special incentives to devote special attention to the subject of *cleanliness of heart* on this recollection day.

II

4. Sacred Scripture speaks of *several kinds of cleanliness*: material cleanliness, legal cleanliness (including freedom from certain physical ills like leprosy), ceremonial cleanliness (often referred to in Leviticus, Deuteronomy), and most important of all, cleanliness of heart which is detachment from guilt or sin.

Our Lord's address to the pharisees recorded in Mt. 23. 25-25 refers to the two kinds of cleanliness mentioned last. He condemns the pharisees' attention to legal cleanliness neglecting cleanliness of heart. (Read the passage). The strange paradox of their behaviour is evident on the Friday of Crucifixion. "Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the governor's hall. And it was morning; and they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that the might eat the pasch". (Jn.18.28)

5. Cleanliness which our Lord desires us to preserve is the inward cleanliness, *cleanliness of heart*. "And calling again the multitude unto him he said to them: Hear ye me all and understand. There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him; but the things which come from a man, those are they that defile a man. If any man have ears to hear, let him

hear" "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." The same cleanliness is understood in his words at the last supper. "Jesus saith to him: He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. *And you are clean, but not all*". "For he knew who he was that would betray him; therefore he said: You are not all clean". Referring further to the disciple's union with Him as the branches in the vine, He adds: "Now you are clean, by reason of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15. 3)

III

6. The exhortation of the Master is repeated by the Apostles. *St. Paul* in his *Epistle to the Romans* Ch. VI-VIII describes the nature and implications of the Christian's death to sin and life in Christ through baptism. Read the chapters VI & VIII and see how cleanliness is implied all through. In the *Epistle to the Galatians* he exhorts the Christians to walk in the Spirit and not to follow the lusts of the flesh.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are: fornication, uncleanness, immodesty,

luxury, Idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissension, sects, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you; that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, Mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be made desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." In his Epistle to the Colossians, the Apostle, Referring to the new life which the newly converted Christians have entered into, remarks "And you, whereas you were some time alienated and enemies in mind in evil works: Yet now He hath reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you *holy and unspotted and blameless* before him" (Col.1.21,22)

"Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with

Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is the service of idols. For which things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of unbelief, in which you also walked some time, when you lived in them. But now put you also all away: anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech out of your mouth. Lie not one to another; stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him that created him; Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all. Put ye on therefore, us the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility modesty, patience; Bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another. Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. "But above all these things have charity; which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts. wherein also you are called in one body. And be ye thankful". In the first epistle to the Thessalonians he adds: "For this is the will of

God your sanctification....every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour....For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification". (I Thess. 4.3-7). In his epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle refers to the precious blood of Christ which has procured our redemption. Cleansed thus from sin, we ought to keep it clean. Bought by the precious blood we must esteem our salvation. Towards the end he adds: "Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees,..And make straight steps with your feet; that no one, halting, may go out of the way, but rather be healed....Follow peace with all men and holiness; without which no man shall see God....Looking diligently, lest any man be wanting to the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up do hinder and by it many be defiled".

7. The paternal exhortation of *St. Peter* to the newly born Christians: "Lay aside therefore all malice, and all deceit, and pretense, and envy, and all slander. Crave as new born babes, pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow to salvation". (I Pet. 2.1,2).

8. *St. James* in his epistle refers to the defilement at times caused by the tongue.

Read Ch.3.1-12) "The tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity".

9. The inspired words we have so far referred to are applicable to all Christians. They have a special force for us, who are called to be Ambassadors of Christ, Mediators, between God and men, teachers in Israel (who have to teach both by word and by example) light of the world and salt of the earth. The priesthood we participate is that of Christ "a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens" (Hebr. 7. 26) The words of the Apostle to the beloved disciple Timothy whom he appointed over the Church in Ephesus are to be engraved in our hearts: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity" (Tim.4.12) "Know the tree from the fruits".

IV

10. The ardent desire of the Church in our regard is expressed in the words of the supreme Pontiffs. No exhortation to priests leaves unstressed the great need of purity in the life of a priest. Pope Pius XI in a discourse to the International Pilgrimage of Seminarians on the occasion of the Sacerdotal Jubilee of the Supreme Pontiff on 24 July 1929 said:

“There is a further pledge, one which is demanded in a special way, the pledge of purity which befits one who must constantly nourish himself on the Flesh of the Lamb who feedeth among the lilies. Divine purity before which the Church, as we proclaim daily in our prayers and hymns, stands amazed that it did not shrink from even the ineffable purity of the Virgin Mary: non horruisti Virginis uterum. What then are we to say of the purity demanded from us? What purity will adequate for those who are destined to be the ministers of the divine Eucharist? Pledged to purity; let your purity be angelic, even as the ministry to which you are called by God is angelic and more than angelic. Purity is called for not only for the sake of piety, but also for the sake of knowledge, for it is written: Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins. Knowledge is a reflection of the all-pure divine light, it is a perfume which cannot be preserved in mire. Purity of intellect, of mind, of heart, purity of the whole life, of all one’s acts, of one’s whole existence, as is fitting in one who not merely stands before God’s eyes but is close to the Heart of God”.

11. Pope Pius XII, as Cardinal Pacelli in 1935, preaching a Holy Hour for priests in Lourds said: “Even among pagans the priests

were regarded as separated from common men, and in the Old Law, which pre-figured the sacrifice of the New Law in many ways, although falling infinitely short of the reality, an exceptional purity was demanded from priests, especially when they approached the altar for sacrifice.

It is not evident then that, strive as will, words would fail us to describe a purity which, even if it were perfect and equal to that of the angels, would make us, not indeed worthy, but only less unworthy, to ascend the steps of the eucharistic altar. In this matter, our thoughts always fall short of the truth, as is stated in the flaming words of St. Chrysostom: "How pure should not be who shares in this sacrifice! More resplendent than the sun must be the hand that divides this Flesh, the mouth which is filled with spiritual fire, the tongue which is reddened by this Blood. Consider the honour to which you have been raised, the table at which you have been seated. What the angels do not see without trembling, what they cannot look on without fear, because of the light which flashes from it, is our nourishment! It becomes united to us, and we becomes one body and one flesh with Christ. Who will recount the powers of God... who will chant his praises?"

V

12. Several passages in our Eucharistic liturgy refer to the cleanliness required of us and means of obtaining the same.

13. Read the entire Psalms 14 – “Lord who shall dwell in thy tabernacle” and Psalm 50 “Have Mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy.” and Psalm 23:

“Who shall ascend into the mountain of the
Lord:

or who shall stand in his holy place?

The innocent in hand, and clean of heart
who hath not taken his soul in vain,
now sworn deceitfully to his neighbour.

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
and mercy from God his saviour.

This is the generation of them that seek him,
of them that seek the face of the God of
Jacob (Psalm 23.3-6).

14. We should not be disheartened at our past iniquities nor at the dangers that await us. Let us have confidence in God’s mercy and in his help..

“If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool (Is. 1.18)

“And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me: and I will forgive all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me, and despised me”
(Jer. 33.8)

“Nor shall they be defiled any more with their idols, nor with their abominations, nor with all their iniquities: and I will save them out of all the place, in which they have sinned, and I will cleanse them: and they shall be my people and I will be their God” (Ez. 38.23).

Consider God's great revelation of mercy and forgiveness through Christ our th ^{mer.} ^{ted in} ^{Be} ^{an} ^{unfailing} ^{source} ^{of} ^{confidence}. His words and acts of forgiveness should be an unfailing source of confidence.

The prayer of our Lord to the Father on behalf of the disciples is an unfailing source of strength for us “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil” (John 17.15). Read the entire chapter.

Conclusion:- The texts we have cited teach us:

1. How important is cleanliness of heart to enter God's kingdom, to appeal before God, to see him, to be united with him;
- 2) What are the abominations that defile us before God: not only sins against chastity

but all sins; pride, uncharitableness, sensuality, avarice. . . . the seven capital vices.

3. Though cleanliness is implied in the very christian life, in his baptism and life of union with Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. The sanctity required of us priests asks for a greater cleanliness

5. We should not be disheartened at our past failures. Have confidence in God's mercy and also in His help.

Let us make a careful examination of ourselves and see how we are in regard to:

Purity of *conscience* and try to maintain habitual state of soul averse to all sin;

Purity of *heart* and keep off from culpable attachments;

Purity of *mind* and reject dangerous, pre-occupying and (when necessary), useless thoughts;

Purity of will by trying to conform ourselves to the will of God by holy abandonment.

Let us try to grow in purity of heart by

- expiation and reparation of past faults
- detachment from whatever may lead to sin
- horror for all deliberate sins (whether

mortal or venial) without being frightened over sins of frailty.

Let us positively try to grow in the esteem of purity and guard it with all care. "Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation" (Mt. 26.41).

"Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and
 cleanse me from my sin
 Create a clean heart, in me O God,
 and renew a right spirit within my bowels:
 (Ps. 50).

"And a leper came to him, entreating him . . . ,
 "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And
 Jesus having compassion on him, stretched forth
 his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I
 will; be thou made clean" (Mk. 1.4).

The spirit of Abnegation

Introduction

- Fitness of this subject in this season approaching lent
- Abnegation which we speak about

is not { that of the ordinary Christian or
 that of a monk secluded in his cloister

It is that of a pastor of souls - of pastors who live in the world without belonging to the world. Hence special problems both theoretical and practical.

Necessity of a formation for abnegation

One might say that modern needs of apostolate call for priests to be complete men, perfect in every line, and that abnegation might seem to be contrary to the striving for the due perfection.

But, in reality, the words of our Lord "Amen, amen I say to you unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground and die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit: He that loveth his life shall loose it and the that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal" (John 12/24) have their value today as in his times.

For, it is evident from experience that without the spirit of abnegation, deep and complete, no one will be able to persevere in his apostolate; nor with one obtain the blessings of God which alone gives fruit to the apostolic activities.

Spirit of self abnegation is necessary also for the harmonious development of the human talents and qualities of the future apostle. Otherwise he will be a deformed personality causing grave harm both for himself and for the Church in whose service he enters. Nature, unless it is trained to serve grace, will expel grace.

At the same time we do not expect the future apostles, which the seminarists are to be,

to destroy whatever is naturally good in them. The supernatural builds on and works with the natural talents. The more perfect the machine, the better the effect of power applied to it. Abnegation, however, is reflected in the very perfecting of the machine.

Necessity for a theological basis

The right concept and positive value of abnegation is often over looked. Those who have less esteem for self denial, be it in theory or in practice, are those who conceive it just under certain traditional formulas or particular practices. Conceiving self abnegation under these formulas or practices, which may not fit in with every circumstance they develop an aversion or raise objections against its advisability. They over look the idea that manifestation of the spirit of self abnegation need not be the same with everyone or every time. The manifestation of the spirit of abnegation in a priest in the world is different from that of a monk in his solitude. It is because some confound the *spirit* with the *manifestation*, that after a period of appreciation in early years of spiritual formation they reject the whole practice enbloc as if exaggerated or antiquate.

The means and opportunities granted to practise selfdenial will have no salutary or

lasting effect unless each one takes them up in the proper spirit and with a personal appreciation and make use of them to develop the spirit of self denial personally for oneself; ofcourse, with the help of those who guide him. The rules and directions given by the directors in this matter will be general and suggestive. They are to be made personal, concrete and complete each one for himself.

I Nature of Christian Abnegation:

The fundamental text of the Gospel. "And he said to all: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me....For whosoever will save his life shall lose for he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall save it....For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself and cast away himself?... For he that shall be ashamed of me and of words, of him the Son of man shall be ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels" (Lk.9/23-26.) All the three synoptics refer to these words immediately after the reproof given to Peter who manifested "sentimentes of men, not of God", at the prediction of the passion.

Cfr. Mt. 16/24-27, Mc. 8, 34-38.

Important factors

1. It is not an end itself it is a means to follow Jesus:-

Just meditate on the words of our Lord cited above. It helps him from loosing his life enclosed in egoism. It helps him to possess this life fully on the day of the judgement of God.

Various analogies will bring this idea clear to us. Daily experience shows how we make a lot of sacrifices for the sake of greater good which we desire to obtain. Read St. Paul's reference to the efforts of the competitors in sports (I Cor- 9,25) reflect over their self abnegation and their efforts to obtain the crown. All philosophers, whether Christian or not, stresses the need of controlling and often fighting against instincts in order that man may be able to lead a life becoming of rational beings. In sickness, in study, in persuit of ideals etc. we accept this principle.

The Christian concept of abnegation and promise of reward is much higher and of a different nature than that of the natural order for abnegation and the law of fecundity. For the full fecundity of christian abnegation is in the reward in life to come: The fruit of Christian abnegation is reaped in its fullness on the day of the Lord which we are assured of by our

faith. The son of man will render retribution to each one according to his works.

If the life to come is an illusion if the incorruptible crown (I Cor. 15,19) is not a reality, then the Christians are the most miserable of all.

Priests or seminarians who do not have an esteem for self denial, or have an esteem only for those acts of self denial which bring immediate fruit, seem to show that the rewards promised by our Lord in the life to come have no motive force on them.

2. Secondly christian abnegation is, as is clear from the Gospel texts cited, a means to *follow Jesus* (If any one wish to follow me...) "qui propinto sibi gaudio aeternae vitae sustinuit curcem" to merit glory for himself and for the members of the mystical body. He aid it in compliance with His Father's will for the good of all mankind. Christian life, after the example of Jesus, is a life of obedience to the will of God of self sacrifice for the glory of the Father and for the good of the brethren what fields of sacrifices does this key of obedience open before us!

3. **Collaboration with Christ:** What great love does Christ show us when he invites us to be his

companions in his sorrowful paths! If only we would cling to God's will during this obscure night of the faith, what joy He is going to give us in the beatific vision! As becomes good friends let us not be simple receivers but also givers, cooperators in the work of redemption.

4. Means of reparation for our sin: The necessity to atone sin presses us. God in his mercy has permitted man to contribute to the atonement Christ born as the Son of Man has atoned; he permits our co-operation. By baptism we are incorporated to Christ become His members, "et ideo, conveniens est, ut id agatur in membro incorporato quod est actum in capite" (St. Thomas) Christ full of grace and truth, has chosen to rise to his glory through the passion and death; so too Christians. It is very kind of God to permit us to join with Christ in the work of reparation.

In the light of what we have seen we may describe the spirit of self abnegation as "the spiritual disposition which prompts us to follow the will of the Father rather than our own in imitation of and in union with Jesus Christ.

II Grades of abnegation

I renounce all that is against God ie. to renounce mortal sin.

- II renounce all is not according to God - ie renounce venial sin-avoid.
- III renounce all that is not for the better service of God imperfection.
- IV desire to be diversted and humiliated in union with Christ.

The total abnegation of the apostle

The first grade is necessary not only for pastors but also for all Christians who wish to live in friendship with Christ. This itself involves plenty of sacrifices though not usually of the heroic character. The apostle, true to his name, cannot be satisfied with this first elementary grade of self denial; he should aim at the highest one, at a positive love of the cross. "That the world may know that I love the father, come, let us go..." a life of self denial is the mark of the apostle's love for the Father. The world has reason to rebuke us if it does not find in us the spirit of self denial, the sign of love for the Father and of companionship with Christ.

To bear witness to Christ: To accept fully our vocation as apostles is to accept the mind to put on that feeling which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. II) to show not only by words but also by our life that God alone is the good, and that to enjoy the reward he has promised us in

heaven, it is worthwhile to leave everything in this world.

To repara sin: Moreover, it is inconceivable that one should exercise his apostolate without hating sin. In this too he imitates Christ too hated it, not only to prevent sin but also to repair sin. By offering himself to acts of reparation in union with and in imitation of Jesus' through a loving acceptance of God's will. This may lead to a desire for renunciation even to foolishness matching the foolishness of those who prefer pleasure to the will of God.

To be ready for disposal for the greater glory of God:

To seek the glory of God, to be prepared to make any sacrifice for the same, should become a motive force for the apostle. Such a priest will be perfectly at the disposal of Christ. The greater glory of God which we are to seek is not the greater glory in abstract; it is that glory which God desires in our fulfilling here and now what he desires of us. For example, it is not for the greater glory of God or one's own perfection, if one, called to external works under a given circumstance, takes himself to hours to solitary prayer, to severe fast, discipline and sleepless vigils resulting in damage to the works he is called. Nor does it conduce to the glory of God if one given to external works

looses contact with God, nor attend to the divine will in the manner of exercise of the works. One in keeping with his vocation to be a future apostle should work hard to develop his talents for apostolic works; this is for the greater glory of God; (the case is different in the case of a solitary monk whom may be called upon to suffer sacrifice the exercise of some of his talents. But this does not of mean unlimited or indiscrete attempt to develop all the talents. He should do it dependent on God's will as manifested through the normal chanel.

The love of the cross, a habitual disposition to choose alwayes that which implies a closer following of Christ should be cemented into the apostolic life.

The Cross of the Priest

“Take up his cross” The cross which the priest should embrace in its full significance is a life which is solely solicitous for the interests of the heavenly Father, always at the service of those who need his help to guide them to Jesus.

The cross which the priest should embrace for the glory of God is the exercise of that work which shall be determined by his ability,

circumstances of life, and the will of the superiors.

An inevitable delusion may come up when a priest contrasts that which *he had intended* to do and that which *he is called upon* to do in reality; experience of discouraging failures, may lead one to inactivity. As a remedy against this and to keep up the same speed we must be deeply persuaded that what God wants of us for the spread of his kingdom is the realisation not just of our plans but of His plans. Which may come manifested to us without interruption at times through the joke of the secondary causes.

Viewed this way a priestly life will never be a failure unless we stamp it so; for failure is the outcome of an effort to seek our unwill rather than the will of God, in other words feeling of failure is the outcome of lack of the spirit of self denial.

Means to Acquire This Spirit

1. **Loving meditation** of the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2: **Fidelity to this example in daily activities** by in the fulfilment of one's daily duties ("take up his cross and follow me....", in the patient bearing

of trials, ("with Christ I am nailed to the Cross") in the exercise of perfect charity ("they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences".....) etc.

A daily dose of voluntary mortifications, interior as well as exterior, to dispose ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to make reparation for sins will be very necessary and useful.

The seminarian must learn to maintain due equilibrium between work, mortifications etc, and the need for rest, physical as well as mental. God wills it. Christ maintained it. The need for rest as also need for voluntary acts of self denial may vary from person to person from circumstance to circumstance.

Each one should try to understand the ideal of *his* vocation *in concrete*. This ideal becomes a motive force capable of moving him in particular cases. Surely he will feel drawn back in the face of difficulties, trials and call for self-denial. Let him remember that if he is to follow his selfish tendencies rather than the call and example of Christ, he would become, at the best, an apostle of a low spirit, a sad case. Self denial is a necessary condition to become, and to be, an apostle with life. "He who loses his life shall find it".

3. A great personal love for Jesus

For a clear vision of this spirit of self abnegation, and for proper compliance with whatever is suggested by the same spirit, one should have an ever increasing love for Jesus. Fr. Lagrange commenting on the Gospel text "If any one wishes to follow me...." etc. observes that for the Jews who heard these words, it meant (before the days of Christ's passion) a readiness to make any sacrifice of personal interests and a readiness to accept any torture along with Christ, with whom they had joined cause. St. Ignatius' meditations on the kingdom of God, Election, Three standards etc. lead us to the same idea of great love for Christ and His cause. The seminarian who, from the first years of his formation, cultivates a personal love for Jesus, a love that is solid and firm and not simply based on sentiments or phraseology, will indeed grow in that intimate love for Jesus and realise more and more the spirit of self abnegation. He will lead that programme of life which God marks out for him, here in the seminary and later in his ministry.

4. Spirit of prayer

Above all we must remember that it is beyond our power to create and conserve this

spirit of self denial without a constant humble and trustful prayer which brings down the gifts of the spirit. This spirit will soften our stony hearts and dispose us to be docile to God.

7. The Spirit of Self Abnegation

Necessary to be a true disciple of Christ. Mt. 10/38;
Lk.14/27,33; Phil II 5-9.

Sign of Christ's disciples II Corinthians. IV.10;
Galatians 2/19,20; Gal. 5/24

Necessary to follow Christ Mt.16/24-26; Cfr.
Lk.9/23; Mk.8/34-38

Necessary for eternal life Romans 8/13,14

Reward Mt. 19/29; Lk: 18/29,30; Mt.13/44-46;
John 13/24,25; Romans 6/8; Romans8/13.

Exhortation to self denial Colossians 3/3,5; I Peter
4/1,2; 2 Cor. 5/14,15; Eph. 5/1,2.

In imitation of the Apostles I Cor. 9/27; 15/31;
Galatians 2/19,20; Colossians 1/24; Galatians
6/14.

The Example of Christ

Heb. X. 5-7; John VI. 38; John XIV. 31;
Mt. XXVI/39,42; John XVIII. 11; John Ch.X;
Lk. VI. 40; I Pet. II. 21; Mt. XI. 29,30.

8. Deny Yourself

Patron - St. Paul

Private sp. reading - Eph. 4, 5; Gal.5/13-26 Imit.
III. 54, 55

Ejaculation - Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

Thoughts - Today begins the holy season of Lent. St. Paul exhorts us in today's Epistle to begin a new life according to the maxims of Christ. "The whole life of Christ was a cross and martyrdom."

1. Self-denial is necessary for all those who desire to follow Christ. Our Lord has expressed it in very clear words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself" (Lk.9/23).

2. It is the best means to gain the fruits of redemption. Due to the original sin the fallen man has lost the gift of integrity; and to regain the right balance he had, as he came from the hands of God, he should, as St. Paul says: "Put away the old man and put on the new man." (Col.3/9)

3. Mortification is necessary to avoid sin and to attain salvation: "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the spirit

you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live" (Rom. 8/12)

4. We cannot grow in perfection without mortification, because inspite of all our good desire for spiritual progress, we easily give them up due to the attractions of worldly pleasures. So mortification is not merely negative but it makes us better christians. An artist by chiselling off different portions of a block of wood, does something defenitely positive, because he brings to being a work of art.

5. For the success of our apostolic service, we have to practise mortification. Many and exacting are the duties of a priest which always demand external and internal renunciations. As Our Lord has worked out our salvation by His cross, so also we have to save souls through privations and sufferings. The present day world demands much from the priests in this line. "Consecrated by anointing of the Holy Spirit and sent by Christ, priests mortify in themselves the deeds of the flesh and devote themselves entirely to the service of men" (Priests No. 12)

6. Mortification, inspite of the privations it demands from us, blesses us, even in this life, with many a gift of the highest order such as

happiness, mental peace and contentment: "Every one that has left house or brethren . . . shall receive an hundred fold in this world and shall possess life everlasting" (Matt. 19/29).

7. The Council Fathers exhort the seminarians to practise mortification: "With special care they must be trained in priestly obedience, in a programme of humble living and in the spirit of self-denial. As a result, even in matters which are lawful but not expedient, they will be accustomed to make prompt renunciation and to imitate Christ crucified." (Priestly Formation No. 9)

How to practice mortification:

1. Mortification demands a sort of basic independence towards all that is not God. So we should not have any final attachment to the creatures.

2. This independence is as much interior and moral as it is material and physical. But it is not indifference, which can imply a lack of interest. Now we should have real interest in the creatures of God and in our worldly vocation. But this interest ought to go hand in hand with the basic independence so that we may be ready to give up this or that real good, to change our type of work according to the will of God.

3. So mortification includes together with this independence of creatures, our loving dependence upon God. Then it is entirely inspired by charity. Therefore christian mortification is quite different from the many privations which worldly minded persons undergo for the sake of a temporal benefit.

4. To foster the spirit of mortification we should ever keep in our mind the biblical theme of our state as pilgrim in this world. A pilgrim takes with him as little things as possible and never settles down; and he is ready to undergo the fatigue and privations of the journey. He is consoled and strengthened by the thought of the eternal destiny.

5. The growth in renunciation depends upon the growth in charity. One who chooses the life of grace, gives up all mortal sin. One who wants firm and ordered growth in grace, renounces all deliberate venial sin. In the same way progress in a special virtue implies growth in corresponding renunciation.

6. Mortification must include the whole man, body and soul and all their faculties. So we should take them separately and purify and sanctify them.

7. We should meditate often on the vanity

of worldly pleasures and honours, on the passion of Our Lord and on the heavenly bliss.

Self-examination -

1. Am I conscious of the fact that my christian vocation, by its very nature, presupposes a life of mortification?

2. Do I know fully well that the life of a priest ought to be all the more a mortified one?

3. Am I convinced of it from the example of Christ and His Saints.

4. Do I realise fully the great sacrifices people are daily doing to gain their petty interests?

5. How do I train myself for my future ministry by daily practising different kinds of mortification?

6. Due to want of proper renunciation, do I wilfully embrace any sinful pleasures?

7. Do I know that much of my mortifications consist in performing well my daily duties and in observing my rules?

8. Have I succeeded fully in controlling my passions and senses?

9. Do I pray daily, especially during the holy sacrifice for the virtue of self-denial?

9. The Spirit of Sacrifice

Patron-St. John Mary Vianney

Private Sp. Reading-2 Cor. XI/16-33; Phil. II, 5-11;
Ps. 21 Imit. 11-12

Ejaculation-Passion of Christ, strengthen me

Thoughts-

1. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church" (Col. 1, 24)

1. Sacrifice to a Christian

By his very position as member of a society and as member of the victimised body of Christ, *every Christian* leads a life of sacrifice. The more one is tied up with society- the family, the neighbours and relations-the greater the restrictions on one's 'ego'. Think of the high price a poor farmer pays with his sweat and tears to keep his wife and children living. Just imagine the anxiety of a widow keeping midnight watch by the bedside of her only child dying. To one who has not the light of Faith these are the cruel jokes of fate. But the Christian solves these problems on top of Calvary in a better manner.

Not only these common experiences of the hard realities there are many limitations for a Christian, limitations, according to worldly standards *precisely because* he is a Christian. Faith and precepts have to take precedence. He accepts this way of life happily because it is a mark of distinction left on him – the mark of the special love of the Unique Lover.

2. Sacrifice to a Priest

If sacrifice is part of the life of any Christian, the whole life of a priest is one prolonged sacrifice. Priesthood and sacrifice are so closely interoven that there is no priestly existence independent of sacrifice. And we share in the priesthood of Christ who was at the same time, "Sacerdos et Victima". We are watch men set on the walls of the Sacred Temple: "I have set watch men, Jerusalem, upon thy walls that shall never cease crying aloud day or night you that keep the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, nor let him rest either...." (Is. 62:6-7). The parishoners will gain strength to carry their cross taking note of the life of sacrifice led in their midst by the priest.

Perhaps the greatest, the most exacting sacrifice in the life is to sacrifice his own will.

His suggestions may not be heeded to. His plans and projects are liable to be brushed aside. In all such moments he remembers that his is a total self-surrender. He cannot retrace his steps. He consciously and willingly stands against his own will because he bows to the will of God. The concept of sacrifice therefore, contains much more than that of mortification or self denial. The killing and denying of self have no value in themselves. But without this element there is no sacrifice either.

To the Jews the cross was a folly

To the gentiles it was a scandal.

II Sacrifice in our daily life

There are ever so many occasions to remind me of my sacrificial role in my every day life. Crosses can come in the form of misunderstanding or false imputation. My very life in a community makes demands on me. The rules and regulations apparently insignificant have a special meaning for me. How do I take the special restrictions incumbent on me as a seminarian-control of my senses, disciplining my natural tendencies etc. How do I behave on various occasions? in the play ground, in the dormitory, during walks and recreations... Am I mindful of others? Does it ever occur to me

that I can make the burden of my fellow seminarian a bit lighter, his yoke bit sweeter?

Let the words of St. Paul be a source of inspiration for me: "I will most gladly spend and be spent myself for your souls" (II Cor. 12:15).

III A Souvenir of this meditation

I will go often in spirit to the fifth station of the Way of the Cross. The picture of Simon of Cyrene fills me with gratitude and urges me to action. A thousand thanks to all those who push me forward with their helping hands on my march to the priesthood. In the same spirit I will willingly give to others what little is in me by way of help, encouragement, consolation.... Not enough that I will not become a cross to any one; I will help him to bear his cross.

"Christians should understand very plainly that they are called not to domination or to honours, but to give themselves over entirely to God's service and the pastoral ministry. With special care they must be trained in priestly obedience, in a programme of humble living, and in the spirit of self-denial. As a result, even in matters which are lawful but not expedient, they will be accustomed to make prompt renunciation and to imitate Christ crucified." (Optatum totius No. 9).

10. The spirit of service

Patron - St.Pius X

Private Sp. Reading - John 13/3-18; Phil.2/1-18;
Isaiah 42, 1-8.

Ejaculation - O, God, teach me to do Thy will.

Thoughts: 1. "There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but every body is to be *self-effacing*. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interest first but *every body thinks of other people's interest* instead. In your mind you must be the same as Christ Jesus: His state was divine yet he did not cling to his equality with God; but *emptied himself* to assume the condition of a slave, and *became as men are.*" (Philipians 2/3-8).

2. Christ-the model of service:

Christ's mission on earth was the fulfilment of the will of the Father. The will of the Father was the redemption of man through the "Kenosis" of his Son. The hidden life at Nazareth, the public ministry, institution of the Eucharist and the death on Calvary-all these point to this. This "self-emptying" is of the intrinsic nature of service so that the quality of the one can be measured by the intensity of the other. "Whoever would be great among you must be your

servant and who ever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”.

3. The life of service:

Priesthood is a ministerial grace, a calling to serve God and neighbour. The priest “chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God. . . .” (Heb. 5,1)

The Priest’s pledge of total dedication to service marks a tremendous moment. It is the beginning of a heroic stage in his life. We are aspiring for that heroism. We are yearning for that supreme day of consecration and life and ministry consequent upon the same. Let us remember that it is a life of sacrifice but at the same time rewarding. “For my yoke is easy and my burden light” (Mt. 11, 30). The price we have to pay for such a life is our inclination to “self-centeredness” and the reward we receive is the inexplicable peace and satisfaction that we have become less of ourselves and more of Christ in the process of our encounter with our brothers. The service that has a glamour about it is easy for me. There I find an effective means to build up my public image. They lavishly cater to my sense of self-importance. Real service on the other hand is self-effacing. It is divine for it is Christ like. We serve others

because we see Christ in them. Without this vision the service becomes selfish. We will serve whom we have a liking, those who are sympathetic towards us. "But do not also the heathens do this".

If self-effacement is an essential prerequisite for service it is not the completed picture. Emptied of self one is filled with Christ. It is in Christ and through Christ that he serves his brethren. The fragrance of such a life and service will bear testimony to Christ and his love. "We should understand very plainly that they are called not to domination and honours, but to give themselves over entirely to God's service and the pastoral ministry" (Optatum totius No. 9).

Examination of Conscience

1. Can I sincerely say that I have the spirit of service. Do I make reservations?
2. What is my attitude when others request of me some service?
3. Do I expect too much from others for me?
- 4) Is my service reserved to my friends and to those who are sympathetic towards me?
- 5) Are my services free of selfish motives or are they conditioned?

6. Is my service the result of a natural humanism or does it come out of supernatural convictions?

7. How do I behave in the community?

11. My Tongue - The most Powerful Tool and Most Precious Gift

Patron: St. Aloysius Gonzaga and St. John

Berchmans

Private Sp. Reading: Isaiah, Chap. 6; St. James Chap. 3; Imit., Book I, 10; Book III, 24,44,45

Ejaculation: "Set a watch, O Lord before my mouth and a door about my lips

Thoughts - The Sixth Chapter of Isaiah speaks of the vocation of the Prophet. Isaiah saw "the Lord Yahweh seated on a high throne; his train filled the sanctuary; . . . I said: "What a wretched state I am in! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips; and my eyes have looked up at the King, Yahweh Sabaoth! Then one of the Seraphs flew to me, holding in his hand a live coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongues. With this he touched my mouth and said: See now, this has touched your lips, Your sin is taken away, Your iniquity is purged.

Then I heard the voice of The Lord saying: whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger I answered: "Here I am, send me."

1. The use of tongue is the greatest gift of God in the human order. The tongue of a priest is not only a means of human transactions but a thing transformed by the touch of God. By my conscious choice of the Lord as my inheritance - *Dominus pars hereditatis meae* - I have dedicated myself wholly and non reservedly to the Lord. Every faculty of myself is surrendered to God. This took place in that unique moment when I said Yes to the Master, the moment when I abandoned myself in the hands of Jesus to be chosen as His Portion. This will again take place when I will finally utter my 'fiat' on the day of my ordination. Not that I am worthy - I am only too conscious of the fact that "I am a man of unclean lips... people of unclean lips." But I am confident in the transforming touch of Yahweh. Isaiah was touched only by a live coal taken from the altar of incense at the entrance of the Holy of Holies. I am touched by the body and blood of God.

2. The vision of Isaiah was the one source of strength throughout his life. It influenced his future life. Like the Seraphs he too was destined to be holy. He was to preach of the sanctity, the sacredness of God; of the salvation

of the world through the Messiah. A seminarian too has to be always moved by the thought that he is destined to *preach* - to *bless* - and to *praise*. His tongue is to *console*, to *encourage* and to *edify*. Think of the number of times a priest by his very ministry has to offer praise and thanks to God, that he has to bestow the blessing of God on others, that he has to preach the word of God. How numerous are the occasions when he will pour out words of consolation to the sick and afflicted - to the dying. How he will encourage those who struggle hard to make spiritual progress - How he will instil confidence in the hearts of the depressed!

3. We are the mouth - pieces of Christ; Our voices are His echoes.

By the sacramental or ministerial position we represent Christ even when we are not fully conscious of it. But there is the more extensive field of our dealings in our *day to day life*. It is here that we have to be more careful. Unless we remind ourselves on those moments of our obligations, we are *likely to become unChrist like*. It may create an absurd situation when we contradict ourselves. Our words in the role of the minister of Christ will bear no fruits - Remember we can more easily shock others - that those who may happen to listen to our unpriestly talk, are not shock-proofs as we may be.

4. It is from the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. "Thy speech doth discover thee. Are not you this man's disciple?" Asked the servant maid to Peter. Our words will betray us too. Whether we are filled with Christ or not? There is a certain *Dignity* that is inseparable from any of our words. Our words must not savour the irresponsible impulsiveness. Not enough; a man or woman who talks with us or hear us talk, must feel that here is a man of God. 'Homo Dei!' It is not the high seriousness of a selfconscious scholar, not the artificial righteousness of a Pharisee. It is *simplicity, sincerity, respect for principles* that gives dignity to the words of a priest. We have to be mature men.

Sincerity and frankness. Hypocrisy was perhaps the vice that received the severest denouncement from Our Lord. We have to be men with the courage of conviction.

Prudence. Does this my word become of a seminarian; what reaction will it make on this boy near me? On this one who hear? "non omnia decet."

Above all *Charity* - Here let me never forget that the one guide - line for me is to *edify* - "build up." Scandal has to come. But woe

unto him that gives scandal. And can't forget that our words may, even in the seminary, minimise one's esteem for priesthood.

Be *tolerant* to others in their failings - Let us remember that we ourselves have our own failings, perhaps even greater.

Appreciate the merits of others - Encourage, congratulate in any little eminence one has been able to achieve. Let us rejoice that in their excellence we too participate as a community. If by my word I could assuage one moment of sorrow, if I could provide one minute moment of joy to a single person this world has been richer because of me.

5. As I kneel before my Master and Exemplar - the words of St. James ring in my ear "The only man who could reach perfection would be some one who never said anything wrong - he would be able to control every part of himself. . . . the tongue only a tiny part of the body, but it can proudly claim that it does great things. Think how small a flame can set fire to a huge forest; the tongue is a flame like that. Among all the parts of the body the tongue is a whole wicked world itself" (St. James, III, 4-6).

Examination of conscience (1) How am I using my tongue in building up an atmosphere of the house of God? (2) How many times do this thought of moving others to virtue come to my mind? (3) Have I perhaps been a cause or an instrument of evil to any one by my indisciplined talk? (4) Have I expressed discontentment about the life here? my companions? (5) Do I speak ill of any one? (6) Does my talk give disedification to my companions? anything unbecoming of a priest? (7) Am I conscious of the rule of solidarity? No man is an island. (8) How do I keep the rule of silence?

Prayer: My Lord and my God.

Lord, make me in the true sense *your mouth-piece*, your echo, your tongue; and *don't spare me* in the making.

12. Regularity In Life

Patron- St. John Berchmans

Private Sp. Reading- St. Lk. 12/33-40;
St. Mat. 25/14-30 Imit: 1.25, Ps. 118.

Ejaculations- "O Lord, teach me to do Thy will"
"All for Thee, O most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Thoughts

1. By the parable of the talents our Lord exhorts us to make the best use of all our natural

and supernatural gifts. We are put in the seminary to trade with them. At an unexpected hour the Heavenly Master will come to ask an account of His Gifts. Will we be found "good and faithful"?

2. "The students must clearly understand that they are not destined for power and honours, but are dedicated wholly to the service of God and pastoral ministry. Special care must be taken to train them in priestly obedience, a simple way of life and the spirit of self-denial; thus they will acquire the habit of imitating Christ crucified and giving up spontaneously even things which are permissible but not appropriate.

"The students must be told about the burdens they are to take up; no difficulty of the priestly life should be concealed for them". (Training for the priesthood No. 9)

3. Two serious obstacles to our success are sloth and inconstancy. "Idleness hath taught much evil" (Eccl. 33. 29). It brings out finally our eternal perdition. "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into fire" (Mat. 3/10).

4. Regularity of life is the remedy against

inconstancy. Do What you have to do, when you have to do, and how you have to do, for the love of God.

5. This presupposes a good rule of life approved by superiors a) It is a means of personal sanctification, because it enables us to make the best use of our time, to supernaturalize all our actions, and helps us to follow a regular programme of sanctification. b) Again, a rule of life cannot but promote the sanctification of the neighbours because we will be able to find time to pray and work for their good; we further edify them by the good example of a life of regularity and punctuality.

Practice

1. Foster a strong conviction about your obligations towards God and your neighbours.

2. Try to acquire a sense of responsibility towards the different duties of your state of life.

3. Often meditate on the justice and goodness of God and the glorious promises He has made to us.

4. Be fully convinced of the vanity of the world and the emptiness of worldly pleasures.

a) Have a clear conscience and approach God with a contrite heart: "Have mercy on me a sinner".

b) Detach yourself from worldly affections and elevate your soul to God.

c) Shake off laziness and do some acts of self-denial.

5. Pray always with Jesus and in His name; "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it to you" (John, 16.23).

6. Approach God through prayer with a sincere feeling of your wretchedness, emptiness, want and nothingness, and with full confidence in the goodness of God.

7. Try to live always in the presence of God and in the company of the saints and Angels, by keeping silence and recollection.

8. Try to convert all your indifferent actions into prayer by doing them in union with Jesus and with good intentions. "Man prays so long he directs his whole life towards God" (St. Thomas).

Self Examination

1. Am I fully convinced of the fact that my life should be necessarily a life of prayer?

2. Do I really find pleasure in silence and recollection?

3. Do I esteem my time of prayer as the

most precious of the day? go to it with the required reverence and attention?

4. Do I earnestly try to get rid of the distractions by controlling my internal and external senses.

5. Do I give undue importance to my other occupations and thus waste the time for prayer uselessly.

6. When very busy, do I find time to pray?

7. When at leisure, do I give more of it to additional prayer?

8. If I find prayer irksome, is it not because I pray too little and do not care enough for it?

9. Do I hurry through my Sp. exercises and thus rob them of much of uplifting power?

10. Do I attimes go through the directions given to help me to perform the sp. duties fruitfully?

11. Do I make an immediate preparation for prayer, instead of rushing into it?

12. How do I pray before and after the meals, classes and instructions?

13. How far have I progressed in mental prayers?

14. Do I practise some mortifications, so as to acquire the spirit of Piety?

15. How far am I successful to convert all my actions into prayer? Do I keep a constant union with God by presence of God, good intentions, Sp. Communion and ejaculations?

13. The love of our daily crosses

Patron - St. Pius X.

Private Sp. Reading - 2 Cor. XI, 16-33; Phil. II, 5-11; Ps. 21 Imit. II. 12.

Ejaculations - Hail Cross, the sign of our salvation; Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

Thoughts - 1. One of the special characteristic features of Christianity is the worship of the Cross, the instrument of suffering. The God we worship is a God crucified. The Mass, the most solemn act of our religion is the sacrifice of Calvary. The cross is our distinctive mark. It adorns our Churches and altars and with it we sign ourselves so often during the day. Cross is the symbol of our faith.

2. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk. 9/23). This is the way of life prepared for us by our Lord. Out of ardent love for our crucified Jesus we, His disciples,

should embrace gladly the crosses of our daily life.

3. St. Paul says: "That I may live to God with Christ I am nailed to the cross" (Gal. 2/19). Jesus atoned for our sins by His cross and death and thus reconciled us to our Heavenly Father. Now it is our turn to make reparation for our sins through our daily crosses and penances.

4. "In the cross is the perfection of sanctity" (Imit. II. 12). We have to do penance throughout our whole life to expiate for the temporal punishments due to our sins and to rectify the disorder caused by them. "We suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him" (Rom. 8/17).

5. Doing penance for others is also an act of charity. Apostolic men should embrace their daily crosses and thus share with the Divine Saviour the work of saving souls. "I am glad of my sufferings on your behalf, as in this mortal frame of mine, I help to pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ still leave to be paid, for the sake of His body, the Church" (Coloss. 1/24).

6. As is also clear from these words of the Apostle, crosses are a source of peace and happiness. "In the cross is infusion of heavenly

sweetness". St. Therese of the C. Jesus exclaimed from her death bed: "I never thought that it is so sweet to suffer".

How to embrace the daily crosses?

1. Keep constantly in your mind this thought; "I am, as it were, a fugitive from hell or at least from purgatory and were it not for the mercy of God, I would be there now, undergoing the well merited punishment of my faults.

2. Often meditate upon the sufferings of O. Lord and His blessed mother and Martyrs.

3. Accept willingly and joyfully all the crosses the Divine providence may see fit to send you, such as ill health, heat and cold, poverty, worries and anxieties, lack of appreciation and support, failures, temptations dryness etc. Consider them as tokens of God's love for you to help you to expiate your sins and to gain merit for heaven.

4. Do not run away from the daily crosses: Discharge faithfully your daily duties in the spirit of penance and reparation, in union with Jesus of Nazareth. Follow the rules of the seminary and the directions of the superiors, observe regularity of life, deal friendly with persons of different moods and temperaments, perform attentively all the spiritual exercises

etc. All these provide occasions for good acts of self-denial and of penance and they are so salutary. "My greatest penance is community life" (St. Berchmans).

5. Also try to do regularly some acts of corporal penance such as fasting, abstinence, vigil. But these penances are to be done only with due permission. To these can be added corporal and spiritual acts of mercy also, "Redeem thou thy sins with alms" (Daniel 4/24).

6. In general a life of fidelity to the Gospel, sanctifying the crosses which it presents.

7. Try not to aggravate sufferings by gathering together in your mind all your ills past, present and future and thus make it insupportable.

Self examination

1. Have I a fervent love for my crucified Jesus and ardent desire to follow Him in the way of the Cross?

2. Do I fully realize the justice of God and my great obligation to expiate the sins of my past life?

3. Am I conscious of the great heavenly glory which I can gain through daily crosses?

4. Do I embrace calmly and joyfully the

sufferings of my daily life giving to others the example of cheerful patience?

5. Am I facing trying circumstances calmly or by adopting an attitude of stoic indifference which is unworthy of a Christian?

6. Am I seeing in every cross that comes my way, a stepping-stone to holiness of life? Do I esteem and prize it as holiness itself?

7. Do I consider any of my duties as very burdensome and anxiously try to get rid of it?

8. Am I lazy and careless in performing my daily duties?

9. Do I complain about the weariness of my work, about the attitude of the superiors who direct me, and of the brothers who work with me? Do I give in to thoughts of impatience towards myself?

10. Do I feel unhappy and dispirited about my life?

11. Would my daily troubles not look very different to me if I kept in mind their formative and apostolic value?

12. Do I daily do any act of penance as approved by my spiritual father?

13. Do I esteem my vocation as the best way for me to follow Christ and to gain eternal reward? Do I often thank God for the same?

14. Am I fully conscious of my obligations towards God my creator to Jesus Christ my saviour, to the Church my mother, and to the mankind at large as the children of God?

15. Do I know that these my obligations are to be fulfilled by following faithfully my vocation and bringing it to a success?

16. Am I tempted think that by following this vocation, I am doing a favour to my God and church?

17. Do I demand, in return, any special privileges and conveniences of life?

18. Am I not to follow the example of the crucified Lord and that of the Apostles in following my vocation?

19. Do I fully realize that I am preparing to be a "priest victim"?

20. Am I earnest in my attempt to amend my faults in order to become like my Divine Lord, the Eternal High Priest?

21. Do I sincerely try to be led, corrected and helped by my superiors?

22. Do I obey exactly all the rules of the Seminary?

23. Do I fulfill all my duties with the utmost diligence?

24. How far have I succeeded in acquiring the virtues of humility, purity, mortification, charity and constancy?

25. How do I perform the Sp. exercises such as, meditation, Holy Mass, communion, visits, presence of God, Rosary, Sp. reading etc?

26. Are there any grievous sins often committed?

27. What is my attitude towards wilful venial sins?

28. Do I cherish a holy enthusiasm as the thought of the happy and glorious day of my priestly ordination and first Holy Mass?

29. Do I foster the right intention about my priestly vocation? Are there any worldly motives which are detrimental to the glory of God, salvation of souls and to my own eternal happiness?

15. Prayer and its Bearing on Life

Readings: Mt. Chapters 5,6&23. Ep. of St. James

Introd:

Modern man has an operational orientation. Hence, any spirit of alienation from the world is no more attractive. On the contrary he is committed to build a new world. Hence, he does not view the creation as a hurdle on the road to

God, but as the road to God. There is nothing in which God is not found. "Through the creatures to the Lord of Creation."

St. Paul says "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom. 12,1). We seek God in the totality of our existence. Prayer is a communion with the total and absolute reality who loves and saves us. Prayer is an act of faith and trust in God who is our future.

Prayer deepens our attitude of appreciation, openness and sensitivity to our neighbour. In our prayer we see Christ and ask for help to be like him, to be a man for others. What I do, what I am, how I live, what I say must be one thing. My dealing with others must be an incarnation and true reflection of my attitude towards God. The vocal prayers should not be "a merely empty shell devoid of real living content and meaning." My prayer should be *mine*. It should be a sensible expression of my openness to and oneness with others. Prayer is an attitude of life to God our Father. For this, we have to live out the truth of our life. It is an engagement of the whole man, who is all there with heart and tongue, intellect and will with one's whole being acting in unison."

Deviations:

Prayer should not become a ritual and mechanical repetition. "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need, before you ask him" (Mt. 6,7-8). Our Father who art in heaven. . . . forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Therefore God's generosity to us is conditioned by our generosity towards our neighbour. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt- 7,21. cfr. also Mt. 5,23-24).

Sincerity

Prayer is not a lip-service; it is a human act; it is a living. I should encounter the Eternal "Thou" in the finite "Thous." Our action and contemplation are not on the opposite poles. My encounter with Xt is not to be narrowed down to the sacramental presence of Christ is the Most Holy Eucharist. His real presence in men who are "the temples of the Holy Spirit" has to be acknowledged. We cannot remain strange to Christ who is hungry, naked, lonely, sick and

imprisoned and present before us. We cannot ignore the real presence of Christ in our friends, brethren and all around us. Recourse to God is not a flight from reality and escape from responsibility. God is not the rival of man!

Meaningful Prayer

Our God is not a dead God belonging to a past century. He is not to be attracted by empty phrases studied by heart and repeated mechanically. He is our Father who wants to see us as we are in the totality of our existence.

Prayer in Community.

1. We are bound to each other in Christ by life and truth "doing truth in charity." This relationship is more profound than any other human relationship. A brother can never become an enemy. This bond leads us to the inseparable and eternal brotherhood on earth as it will be in heaven. It should be direct, simple and confident.

2. Personal element: Prayers should be set in our concrete context of human life. It should be meaningful in our everyday life. The forms and methods of prayer, also should have their relevance and meaning in our concrete situation of life.

3. Liturgical prayer: "In the liturgical

prayer the Christian community exercises, expresses and deepens its oneness through the partaking of one bread and through the communication of the same spirit." The absolute foundation of our justice, love, peace, joy and conscience is God." The Lord Jesus Christ present in us as his Temple wants to feed us with his Body, wants to speak to us in his Word, wants to meet us through our neighbours.

4. Act of Faith: My words and actions must be the incarnation and manifestation of my Faith in Christ. My prayer should transform my actions and give them new meaning by relating them to the absolute. The absolute foundation of our justice, love, peace joy and conscience is God.

15. The Spirit of Prayer

Patron- St. Francis of Assisi

Ejaculations- Lord, teach us to pray. Come, let us adore and praise the Lord God, who created us.
Private Sp. Reading: Imit. 1,20; II. 1; St. Mt.7,7-12
1 Cor. 14: 14-25; Ps. 3.

Thoughts

1. Prayer is the fulfilment of the first commandment of God, a paramount duty for

every Christian. It is the most common means to fulfil our duty of adoring, praising and thanking God, or Creator. So man as the priest of the universe is urged by his own self and by all creatures to pray to God.

2. As we stand in urgent need of God's help in the natural order as well as in the supernatural, we ought to pray to God for the necessary graces. "Without me you can do nothing".

3. The Priest should be a man of prayer. St. Peter says: "we will give ourselves continually to prayer"

"Priests themselves extend to the other hours of the day the praise and thanksgiving of the Eucharistic celebration in praying the Divine office offered in the name of the Church for all the people entrusted to their care, and indeed for the whole world" (Ministry and life of Priests)

4. So the Seminarist should be trained in the spirit of piety and prayer. "They should learn to see Christ in faithful meditation on the word of God, in active participation in the Sacred Mystery of the Church, especially in the Eucharist and the Divine Office" (Training for Priesthood)

5. The life and teaching of our Lord manifest very clearly all these truths. He led a life

of continous prayer, both in the hidden life and in the public life. "He went up the mountain and spent the whole night in prayer". He exhorted his disciples many a time, to pray always: "You ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luk. 18:1)

6. Prayer detaches us from sin and worldly things and elevates us to God. It is the soul's effort to rise up to God and God's goodness to bend over the soul. Hence as St. Augustine says: "He who knows how to pray well, knows how to live well".

How to foster the spirit of Prayer

1. Ask Jesus to teach you to pray. Prayer is a Science with its rules, principles and the ways of making progress; and Jesus is the best teacher.

2. Try to perform all your spiritual duties with the greatest care. Let all the faculties of your soul and body be fully engaged in them, even if you feel aridity and weariness.

3. Recite the vocal prayers slowly, be careful to articulate all the syllables, make the right inflections and necessary pauses. St. Francis of Sales says: "Hurry in prayer is the capital enemy of true devotion".

4. Prepare for your prayers before you begin them.

5. Try with all your mind to follow a rule of life.

6. Constantly fight against the voice of sloth and mediocrity.

7. Perform each individual action as if it were the only thing you have to do, for that particular action is alone in your power at the time of its execution.

8. With St. Bernard, ask yourself often: "If I knew I were to die after this prayer after this action how would I perform it?"

9. Try to live the morning offering of the Apostleship of prayer.

10. Study earnestly the example of the saints and try to imitate them.

Self examination.

1. Am I fully convinced that my greatest duty in the ecclesiastical state is that of aiming at my own perfection and helping others towards their perfection?

2. Do I verily realize in my conduct, conversation and every action the high relation in which I stand to God and what the life of a seminarist demands from me?

3. What are the efforts I make to rule my passions and root out the evil appetites of my heart?

4. Do I set aside my desire for personal conveniences and deny my own desires when it is needed, in order to conform myself to the rule of life?

5. Do I derive from my daily spiritual exercises all the advantages intended by the Church?

6. Do I observe with all earnestness all the rules of the seminary and the directions of my superiors?

7. Am I open and sincere to my superiors and my spiritual director, and do I faithfully follow all their admonitions?

8. Do I fulfil all my duties after the appointed manner and at the prescribed time and persevere in them as long as required?

9. Do I ever affect some sickness to excuse myself from the observance of any rule or command?

10. Is my fidelity to daily duties born of an inner desire or out of fear of failure or censure by others?

11. Besides the rules and directions given by God, the church and my superiors, have I my own rule of life embracing all my daily duties.

12. In particular how far am I regular in regard to spiritual exercises, studies and other daily or weekly exercises?

13. Mark out disorders to be corrected and take appropriate resolutions.

16. Growth in holiness

Patron - St. Pius X

Private Sp. Reading - Imit. I.18, IV. 7; Mt. XIII.

Ejaculations - Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.
Omnipotent God, help me to grow in holiness.

Thoughts - 1. St. Pius X speaking to the students of the French Seminary said: "You have the duty, to be holy, not simply in a mediocre degree but thoroughly....you must avoid not only mortal sins but also the smallest sins".

2. "The virtues which make the fitting adornment of a cleric are comprised in zeal for holy things. But as a result of the inconstancy of human nature, this zeal frequently tends to lose its fervour with the passage of time" (St. Pius X).

3. "Those who are responsible for the discipline and piety, shall see what promise the

students give, and examine closely the character of each one: let them discover whether the student possesses the appropriate degree of knowledge and sanctity or at least whether he is sincerely and eagerly striving to acquire it" (St. Pius X).

4. Life is movement; hence it is essentially progressive. This is all the more true of supernatural life. St. Augustine says: "In the way to God, not to advance is to retreat. He turns back who reverts whence he had once departed". St. Bernard explains this doctrine thus: "Dost thou wish to advance? - No. Then dost thou wish to turn back? - By no means. What then wishest thou? I wish to live in such a way as to remain where I have arrived. This is impossible, for nothing in this world remain in the same condition".

5. Luke-warmness is a great enemy of spiritual life. "I would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm and neither cold or hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth" (Apoc. 3/16)

6. It causes a kind of blinding of conscience and gradual weakening of the will. "Thou sayest: I am rich and made wealthy and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Apoc.3/17)

How to remedy this spiritual malady:

1. The Holy Spirit has himself pointed out the remedies. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold, fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich" (Apoc. 3/18) This gold is of charity and fervour of spirit. Meditate often on the great love God has shown in creating, redeeming and sanctifying you.

2. Think of the sublimity of your vocation and the whole hearted dedication it demands. "Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the spirit; serve the Lord" (Rom. 12/11)

3. And mayest be clothed in white garments and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear (Ibid.) Try to preserve the purity of conscience by getting rid of sinful inclinations.

4. Anoint thy eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see" (Ibid). This is to attain a correct view of our dangerous life. Do the examination of conscience earnestly and make the confessions sincerely.

5. "Be zealous and do penance" (Ibid). We should give up our sensuality and diligently perform all the daily duties.

6. "Behold I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me" (Ibid). This is the loving invitation from God manifesting His great patience. Let us converse with God by fervent prayer and meditation and sup with Him by participating in the paschal mystery.

7. Don't make the life mechanical and the spiritual practices a routine business.

Self Examination.

1. Am I a slave to any evil habit? Do I commit any mortal sin? Am I earnest enough in avoiding wilful venial sins? Do I disregard them as not to be heeded?

2. Do I know fully the real state of my soul? How do I make the examination of conscience? What improvement can I effect?

3. Do I receive well the corrections I get and try in all earnestness to put them into practice? consider over them in particular.

4. Do I make concessions to sensuality and yield to pleasure? Am I loathing effort? Negligent in performing the different duties?

5. Do I find my life very difficult and burdensome? Am I moody and complaining?

6. How do I behave toward others? Do I annoy and displease them? Am I selfish?

7. Am I disturbed by any serious doubts about the state of my soul?

8. Am I regular in making my confession and holding interviews with my superiors?

9. How far do I conform myself with the rules and directions which are a means for me to grow in holiness?

17. Zeal for the Salvation of Souls

Patroness – St. Therese of the Infant Jesus.

Private Sp. Reading – 2 Tim. 4/1-9; Imit. I. 15,17;
Rules Chp. IV.

Ejaculation – Sacred Heart of Jesus; Thy Kingdom come.

Thoughts – 1. The greatest service we can do here on earth is to work for the salvation of souls. It is to co-operate with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the mystery of Redemption.

2. “Follow me; I shall make you fishers of men.” The call to priesthood is necessarily

a missionary vocation and the seminarist should prepare himself to become a good pastor of souls.

3. "Go you therefore into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16/15). This is the special duty entrusted to every priest by the ordination. So St. Paul says: "A necessity lies upon me; for owe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (I Cor. 9/16).

4. "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (Jo. 10/16). The seminarist should be fully convinced that every priest is a missionary and that, therefore, he should not confine his care and zeal to catholics only but should extend it also to others.

5. "The greatest attention must be paid to what is said...about living a life patterned after the gospel, without concern for personal or family advantage. From all this seminarians will learn extra-ordinarily well how to dedicate themselves wholly to the service of the Body of Christ and to the work of the gospel" (Decree on Missions no. 16).

6. Piety is indispensable but not enough; indeed, without zeal it is scarcely genuine.

St. Theresa exclaims: "I would be a priest, an apostle, a martyr, a doctor of the Church..... The vocation of the priesthood! With what love, my Jesus, would I bear thee in my hand when my words brought Thee down from heaven! With what love, too, would I give Thee to the faithful....I would travel the world over to preach Thy name and raise on heathen soil the glorious standard of the cross. One mission alone would not satisfy my longings. I would spread the gospel in all parts of the earth, even to the farthest isles. I would be missionary, but not for a few years only. Were it possible, I should wish to have been one from the world's creation and to remain one till the end of time."

How to cultivate this zeal

1. Meditate often on your glorious vocation to save souls. "Of all divine works, there are none more divine than those of co-operating in the salvation of souls" (St. Denis).

2. Kindle in your heart the fire of zeal at the thought of so many souls that need your help.

3. Foster the zeal for souls by the fervent practice of the Apostleship of prayer and embrace with your heart the whole work of salvation entrusted to the church in every part of the globe.

4. Try in all earnestness to gain souls by fervently hearing Holy Mass, receiving Holy Communion and reciting the Divine Office etc.

5. Strive hard to prepare yourself to become a good pastor of souls, imitating the hidden life of the Divine Saviour at Nazareth.

6. Try to acquire maximum possible efficiency in the doctrines of the Church and in teaching catechism and in sacred eloquence.

7. As a necessary preparation to sanctify others, be very earnest to sanctify yourself by cultivating the virtues of obedience, fraternal charity, cheerfulness, dutifulness and spirit of service and sacrifice.

8. Study with great enthusiasm one lives of the great missionaries and saints who have done great things for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls.

Self-examination -

1. Do I realise fully the gravity of my duty to labour in every way possible for the salvation of souls?

2. Am I really feeling an apostolic anguish at the paganism that surrounds me and at the weakness in faith of so many christians?

3. Do I feel a holy enthusiasm to work for the good of others?

4. Do I pray fervently for the conversion of sinners and unbelievers?

5. Do I daily pray for the increase of vocations, for the sanctification of priests and for the success of their apostolate?

6. Do I feel happy to do little sacrifices as often as possible for the good of the missions?

7. How am I preparing myself to become a good pastor of souls?

8. What are the qualities which a good pastor of souls should have? charity, diligence, humility, self denail. . What efforts do I make to grow in those qualities? What are the opportunities? How shall I make good use of them?

9. Do I cheerfully now fulfil my daily duties and the various offices assigned to me by my superiors?

10. Do I prefer any high or convenient work to a low or inconvenient one?

11. Am I ready to take up any pastoral work in any part of the world according to the desire of my superiors?

12. Am I persuaded by the glory of God and the good of souls in all my action?

The Cardinal Virtues

Natural virtues can fundamentally be reduced to the four cardinal virtues: Prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. Prudence exercises its influence directly on the intellect and regulates the other three virtues. Justice regulates the will not in relation to the passions but in regard to our relationship between one another. Temperance and fortitude control passions related to pleasure or fear.

These natural virtues has its place in our supernatural life; they are perfected by sanctifying grace, by the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity and by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. Prudence - What spirit you share?

Patron: Mary, Virgin most prudent

Prayer: "Lord enlighten me that I may see"

Reading: St. Mt. Ch. VII; I Cor. I. 19-31

Imit. of Christ I Ch., IV

Considerations

1. Coming back from the samaritan village, enraged at the indifference of the people, disciples James and John asked Jesus "Lord, wouldst Thou have us bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?"

Jesus turned and rebuked them. "You do not understand what spirit it is you share? The son of man has come to save, not to destroy them" (Lk. IX. 51-56.)

To share the Spirit of Christ is to live in the true light of life through Christian prudence. By the virtue of prudence one acts from within and becomes more Christ like in his actions. Christian prudence is an infused moral virtue, given to the practical intellect for the right ordering of one's actions in view of the supernatural end.

In order to grow more and more in the practice of prudence

a) We must be enlightened by faith strengthened by prayer and inflamed by charity.

b) We must foster a deep personal reflection about the past, the present and the future state of life.

c) We must take counsel with wise and competent persons concerned.

2. "If a king goes out with ten thousand men to fight against another king, who comes with twenty thousand men, he will sit down first and try to figure out if he is strong enough to face the other. If he is not, he will have to send messengers to meet the other king, while he is still a long way off, to ask for terms of peace. So it is with you" (St. Lk. XIV. 31-33).

Jesus here points out to his disciples, the right reasoning applied to actions. It is very much of Christian prudence that guides us in the foot-steps of the divine saviour. We must be 'wise as serpents', 'innocent as doves' in our dealings with others.

"What we are by profession, we must show by deeds rather than by mere names" (St. Ambrose.)

Exam. of Conscience:

1. What prevents me from being a close follower of Christ? Am I too selfish in my likes and dislikes?

2. To know the gospel teachings is not enough. Do I put them into practice?

3. Do I imbibe the spirit of the life in the seminary and follow the directions of those who guide me?

4. Do I share the life experience of the apostle "when I was a child I spoke as a child I thought as a child. When I became a man I gave up the childish ways" (I Cor. XIII. 11).

2. Temperance – Christian as an athlete

Patron: St. Mathew

Prayer: 'Blood of Christ inebriate me'

Readings: St. Lk. XII. St. James III

Imit. of Christ III. 5.

Considerations

A) St. Paul compares the growth to Christian maturity to that of an athlete. "Every athlete must keep all his appetites under control; and he does it to win a crown that fades, whereas ours is imperishable. So I do not run my course like a man in doubt of his goal. I do not fight my battle like a man who waste his blows on the air. I buffet my own body and subdue it or I who have preached to others may myself be rejected as worthless". (I Cor. IX. 25-27).

We do become and remain good athletes for God's kingdom through the practice of the virtue of temperance.

B) It is up to temperance to bring the sense appetites under the control of reason by excluding the immoderate gratifications. Zealous vigilance self-control and mortifications are to be followed lest we turn away from the real goal and fall into the trap of a pleasure seeking life. "...I will say to myself: Take your ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him fool this night your soul is required of you.... So is he who lays treasures for himself and is not rich toward God." (Lk.XII.15-21)

So be attentive to

- 1) the exercises of asceticism
- 2) the discipline of the sense appetites.
- 3) Examine the natural likes and dislikes and devise means to keep the heart detached from worldly affections.

C) Jesus Christ is the way to the heavenly Father and to his kingdom. He by his own life has shown the way for his followers. "Make your way in by the narrow gate.... How small is the gate, how narrow the road that leads to

life and how few there are that find it.”
(Mt. VII.13-14).

Mortification, fasting and abstinence contribute to the practice of temperance that guides us through Christ’s way.

Examination of Conscience

1. My attitude as regards food and clothing?
2. My pre-occupations – reading games, recreations etc?
3. How do I control my eyes, tongue and touch?
4. How do I practice acts of self-sacrifice?
5. How do I fulfill my daily duties?

3. Hunger and Thirst for Justice

Patron- Jesus, King of love, Justice and Peace.

Ejaculation- ‘Lord make us true apostles of thy kingdom.

Sp. Reading- St. John XVI. 1-15; Mt. XXI. 28-45.

Considerations

1. **The sense of justice:** While enumerating the beatitudes, Jesus said: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice. They shall

have their fill" (Mt. V. 6). Here we are given the basic concept of the Christian righteousness and holiness. It is the gift of participation in the infinite justice of God and we are called to open ourselves to it. The spirit of God in communicating it to us, makes us co-heirs with Christ (Rom. VIII, 17). "So it is that priests are grounded in the life of the Spirit, while they exercise the ministry of the Spirit and of Justice as long as they are docile to Christ's spirit who vivifies and directs them" (Presbyterorum ordinis 12).

The virtue of justice resides in our will urging us to give each one his due and regulating us in the discharge of our duties towards others.

2. The way of Perfection: "You are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"
(Mt. V. 48)

The prophets of the O. T. exhorted the people of God that God's justice is extended to saving and healing and that they are to follow God's way of justice. "I reject your oblations and refuse to look at your sacrifices of fattened cattle but let justice flow like water and integrity like an unfailing stream" (Amos. V. 24).

The most salutary expression of divine justice is the expiatory sacrifice of Christ on

the cross. - As priests we are to share and bear witness in ourselves of this salvific justice of God. "Undergoing death for all of us sinners; Christ taught us by example that we must shoulder that cross which the world inflict upon those who search after peace and justice". (Gaudium et Spes 38).

"Happy are those who are persecuted in the cause of right; theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt.V.10).

III The mind of Christ. "Render to Caesar the things which are Caesars'; To God the things which are God's (Mt. XXII.21).

Jesus lays down to us very great and vital principle of Christian justice. - Any Christian has a double citizenship. He is a citizen of the country of this world and to that he owes much' He must be a responsible citizen and failure in that is also failure in Christian duty of justice.

Christian is also a citizen of God's kingdom. "Far off or near, united in the same spirit, we have access through him to the Father. We are no longer exiles, or aliens; the saints are our fellow citizens, we belong to God's household" (Eph. II. 18,19.) Hence he is, by the nature of the new existence, ordered "to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice." (Mt. VI. 33).

These are matters of conscience and of religion and of growth in holiness which are essential to build up God's kingdom on earth.

These two citizenship should go hand in hand. He will fail in his duty neither to God nor to man. He will as St. Peter exhorts "give to God Reverence; to the king due honour" (I pet. 2. 17).

IV Peace, the fruit of justice

'Peace, the tranquility of order' results from justice. "Peace is rightly and appropriately called 'an enterprise of justice' (Is. 32. 7) It originates from that harmony built into human society by its divine Founder and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice." Gaudium et spes. 78.

Examination of Conscience

1. How do I follow the principle of justice "Live and let live?"

2. How do I esteem my vocation? my spiritual growth? Priestly obligations? my natural talents? Do I thank God often for these manifold gifts?

3. Do I try to share with others those benefits and gifts which God has so generously offered me?

4. Do I find myself imprisoned in selfish motives?

5. Am I at peace with God? with my conscience? with all those in the community?

4. "Take Courage"

Patron: Jesus, the 'Ecce Homo'

Ejaculations: 'You, O Lord, are my strength'
Ps. XLII.2.

'Passion of Christ strengthen me.'

Readings: St. Mt. X.24-33; Rom. VIII
Imit. Xt. Bk. I. Ch. 12

Reflections

1. "Take courage, it is I" (Mt. XIV.27.)

Just after the miraculous feeding of the multitude with five loaves, Jesus prevailed upon his disciples to take boat and cross over to the other side of the lake. The evening twilight already faded out and the wind was contrary. Their night trip turned out to be a life-struggle. Jesus praying alone on the hill side late into the night, came towards them walking on the waves. The dispirited disciples were terrified at this. The divine master comforted them saying "Fear not; Take Courage, it is I." (Mt. XIV. 22-28).

There are times when the wind seems to be contrary in the sea of our life. While life turns out to be a desperate struggle with difficult situations, with temptations and with our own indecisions, then and there we are to see and hear Jesus at our side encouraging us "Fear not; Take Courage, it is I."

2. What and how of fortitude the christian moral virtue?

In various walks of life we meet with people who possess a certain sense of firmness in spirit and vigour of character. They are alive against fear; they are alert in heroic resistance of evil. This is a natural state of affairs. But the virtue of christian fortitude takes a step further. It is a kind of super-animation in us, resulting from the participation in the fullness of the Spirit in Jesus Christ; a divine gift that inwardly strengthens us to undertake the daring enterprises of christian life-programme.

"The God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself, after we have suffered a little while perfect, strengthen and establish." (I Pet. V.10.)

"The Spirit you have received is not a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; It is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out, Abba, Father." (Rom. VIII. 15.)

3. "Ever since the time of John the baptist, the Kingdom of God has opened to force and the forceful seize it."
(Mt. XI. 12.)

Becoming a priest in the true sense, is to enter into a new centre of existence in Christ, the Kingdom of God. It is to submit oneself to the dynamic forces of a higher divine state and act entirely from that new focal point of life, being detached from one's own fears and illusions. Higher the flight of life the more it demands caution and courage to take the risks.

The charity of Christ urges (II Cor. V. 14) his followers to live the truth in love; to stand firm at the peak of sacrificing their own lives for the sake of the kingdom of God. Thus inflamed with the spirit of fortitude St. Paul writes to the Romans. "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will afflictions, or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or peril or sword? For thy sake says the scripture, we face death at every moment; reckoned no better than sheep marked down for slaughter. Yet in all these we are conquerors through him who has granted us his love". (Rom. VIII 31-36)

4 Life attuned to Christ's vision and his way of the cross

"A disciple is no better than his master, a servant than his Lord; enough that the disciple

should fare like his master, the servant like his lord....Do not, then, be afraid of enemies. There is no need to fear those who kill the body, but have no means of killing the soul; fear him more, who has the power to ruin body and soul in hell....Do not be afraid, then! you count for more than a host of sparrows. And now, who ever acknowledges me before men, I too will acknowledge him before my Father who is in heaven; and who ever disowns me before men, I too will disown him before my Father in heaven." (Mt. X, 24-33).

"Come down from the cross here and now that we may believe in you". The Roman soldiers and pharisees mocked Jesus the 'Ecce Homo' as they stood nearly the cross on calvary." But Jesus the eternal High Priest in atonement for the sins of the world nailed to the cross, cried out with a loud voice "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit" Then he bowed his head and yielded up his spirit. (Mt. XVII-39-50). This is precisely the courageous victory of God's redemptive Love. Jesus manifested the glorious divine fortitude in a human way!

"By the power of the risen Lord, the church is given strength to overcome patiently and lovingly the afflictions and hardships which

assail her from within and without, and to show forth in the world, the mystery of the Lord in a faithful way until at least it will be revealed in total splendour". 'Gaudium et Spes'. 8

Examination of Conscience

1. Jesus said "You can do nothing without me". How far this is true to my life? Do I live and act in the spirit of Christ?

2. Do I have a real horror of evil and a sincere co-operation with graces to overcome temptations and natural impulses?

3. Am I fully committed to the noble cause, the priestly formation in me? Do I get trained to shoulder responsibilities without fears and complaints?

4. Do I act out of mere human respect and considerations?

5. Am I afraid of hardships and sufferings?

The Mysteries of the Christ

1. Advent

The Three Comings of the Lord

He Came-He Comes-He Will Come

1. He Came

- The fulness of God in human form - The Expectation of the Nations - The Redeemer-

- "God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son" (John III, 16)

- "The Word was made flesh, He lived among us and we saw His glory, the glory that is His as the only Son of the Father, full of Grace and truth" (John 1, 14)

- "A light to enlighten the Pagans and the glory of your people Israel" (Lk. II, 32).

- His Baptism, Fasting and Temptation, the call of the disciples (Mt. III, IV)-

- "Look there is the lamb of God; who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1; 29)-

- 'Come and see'and "they followed him.."

- Read John Chapter I and read in it your vocation to priesthood - Read John Ch. IV and study the means of being born of the Spirit to inherit Christ's Kingdom and continued His work Meditate on his teachings and reaffirm your loyalty to the same. "Lord whom shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life and we believe; we know that you are the Holy one of God" (John VI, 68, 69).

- Still He met with opposition even in His own town: "They sprang to their feet and hustled Him out of the town....intending to throw Him down the cliff but He slipped through the crowd and walked away"

(Lk. 1V, 29; 30).

- He met with conflict even within Himself - the scene of Gethsemane. "And sadness came over him and great distress. Then He said to them My soul is sorrowful to the point of death....He fell on his face and prayed: 'My Father', He said, if it is possible let this cup pass Me by. Nevertheless, let it be as You, not I, would have it". (Mt. 26, 38, 39).

Meditate on the scenes of the passion - the trials, the flagellation, mockery and crucifixion: "one of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and

water. This is the evidence of one who saw it - trustworthy evidence (John 19, 34)

- Rising from the sepulchre the third day He came to the disciples who in wilderment for fear of the jews, had hidden themselves and said: "peace be with you" and showed them His hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, . . . and He said to them again; 'peace be with you.' As the Father sent me, so am I sending you. After saying this He breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. . . ." (John XX, 19-22).

- Appearance eight days after. .

Declaration of Thomas "My Lord and my God."

Jesus said to him:

'You believe because you can see Me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe' (John XX. 28-29).

- Appearance on the Shore of Tiberias

- Simon do you love Me more than these others do,

'Feed My lambs' (John XXI, 15).

There are many other things which Jesus did. . . .

The Purpose of Jesus coming

1. 'He has sent Me to bring the good news

to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and to the blind new spirit, to set the down-trodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (Is. 61:1-2; Luke IV 18, 19).

2. "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd: The good Shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep" (John X, 10, 11).

"I came to do not my will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John VI, 38)

Our Response

1. Firm faith in the words of St. Peter and St. Thomas.

2. Loving meditation of the Mysteries of Christ narrated in the Gospels and explained in the Epistles....

3. Eagerness to participate in the mysteries as and when the privilege is extended to us....

4. Unreserved dedication to the work of continuing his mission in the state to which I am called....

2. Meditation: He Comes

The Historical coming and manifestation and redeeming acts over which we contemplated

yesterday is being repeated in other forms daily in individuals and in the society.

Nay, he assured, that He will be with us

“And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time” (Mt. 28,20)

“If any one loves me he will keep my word and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him”

(John 14.23).

2. The incidents narrated in the Gospel are repeated. Reflect on some of those scenes: He visits us: as our Redeemer, as our brother, our guide, our mediator and high priest, our King, our master and teacher, and our life – what should be our attitude?

When we are sick when enslaved by sin, when we group in dark when we call on him in needs spiritual and temporal. He visits us when our labours seem to be unsuccessful (draught of fish). He helps us when we are frightened (storm in the sea) when we seem to sink (Peter's cry against the waves which were to drown him). He warns us about dangers (Peter's fall) exhorts us to prayer (Gethsemany) visits us in our despire (disciples to Emmaus) when bereaved (Lazar's resurrection raising of Jairus daughter of the Son of Naim....)

As the Good Shepherd he comes after us even when we wander away.

3. He invites us: "Come and see" "Come after me" Come to me all you who labour and are over burdened and I will give you rest (Mt. XI,28).

"If any man thirst, let him come to Me (Jh. VII,37)

"He that come to me shall never hunger" (Jn. VI,35).

"Him that come to me I will in no wise cast out."

"No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me" (Jh. VI, 44).

4. He speaks to us and explains the mysteries of our faith (Nicodemus, Apostles....)

Let us encounter him in our Sacred Liturgy, private devotions, studies and other opportunities. Let us see him in the Holy Eucharist, in our brethren, honour and identify ourselves with him.

5. He calls us as he called Samuel (I Kings 3/10) as he called Saul (Acts IX, 4,6). He that harkeneth to me shall not be confounded (Eccl. 24/30). "Behold I stand at the gate and knock if any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to share his meal, side with him (Apoc. 3/20).

Let us welcome Him

6. "Today if you shall hear His voice harden not your hearts (Ps. 94/8). "Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation (2 Cor.6/1). Let it not ever be said in reference to us "He came unto His own and his own received Him not (John 1).

Let us pray

As the heart passeth after the fountains of water; so my soul passeth after Thee, O God (Ps. 61/2).

O God, my God, to thee do I watch at break of day. For thee my soul hath thirsted; for thee my flesh, O how many ways (Ps.62/2).

Let us pray with the Psalmist "Show me thy face and give me thy salvation.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another. . . . (Col.3/16).

This will help us to say with the Apostle "The life I live is not mine but it is Christ who lives in me (Gal.2/20).

Our Guides - Blessed Virgin Mary

The Shepherds

Simon and Anna in the temple

The Apostles

All those who approached him with faith and obtained graces.

The Saints who co-operated with the Grace of God and made good use of all opportunities.

2. With Mary to Bethlehem

Patroness - Immaculate Virgin Mary

Private sp. reading - St. Luke 2/1-20; Imit. IV.2

Ejaculations - O Mother, lead us to thy Divine Son.

Thoughts - 1. The Holy Season of Advent is a preparation for Christmas?. The application of Christ's merits and the distribution of His Grace are made according to the measure of the dispositions of each soul. The Bl. Virgin Mary was best disposed for the coming of the Saviour. So if we allow ourselves to be guided by her, our dispositions will be perfect and the solemnity of the birth of Jesus will produce in us all its fruits of grace, light and life.

2. At the moment when the word came into this world, He found Mary's heart perfectly prepared and capable of receiving the divine graces, through her sinless life. She was created immaculate to become worthy abode for God.

3. Again, Mary was full of grace. She was ever gaining new graces by her virtuous life and

was accepted as a holy abode for the all holy Divine Word.

4. Further she was a Virgin. Her virginity was so precious to her that her first thought when the angel proposed to her the mystery of the divine maternity was, "How can it be, because I know not the man?". "Mary's virginal bosom formed and immaculate sanctuary whence arose the most pure incense of her adoration and homage." (Abbot Marmion).

5. Another disposition of Mary was her profound *humility*, which brought down the mighty God, as a helpless child. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

6. Her fervent charity and spirit of service manifested in visiting and assisting St. Elizabeth, also prepared Mary for the first Christmas.

7. Her long and tedious journey to Bethlehem, full of sacrifices, can be considered as an immediate preparation for the birth of Christ.

8. The total self surrender of Mary for the salvation of the world manifested in her 'Fiat', was continued in her obedience to the Caesar's edict and her childbirth in the manger.

9. Over and above all these stands her

intimate, continuous and loving union with the Divine Word in her holy womb.

II How to partake of these holy dispositions

1. Let us imitate our sinless mother and strive hard to curb all our evil passions so that there may not be anything displeasing to our Divine Saviour.

2. We should try to purify our life by repeated acts of penance and sacrifice.

3. Try to gain more graces by performing fervently all our daily duties and especially the spiritual exercises.

4. Preserve the purity of heart and foster it by practising internal and external mortifications-

5. Imitating our Lady we should cultivate the virtue of fraternal charity, avoiding carefully all that is displeasing to others.

6. Receive the Incarnate Word in Holy Communion most fervently, with due preparation and thanksgiving and continue to commune With Him all through the day.

7. Finally let us confess humbly to Jesus, our utter nothingness and spiritual proverty and pray to our mother and St. Joseph to help us prepare for the coming of Christ.

III Self Examination

1. Have I an ardent desire for this new coming of Christ to my soul? What practical resolutions do I mean to take to prepare myself for it?

2. Do I find anything in my life which is displeasing to the Divine Infant of Bethlehem?

3. How am I trying to correct my faults?

4. What all mortification do I daily perform to control my evil passions?

5. How do I persevere in the spirit of Penance? What special penances do I mean to do during this Advent?

6. Do I try to practise the virtue of humility? Am I doing everything for the greater glory of God?

7. Am I charitable toward my brothers and superiors? Do I entertain any ill feeling against anybody?

8. With what love and devotion do I receive the Eucharistic Lord? How do I make my visits to the Bl. Sacrament?

9. Do I seriously consider during this Advent, the many millions who do not yet know

the Divine Saviour? What do I mean to do for them?

10. Am I praying daily to the Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph for their special help and guidance in my daily life?

3. The Transfiguration of Christ

Patron: St. John Berchmans

Private Sp. Reading: St. Luke 9/28-36; John 1/1-14
Philippians 2/5-18;
2 Peter 1/16-18

Ejaculation: Lord, increase my faith.

Thoughts: 1. We are about to celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord on Tabor. It presents to us ample matter for our contemplation and imitation. Further, this mystery in Christ's life will produce in us, according to the measure of our faith, hope and love, its own special grace.

2. The Transfiguration is meant to confirm our faith in the divinity of Jesus. During His mortal life, Jesus appeared to be a man like other men. His divinity was veiled under the infirmity of mortal flesh. In the Bl. Sacrament He is all

the more hidden under the species of bread and wine. Let us listen to the Heavenly Father speaking to us: 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear you Him' (Mat. 17/5). These words remind us that we are also the beloved sons of God through Christ and must follow Him to be beloved sons.

3. Another purpose of this mystery, as St. Leo says, "was to remove the scandal of the cross from the hearts of the disciples; the humiliations of a passion freely chosen would no longer trouble their faith after the splendour of the hidden majesty of the Son of God had been revealed." "Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and they were speaking of His passion which was to accomplish in Jerusalem" (Lk. 9/31).

4. It also reveals to us our future happiness which we are to enjoy with the glorified Lord. "Lord it is good for us to be here." This joy we enjoy now by keeping close to Our Lord amidst all the trials of this life, and in preparing ourselves for the eternal bliss.

How to profit by this Mystery

1. Be convinced that we are chosen in a special way, as those three apostles, to stand witness to Christ and his teachings in these difficult times.

2. Often we should leave behind the worldly affections to reach the solitude of Tabor, and keep close to Jesus by prayer and contemplation. If weariness occur even in time of prayer, Let us say to ourselves "it is good for us to be here."

3. "This is my beloved son.... hear you Him"—These words of the Father are to be listened to through a lively faith, especially while participating in the divine liturgy (the liturgy of the Word, the Eucharistic sacrifice and Holy Communion) in reading the Bible, following the teaching of the Church and in dealing with our superiors and brothers.

4. Let us accept the crosses and trials of daily life and fulfil all our duties most carefully in imitation of the "Beloved Son" of God.

5. Be fully conscious of the internal transfiguration effected in us by Baptism and meant to be brought to its fullness by the action of the Holy Spirit. Be docile to His inspirations and make use of the means and ways proposed by the Church for the purpose.

6. Let us often meditate on the heavenly glory of the crucified Lord and His prayer on behalf of His followers. "Father, I want that those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you

have given Me" (Jo. 17/24). Let this destiny of ours spur us to live as beloved sons of God.

Self-examination

1. How deep is my faith in Jesus and in His teachings?

2. How do I esteem my priestly vocation and how do I prepare for the proper fulfilment of the duties of my future ministry?

3. Do I know that I will have to bear witness to Christ in a world which has very little faith and morality? How can I bring all to faith and love in Jesus?

4. Am I earnest in getting rid of whatever wrong ideas and tendencies I may have and are opposed to what has been proposed by Christ? Think of the idea Christ had regarding His passion and the desire of St. Peter and others to avert Him from that.

5. To what extent do I try to grow in faith through prayer and other spiritual exercises?

6. How far am I prepared to work, to make sacrifices and undergo mortifications for this purpose?

7. How far am I prepared to follow the Lord's way of the cross; as and when willed by

the Father? Am I too eager that others may always acknowledge me for all my worth?

8. Do I try to find real happiness in my life by keeping close to the Lord.

9. Am I really consoled and strengthened by the thought of the heavenly glory awaiting me?

10. Do I in all docility submit myself to the transforming action of the Holy Spirit by praying for His gifts and following His inspirations?

11. What greater earnestness should I make to put on Christ so that day by day I may grow in the likeness of Christ and be configured with him by the time of my Ordination?

4. Soldier of Christ

Patron- St. Francis Assisi

Private Sp. Reading- Jo. 12/12-19; Imit. II. 12

Ejaculation- Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy Kingdom Come.

Thoughts-

1. We know that Christ is the eternal king of all nations as well as every individual. His kingship was foretold by prophets, confessed

by Christ Himself, declared by Pilate at His trial and referred to by the soldiers at the crowning with thorns, by the scoffers beneath the cross, by the thief on His right hand and by the inscription on the cross itself.

2- We are His soldiers. In Baptism we have promised to fight against satan whom we have solemnly denounced, and have become incorporated in Christ. "All you who have been baptised in Christ's name have put on the person of Christ" (Gal. 3/27).

3. We are confirmed and strengthened in the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation, as soldiers of Christ. "They were no match for Stephen's wisdom and for the Spirit which then gave utterance" (Acts 6/10.)

4. Now we are specially called through the priestly vocation, to become the leaders of the faithful. Follow me; "you shall be witness to Me to the end of the world" (Acts 1/5).

5. We are expected to serve him most faithfully and to gain eternal reward. 'I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course. I have kept my faith. All there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give

to me on that day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for His appearing
(2 Tim. 4/8).

6. "But as for these my enemies, who did not want me to be king over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence" (Lk. 19/27) This is the punishment for the unfaithful servants.

How to foster our fidelity to the Divine King?

1. First of all let us be fully convinced of the nature of the Kingship of Xt. "My Kingdom is not of this world" the royal rights of Christ who is not only our creator but also our redeemer, who has given His life blood as our ransom.

2. We should "labour as good soldier of Christ" (2 Tim. 2/3) by fighting against the devil, the enemy of God.

3. We should ever remember the words of St. John: "He who commits sin belongs to the devil" (1 Jo. 3/8): because every sin is treason against the King and desertion to the enemy.

4. We should be ever vigilant to fight against temptations of the world. "The world stands at the parting of ways between Christ and Antichrist. The great hour of the Christian

conscience has struck. There must be no place in your conscience for the cowardice and the irresolution of those who think that they can serve two masters" (Pope Pius XII on Easter Sunday, 1948).

5. Christ must reign in all our faculties. First in our minds, by ardent faith in Him, by a firm belief in all His teachings, by adhering to His spirit and ideals: "If you abide in my word shall be my disciple indeed (Jo. 8/31).

6. We have to show our fidelity to Christ by submitting our will to His divine will. By this we can gauge how far we allow Christ to reign in us. We should continue to show this submission even in the midst of trials and tribulations.

7. Christ is the King of Love and is to be enthroned in our hearts. The measure of our love for Him will be the measure of our fidelity to Him. Only undivided love begets perfect fidelity. "Who will separate me from the charity of Christ."

8. We should see Christ in all and love and serve them for His sake.

9. We should strive hard to serve our King in all humility and even embracing humiliations. Remember well that "the servant is not greater

than the master.” Even now we have to fight against human respect and cheap popularity. Fr. Nash S. J. explains this thus: “If a man is trying to observe rules exactly, from high spiritual motive, it is a coward’s way to play upon his human respect. Another who has no desire to see good observance, who likes laxity and has not himself the character or love of Christ to act up to the conscience, will proceed to sneer, and he may find others to sneer with him. What has St. Paul to say about it? ‘To me it is a very small thing to be judged by you . . . neither do I judge my own self . . . He that judgeth me is the Lord’ (I Cor. 4/4).”

10. “You shall be witness to me to the end of the earth” (Acts 1/5 – This is the command of our King and the goal of our warfare. We should live for the expansion of His Kingdom in every country and amidst every people.

Self examination

1. Do I meditate often about my obligations toward my Divine Lord?
2. Can I not detect in my heart some obstacles to the kingship of Christ? Am I sincere and generous in combating my vanity and sloth?
3. Am I sincere and straight forward in

my dealing with others? Do I make them feel the charity of Christ?

4. Do I long and pray and seek in all my spiritual life to let Jesus have His way with me and to surrender to His claims for my love?

5. Am I anxious to see my King acknowledge and revered by all?

6. What are my dispositions in the various activities of my daily life? Am I really bent up on doing God's holy will all along?

7. Is my purity of intention not marred by inroads of self-love, in seeking my own will and what pleases me.

8. Am I ready to undergo any suffering for the glory of Christ? Do my daily life stand testimony to it? Do I pick and choose among the commandments of Christ and the rules of the seminary, leaving aside those which demand any sacrifice?

9. Do I ever behave as if the shepherd should follow the sheep and the king should conform to the ways of his self-willed subjects?

5. I am the true light

Patron: Jesus the light of Life.

Ejaculation: "Lord that I may see and follow thy way"

Reading: St. Jn. VIII.12-20
I Jn. II.1-17
L. G. No. 1-4.

1. Light from the light eternal

"God is light; there is no darkness in him' (I Jn:2.5) God the eternal light of life whose abode is in inaccessible light (ITim. VI.16) said "Let there be light and there was light. God saw the light was good and He divided light from darkness" (Gen.I.3-4.)

"Yahweh went before them by day in the form of a pillar of cloud to show them the way and by night in the form of a pillar of fire to give them light. Thus they could continue their march by day and by night" (Ex. XIV.21)

Light is the symbolic manifestation of God's glory, God's abiding presence and God's saving power.

II "And that life was the light of men"

Simon led by the H. Spirit taking the divine Babe in his arms said "Mine own eyes have seen the saving power which God has prepared in the sight of all nations. This is the light which shall give revelation to the gentiles; this is the glory of the people Israel". (Lk.II 30-32.)

St. Mathew records the appearance of the saviour as to the fulfilment of what was prophesied by Isias "The people that abode in darkness has seen a great light; for men abiding in a land where death over shadowed them, light has dawned (Mat.IV, 16)

On the solemn occasion of Feast of Tabernacle's Jesus proclaimed before the crowd". I am the light of the world, anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark; he will have the light of Life" (Jn VIII.12.) Even today and everyday this holds true though some would prefer to walk in darkness and would therefore hate the light.

Jesus is the promised messianic light of life held out to the world by the heavenly Father.

III "You are the light of the World"

To his followers Jesus said "You are the light of the world". The Christian through his

participation in the light and life of Christ to the world. St. Peter exhorts the primitive christian community "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation a people set apart to sing the praises of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (Pe.II. 9.)

Why light? No one lights up a lamp to put it under a tub. They put it on the lamp stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven" (Mt.V.14-16)

"Anyone who claims to be in the light, but hates his brother is still in the dark" (1 Jn. II.8)
Prayer. "Lead kindly light" amid the encircling gloom,

Lead thou me on".

Card. Newman.

Examination:

1. Am I convinced that my mission is to give witness to the Light?

2. What attempts do I make to dispel the darkness in me and in my brothers?

6. The Light of the World

Patron - St. John the Apostle

Private Sp. Reading - St. Mt. 5/13-17; Eph.5/1-20;
1mit. I. 1

Ejaculation - Lead O, kindly light.

Thoughts - In this season of Denaha let us meditate on Christ, the light of life, which is to be reflected in all the christians and especially in priests.

1. The symbolism of light is universal and it occurs frequently in the Bible. God is called light: "The Lord shall be unto you an everlasting light" (Is. 60/19). Again in the Psalms we read: "The Lord is my light and salvation" (Ps. 27,1).

2. God's presence and protection were often shown in light. A luminous cloud led Israel across the desert; another appeared on mount Tabor at the Transfiguration. St. Paul recognized the presence of God in a blinding light. He says: "God dwells in inaccessible light" (I Tm. 6/16).

3. The light of God's countenance is his favour to men: "Show us the light of your face, turned towards us" (Ps. 4/6).

4. Jesus Christ is prefigured in light: "I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations" (Is. 42/6). St. John also introduces Christ as light: "That life was light of men, a light that shines in darkness.... The word was the true light that enlightened all men" (Jo. 1/5-9).

5. Christ announces Himself as light: "I am the light of the world" (Jo. 5/12). Again, 'I, the light, have come into the world so that whoever believes in me need not stay in the dark any more" (Jo. 12/46.)

6. Those who are sons of God are called sons of light because "they have the light of life" (Jo. 5/12). "The children of the world are more astute than the children of light" (Lk.16/8). "Believe in the light and you will become sons of light" (Jo. 12/36).

7. The christian by his participation in the light and life of God, through Jesus, becomes himself a medium of light to those who are in darkness, "You were darkness once, but now you are light in the world; be like children of light" (Eph. 5/9).

8. "You are the light of the world" (Mt. 5/14). These words of our Lord is specially attributed to priests, who are ordained to give spiritual light and life to mankind.

How to become the light of the world:

1. "walk not in the darkness" is the first admonition we have to follow. We should not be "of those who rebel against light" (Job. 24).

2. We should foster the light in us by virtuous living: "Be like children of light, for the effects of light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth" (Eph. 5/9). In other words, it is a life influenced by lively faith.

3. We have to show forth our light to others by good works: "Your light should shine in the sight of men so that seeing Your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven" (Mat. 5/16.)

4. St. John says "He that hates his brother is in the dark; he that loves his brother abides in the light" (1 Jo. 2/10). Hence it is clear that fraternal charity is necessary even to keep up the heavenly light in us.

5. It is also our duty to take this light to all men: "I have made you a light for the nations so that my salvation may reach the ends of earth" (Acts 13/47). Pope Pius XII speaking to the seminarians of the Roman colleges said: "If you like to become the light of truth which comes from Christ, you must yourselves first be illuminated by that truth. That is why you devote

yourselves to the study of the sacred sciences” (24 June 1939).

6. As the light of the world, the priest is not only illuminating but life giving light. “All the preparation and formation of a priest must conform himself to act as the supernatural sun, illuminating the minds of men which the truth of christ and inflaming their hearts with the love of Christ” (Ibid)

Self examination:

1. Am I fully conscious of the great duties of a priest who is the light of the world?

2. Do I look for light through personal prayer and diligent search in the S. Scripture?

Oath of the just is shining light”(Prov.4/18).
Is this true of my life?

4. How far earnest is my response to the teachings of Christ, ‘light that illumines all men’?

5. How do I try to grow in the priestly virtues?

6. How far do my enlightened faith and hope influence an intense practice of these virtues? consider some of the virtues in particular?

7. Do I make my light shine before others

by means of good works? Do I in other words radiate Christ in my activities?

8. Am I earnest in practising fraternal charity so as to preserve the light of Christ?

9. Do I strive hard to study the sacred sciences and live accordingly that I may be able to bear the torch of faith before others?

10. How far am I eager to make others the sons of light by gaining through prayer and other means graces for them to live true christian life?

7. God's Call And Man's Response

Patroness- St. Teresa of child Jesus

Private Sp. reading-Mt. 4, 16-22, Lk, 5, 1-10,
Hb. 11, 9ff

Thoughts:

Essentially there is only one christian vocation though differentiation of functions. It has a single aim: union with the Father through Christ and the Holy spirit: "His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets some

evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4/11)

"Let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned him and which God has called him" (I Cor 7/17.)

"Everyone should remain in the state in which he was called" (I, Cor 7/24.)

2. In vocation, *it is God who always has the first word.* the initiative being his exclusively. The very word "call" implies the word "answer". To be called means to have summoned by God to stand in his presence and to answer Him 'Yes' or 'No'. In the descriptions of vocation in the O. T. and New Testament, God's initiative is shown in the clearest and most elaborate way. Yahweh's calling someone to the prophetic office is the prototype of every vocation. The call of Isaiah: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying. Whom shall I send? who will be our messenger? I answered 'Here I am, send me' He said: "Go and say...." (Is. 6/1-10.)

The call of Jeremiah

“The word of Jahweh was addressed to me saying ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before up came to birth I consecrated you, I have appointed you as prophet to the nations I said ‘Ah, Lord Yahweh look I do not know how to speak: I am a child’ But Yahweh replied, Do not say, I am a child. Go now to those to whom I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you - It is Yahweh who speaks’’ (Jer.1/4-8).

“You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced; you have overpowered me you were the stronger” (Jer 20/7-8).

3. The fact that God calls someone does not at all mean that He rejects others.

4. To humble the proud, God calls always not the best. “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are, so that no human being boast in the presence of God (I Cor- 1/27-29).

‘When Christ at a symbolic moment was establishing his great society, he chose for its corner stone neither the brilliant Paul nor the

mystic John, but a shuffler, a snob, a coward—in a word a man. And upon this rock he has built his church and the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.” (G. K. Chesterton).

5. When God chooses, He is not attracted by some preexisting good in the object of his choice, but in the very act of choosing He places whatever is good in the object of His choice “Love is....the deepest meaning of election.... There can be no escaping the fact that in the Old Testament divine love is absolutely free and unconditioned in its choices....It is directed to one man out of thousands and lays hold of him with jealous exclusiveness despite all his deficiencies” (Eichrodt.)

“You love those who crucify you and you crucify those who love you” (Leon Bloy.)

6. “Vocation is not only a gift but also a mission, a programme, a challenge and a cross.... imposes responsibility. It is a charge, the seriousness of which shatters complacency and closes the door on self assurance.” (Fr. Kelleher).

As the christian envisages more clearly and gratefully his christian vocation and the rule of his life, as coming from grace freely given, the richer and more pure will his religious and moral life become.” (B. Haering.)

Examination of Conscience

1. Am I sufficiently convinced that my vocation is a gift of God?
2. What efforts do I make to nourish in me the seeds of vocation?
3. Is the vocation to priesthood seen and understood as a self-donation or am I led by mere natural motives?
4. Am I over-anxious about my state of life?

8. Listening to Christ

Patron : St. Paul

Ejaculation : God, teach us to do Thy Will.

Sp. Reading : I Psalm. 3. Mt. 3. 13-17; Heb.1. 1-4
Imit. 11. 12.

1. In His redemptive plan Jesus Christ has come down to share the lot of the repentant man and showed His willingness to receive 'Baptism, from the hands of John the Baptist in preparation for his public ministry.

2. Jesus Christ is the fullest Revelation of the Father, God amidst His people (Heb.1.1.;Col.1.)

3. His Father testified to His divine Sonship and commanded us to look towards Him for our salvation: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; Hear ye Him" (Jo.12.28)

4. Jesus speaks to us in various ways, as He is present to us in manifold ways: (Myterium Fidei).

5. From our part we have to listen to Jesus carefully: always and everywhere; in interior solitude and external activities; in the inspirations he gives and in the 'signs' he shows. "The students may learn to live in intimate and constant communion with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit"(PF.n:8).

6. The process of our formation is, in fact, this listening to Christ, in collaboration with our superiors and in communion with our brethren. "Speak, Lord! Thy servent heareth"

(1 Psalm. 3.10)

7. Hence our formation is definitely personal, voluntary and continuous; and should be effected in the light of our special vocation which is a divine gift." "The students should learn to live according to the evangelical ideal.." (PF n. 8).

Practical reflections

1. Do I really believe that my priestly formation is personal and voluntary?

2. Do I realise that my formation is a continuous process to be effected in cooperation with my superiors and colleagues and in the light of my vocation?

3. How do I understand my vocation? Have I nothing more to hear from Jesus Christ, whose minister I am or whose minister I am going to be?

4. Is Christ a living person to me? Do I have a real and personal contact with him? What is my attitude towards listening to Him?

5. Do I take pains to hear Christ: in prayer? in fulfilling my daily duties?

9. "Learn of Me"

Patron: St. Joseph

Private Sp. Reading: Phil. 2/1-12; Gal. 5/13-20;
Imit. III. 8, 9, 11, 13, 14.

Ejaculation: Jesus meek and humble of heart,
make my heart like unto Thine.

Thoughts: 1. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to a world ruled by Roman imperialism, Greek

sophism and jewish pharisaism. He called out to all: Learn of Me; because I am meek and humble of heart." The same message is given to us also in this age of materialism and egoism. As Christians we have chosen to follow Christ; but we fail to realise the true meaning of His message of humility which He has taught by words, and all the more, by His great example.

2. His whole life was an act of humility. It was manifested in the mystery of His Incarnation and Nativity. The hidden life at Nazareth bespeaks nothing but the same. Every circumstance of His public life suggests it. It was the virtue He dearly loved and praised, taught and practised from Bethlehem to His death on the cross. "He was emptied of His glory", "humbling Himself" unto death.

3. The Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and the Apostles looked upon Him as their Great Exemplar and tried to be humble like Him.

4. Christ has clearly warned us against the malice and dangers of pride in very clear words: "Whoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled." "God resists the proud."

5. Humility is the foundation of spiritual life: "Dost thou wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that shall pierce the

clouds? Lay first the foundations on humility” (St. Augustine).

6. “Humility is the mother of many virtues. It is this virtue that gives birth to obedience, patience, fear of God, modesty and peace” (St. Thomas Villanova).

7. It is the source of divine grace. “But to the humble He gives His graces.” It fosters the spirit of prayer: “He who is not profoundly humble can never arrive at a sublime degree of prayer” (St. Theresa).

8. It is the safest way of salvation: “Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 18/31).

How to practise humility?

1. Place yourself before God Almighty and contemplate His perfection and your nothingness.

2. Kneel at the feet of our Lord Jesus and ponder over His life of humility and humiliations and ask yourself with St. Bernard; “What pride is there that the humility of Christ cannot extinguish?”

3. Often give thanks for the divine gifts and have recourse to His help in all your undertakings.

4. Submit yourself fully to the will of God and accept with humble patience the trials of life-

5. Humbly obey your superiors and remember the words of Isias: "woe to you that are wise in your own eyes" (6/21) and of Imitation: "The self-wise rarely allow themselves humbly to be ruled by others".

6. Look upon yourself as the least among your brothers and help them according to the example of Our Lord: "If I have washed your feet....yuu in your turn ought to wash each other's feet" (Jo. 13/14)

7. Try to embrace humiliations patiently and try to profit by them. "All who have a true desire to become humble. have practised humiliations" (St. Bernard).

8. Be ever vigilant to fight against the prompting of pride and pray often for the virtue of humility.

Self Examination.

Let us examine at length on the vice of pride and find out how far we are successful in acquiring the virtue of humility. Pride is considered under different headings:-

I Pride of Superiority

It is manifested by:

a) **An overbearing attitude:-** Have I a Superior attitude in thinking, speaking or acting? Have I offensive, haughty ways of acting or of carrying myself? Do I demand recognition? Do I use the word "I" so much as to make it offensive? Do I desire to be always first? Am I ready to seek and accept advice? Am I prone to be little persons places or things? What have I done to correct overbearing attitude?

b) **A critical attitude:-** Am I prone to be critical of persons, places and things? Am I uncharitable? Do I speak ill of others? Have I lied about others? Do I listen to others who speak ill of others? Do I seek to place blame on others excusing myself? Do I ridicule others? Am I jealous? Am I envious, wishing evil to another rejoicing at his failures? Do I carry small dislikes or even more serious ones? Is there any one I dislike to speak to? What have I done to correct this critical attitude?

(c) **An argumentative attitude:-**

Am I prone to argue? Have I a Superior, "know-it-all" attitude in arguments? Do I think that others are quite wrong? Do I refuse to give

consideration to what they state? Is it hard for me to yield a point? Do I try to see both sides of a question? Do I argue in my own defence, even when I know I am wrong? Do I insist on having the last word? Have I tried to argue reasonably and without a raised tone? What have I done to correct this argumentative attitude?

(d) **An angry attitude:-** Do I easily lose my temper? Does loss of temper make me sullen, unkind, uncharitable, critical? Do I get angry because of opposition? Am I so set on winning games and scoring high positions that I get dejected when losing? Do my mistakes make me angry? Does a correction of any kind make me angry? Is it a particular person, or place, or thing that arouses my temper? What have I done to correct faults against meekness?

II Pride of Timidity

Do I think, speak and act timidly? Have I shy eyes and shy manner? Am I easily embarrassed? Do I recognize my weaknesses as they really are? Do I try to hide them? Do I fear ridicule because of them? Am I shy about doing things in public? Do I try to get out of them? Do I compare my talents to those of others and feel exalted or dejected? Do I understand that

God has given me what I have? Do I bury my physical, mental or spiritual talents or try to develop them? Am I so afraid of mistakes as not to try at all? Am I open and frank to my Superiors and Confessor? Am I afraid to be pious? Obedient? Charitable? Humble? Mortified? Studious? Do I stay with the crowd be it right or wrong? Does shyness lead me into deliberate wrong? Am I afraid to correct others? What have I done to correct pride of timidity?

III Pride of sensitiveness

Am I easily wounded? Am I suspicious? Distrustful? Do I misjudge, misinterpret others? Do I accuse others of being unjust and unfair to me? Do I allow innocent fun at my expense? Do I think that others do not like me? That I am unwelcome in the company of others? Am I moody? Am I hard to get along with? Am I willing to accept advice, correction and help? Do I get upset when I feel I am not sufficiently attended to? What have I done to correct pride of sensitiveness?

IV Pride of complacency or vanity

(a) In Sp. affairs:- Am I subject to vain glory? Am I vain in thoughts, in words, in acts in regard to spiritual affairs? Am I vain about my meditation? Mass? Devotions? etc. Am I vain

about my virtues such as obedience, mortification, penance? Does vanity enter into my confessions, directions? monitions? Do I act piously? seek strange devotions? Do I love to speak about my goodness? Do I criticize the spiritual life of others? Do I pray God for help in all my undertakings? Do I thank Him for all my success?

b) **In my internal behaviour:-** Am I vain in thoughts, in words or in acts concerning my mental ability? Do I have distractions of vain glory? Do I daydream in a heroic way? Am I vain about my memory? My imagination? My understanding? My knowledge? Do I ask questions for the purpose of showing my ability? Have I a conceited way of explaining things to others? Do I speak about my mental abilities Am I earnest enough to do all things for the glory of God? How shall I correct my deficiencies in this matter?

c) **In external affairs:-** Am I vain in my actions? looks? vain about my personal appearances? dress? vain in the way I speak? walk? Am I vain about my health? vain in my games? vain in singing? Am I vain about the things I use? Do I glory about my success? about my family? What have done to correct this vanity in external affairs?

Positively

How do I stand in relation to the example of humility set by Christ and his teachings on

this matter? With what reverence do I honour God, conform myself to His will, obey Superiors out of love of God? What patience do I Show against difficulties, sufferings, privations and especially humiliations?

Have I a desire to love the cross and love humiliation, in union with Christ and out of love for Him?

Am I prepared (i) to accept myself with all my deficiencies

2) to accept others knowing me for my real worthlessness and

3) to be treated for what I am?

“Then we attain complete self effacement, and God alone lives and reigns within us.”

10. At The Foot of The Altar

Prayer: Bl. Virgin Mary, the mother of priests.

Ejaculations : H. Mary my mother help me to ascend the altar.

• **Readings:** St. Lk. II. 22-35. HEB. X. 1-22.

1. “As laid down by the law of Moses, they took the child to Jurusalem to present him to the Lord”. (Lk.II.22.)

Jesus the Highpriest has come to the world to offer himself as a Sacrifice on the altar of the world, for the whole world. By fulfilling the Jewish rite of presentation at the temple, he makes a ritual offering of himself to God and to the task God has entrusted him.

What we offer is a symbol and expression of our self-gift. We give ourselves through our gifts.

2. "Behold I came to do Thy will"
(Ps.39.7-8)

The decision we have taken and the steps we are taking in favour of priesthood is a unique and extraordinary way of realising our self-gift to God and men in Christ and with Christ. We are called to associate with him in the closest manner to be priests and victim. It is up to make our lives a holocaust of Consuming love.

3. "Not my will but thy will be done"
(Mk-XIV.36.)

We remain at the foot of the altar along with the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, by shedding his blood, in order to become victims with him and thus fulfil what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ.

We have to remain set apart consecrated and crucified with Christ that he may accomplish his saving through us also. Here there is

the enduring joy of meeting God and being with him; here there is the joy of giving as well as the agony of giving up.

Ask yourself:-

1. Am I conscious of the self-immolation demanded by the priesthood?

2. Am I filled with the spirit of Christ in my life offering?

3. What should I do to be faithful to my divine call?

11. Vocation

Patroness: The Bl. Mother of the Eternal Priest.

Private Sp. Reading - Imit. IV. 5, 8; St. Mt. 4-17-22.
Decree on the Training for Priesthood nos. 4-12.

Ejaculations - "Speak O Lord; Your servant is ready to hear." "Passion of Christ; strengthen me."

Thoughts - 1. "With unchanging love I love thee, and now in mercy I have drawn thee to myself" (Jere. 31. 3). God has called us from nothingness to existence, to human life, to the catholic

faith and finally now to priesthood. This is a gratuitous gift for which we have no right whatsoever. Accepting it gratefully, we should live for God alone. "I am the beginning and end of all" (Apoc. 1/8).

2. "You have not chosen me; but I have chosen you and have appointed you" (John 15/16). We are chosen to this state of life by our Divine Lord, through our superiors, as He once called His first disciples. We should esteem this vocation above all things.

3. "Follow me; I will make you fishers of men" "The students must clearly understand that they are not destined for power and honours but are dedicated wholly for the service of God and the pastoral ministry" (Train. Priesthood no. 9).

"The mystery of salvation is to be presented in such a way that the students perceive the meaning, structure, and pastoral purpose of their studies; *this will also help them make their faith the foundation and inspiration of their whole lives and will give them the strength to embrace their vocation with personal dedication and a joyful heart*" (Ibid no. 14).

5. This Vocation is a source of great spiritual perfection. "The spiritual formation ought to be closely connected with the doctrinal

and pastoral training.... The students may learn to live in intimate and constant communion with the 'Father through His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit' (no. 8). "They should rather be trained *to find in the pastoral action itself a very effective means of strengthening their spiritual life*" (no. 9).

6. "Come and follow me, you will have a treasure in heaven" (Mt. 19/21) This vocation preserves us from a number of sins which we might have committed had we pursued another walk of life; and it will lead us safely to the eternal bliss.

How to preserve and foster this vocation

"Son, when you come to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear and prepare thy soul for temptation" (Ecc. 12/1).

1. Your vocation is a rich treasure of which the devil is very jealous. He will employ every artifice to rob you off this priceless blessing. So reject all thoughts of inconstancy as you would reject all thoughts of impurity. If it continues, reflect upon the words of O. Lord: "No man putting his hands to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 9/62). Also disclose your trouble to the Directors concerned as early as possible.

2. Strive hard to perform fruitfully all your Sp. exercises, because from negligence in these exercises, will rise disgust for your vocation.

3. Try to view in the light of faith every duty you perform, every person you come across, every suffering you meet with. "The students should learn to live according to the evangelical ideal to deepen their faith, hope, and charity so that by the practice of these virtues they may acquire the spirit of prayer, safeguard and strengthen their vocation, energize the other virtues and grow in the zeal to win all men for God" (no. 8).

4. Your superiors cannot form you without your co-operation. Therefore have a filial confidence in their guidance and you will thus "defeat all the snares of the devil" (St. Francis Xavier).

5. Observe faithfully all your rules which will help to form your life and to test yourself. "The seminary discipline should be regarded not merely as an appropriate safeguard for community life and charity, but as a necessary part of the whole training: it is a great help for acquiring self-mastery, developing personal maturity, and cultivating the other

qualities of mind that most contribute to the well-ordered and fruitful activity of the Church" (no.11). Accustom yourself to act under God's eye and do not allow the wretched saying, "not caught, not guilty" to be yours.

6. Kindle in your heart the fire of zeal at the thought of so many souls that need your help in your future ministry, and strive hard to equip yourself well to become a good pastor. "The students must be prepared for the ministry of pastor that they may learn to represent Christ before men who came "not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (no.4).

7. Be always ready to encourage and help each other in the seminary training and don't give any cause for dis-edification. "The whole pattern of seminary life - pervaded by the spirit of piety and silence and by readiness to help one another - should be so organized that it constitutes a kind of initiation into the life the students will have to lead later on as priests" (no.11). "The students must learn to adjust their personal character; they must develop personal courage, and in general, learn to value those virtues which are highly regard by men and are an asset to a minister of Christ, such as sincerity, a strict concern for

justice, faithfulness to one's promises, courtesy, modesty coupled with charity in conversation" (no11). "I therefore beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called" (Eph.4/1).

8. Don't be inordinately attached to less necessary pursuits which may distract you from more necessary ones and even lead you into spiritual ruin.

9. Meditate often on the excellence of the priestly life, the dangers of the world and the vanity of things earthly.

10. Avoid all wilful venial sins which will end in mortal sins. And if you find that evil habits are already formed in you so much so that grievous sins are often committed, explain candidly your difficulties to Sp. Director and abide by his directions.

Self-examination -

1. Do I esteem my vocation as the best way for me to follow Christ and to gain eternal reward? Do I often thank God for the same?

2. Am I fully conscious of my obligations towards God my creator, to Jesus Christ my saviour, to the church my mother, and to the mankind at large as the children of God?

3. Do I know that these my obligations are to be fulfilled by following faithfully my vocation and bringing it to a success?

4. Am I tempted to think that by following this occasion, I am doing a favour to my God and church?

5. Do I demand, in return, any special privileges and conveniences of life.

6. Am I not to follow the example of the crucified Lord and that of the Apostles in following my vocation.

7. Do I fully realize that I am preparing to be a "victim"?

8. Am I earnest in my attempt to amend my faults in order to become like my Divine Lord, the Eternal High Priest?

9. Do I sincerely try to be led, corrected and helped by my superiors?

10. Do I fulfill all my duties with the utmost diligence?

11. How far have I succeeded in acquiring the virtues of humility, purity, mortification, charity and constancy?

12. How do I perform the Sp. exercises such as, meditation, Holy Mass, Communion, visits, presence of God, Rosary, Sp. reading etc?

13. Are there any grievous sins often committed?

14. What is my attitude towards wilful venial sins?

15. Are there any worldly motives which are detrimental to the glory of God, salvation of souls and to my own eternal happiness?

12. "Vocation and Victimhood"

Patron - St. Thomas the Apostle

Ejaculation - "Let us also go with Jesus and die with him."

Sp. Reading - St. John XI. 5-16

II Cor. XI, 21-33

Imitation of Xt. II Ch. 12.

Reflections "Thomas said to the other disciples: let us also go with him and die with him." This challenging declaration gives us a deeper vision of our Priestly Vocation and Life committed to Jesus Christ. As a preparation for the Centenary Celebration, we shall devote this recollection day to understand the message of our apostle.

A) "Let us also go with Jesus"

"Jesus called unto him whom he himself desired and they came to him. And he appointed the twelve to be with him" (Mk. III.14). We too are called to be with Jesus, and to accompany him in a special manner—

1. Through death to sin
2. By practising virtues
3. United in the Spiritual exercises

Am I in the footsteps of the apostles who having accepted the call "immediately left their nets and followed him" (Mk. 1-18)

B) "Let us also die with Jesus"

"I appeal to you by God's mercies to offer up your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to God and worthy of his acceptance" (Rom. XII. 1). Then, like a soldier of Christ Jesus, take thy share of hardship. . . . we are to share his life, because we have shared his death" (II Tim. II. 3,11). Here St. Paul points out clearly the inseparability of priest and victim.

Priest through his daily life and ministry is to continue the sacrificial immolation of the lamb of God - To fill up those sufferings that are wanting to the passion of Christ (Col. I. 24).

"Take up your cross daily and follow me" (Mt. XVI. 24).

1. By carrying out God's Will.
2. By loving and serving one another as Jesus did.
3. By loving acceptance of sufferings and difficulties of life.

"This is what the world expects today. We need priests who give the body and blood of God and their own at the same time" (Paul Claudel).

Examination of Conscience

1. Do I pay proper attention to the whisperings of Jesus in prayer?
2. Do I Keep company with Christ in all my efforts?
3. Have I understood that the spirit of mortification and Sacrifice as part of my Vocation?
4. Am I tempted to give more time attach more importance to light reading than to serious study?
5. What is my habitual reaction to difficulties in prayer, study, work and community life? Is it discouragement? nervous irritation? or patience and good spirit?

13. Let us also go and die with Him

Patron: – St. Thomas the Apostle

Private Sp. Reading: – 2 Tim. 2/1-14; Imit II. 12.

Ejaculation: – My Lord and My God

Let us also go and die with Him.

Reflections:

1. “You may have thousands of teachers in Christ, but not more than one father; it was I who begot you in Jesus Christ, by preaching the Gospel” (I Cor. 4/15).

a) Do not these words of St. Paul clearly express the claims of St. Thomas over us, his children in Christ.

b) “Therefore, I beg you, to imitate me as I imitate Christ” – How do I imitate him in priestly vocation?

c) “My Lord and my God” – Do I stand witness to Christ as St. Thomas did?

2. “Let us go” – We are called by Christ to go with Him. This is in short the purpose of our divine call and priestly life.

a) What do I think of my vocation? Am I not called to follow Christ as St. Thomas did?

b) Do I take care to follow Christ in everything?

c) Am I disturbed by temptations? dissuaded by worldly pleasures? disheartened by failures?

3. "Let us also die"

a) St. Paul says: "I die every day in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 15/31) – Is it true of me also?

b) Am I labouring hard as "a good soldier of Christ?"

c) Do "I fight a good fight" against my evil passions such as sloth, carelessness, and vanity?

d) Am I earnest in preparing myself to become an apostle of Christ? "The grain of wheat should die if it is going to bring forth fruit"

4. Always "with Jesus"

a) Do I try to keep close to my Lord always?

b) Am I united with Him by a strong bond of love?

c) Do I earnestly try to do everything to please Him?

d) Do I find delight in doing daily some acts of mortification and self-denial?

e) How do I receive the Eucharistic Lord into my heart?

“For me to live is Christ and die is gain”
(Phil. 1/21).

14. Our Ladies ‘Fiat’

Patron: Bl. Virgin Mary, mother of the eternal High Priest.

Ejaculation: Immaculate mother of the Holy one
make us holy.

Reading: Wisdom. IX. 5-18

St. Lk. I. 26-55

Vat. II. On Priests No. 15

I Special message to Mary through the Annunciation

Hail Mary full of Grace. The Lord is with you. You are to conceive and bear a son and you must name him Jesus....The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most High will cover you with its shadow. And the child will be holy and will be called son of Godfor nothing is impossible to God”. (St. Lk.I 28-37).

Our priestly vocation too is an Annunciation from God.

II Mary's response and its significance

"I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me" (Lk. I. 38).

When God was creating the universe he said "Fiat" and all things came forth from nothing. Then the eternal love of the Lord of creation solicited the creatures for a life long 'fiat' as the echo of the one which resounds in heaven. But our first parents failed in this. Then again as God became incarnate He wanted that 'fiat' to be pronounced by a creature. God awaited the consent of the 'chosen Virgin' of Nazareth. She knew that the whole plan of Redemption hinges on her free consent and commitment. Fully conscious of the total import of the divine invitation Mary said her 'fiat' to be the mother of the Redeemer and the redeemed!

"And the Word was made flesh and lived among us". (St. Jn. I. 14)

III 'Fiat' in our christian and priestly life

God's dialogue with the virgin Mary is analogous to his dialogue with humanity. We find in the Annunciation and in Mary's response a model for ourselves. We too are called to act in the drama of Redemption as associates of

the divine, Saviour. Our christian and priestly life is nothing but a meaningful extension of the 'Flat' of Mary as to our vocation and mission to bring forth Christ sacramentally and spiritually to the world! God awaits our free consent and commitment.

Holy Mary, mother of Jesus and priests pray for us.

15. Bl. Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Men

Patroness: Holy Infant Mary

Private Sp. Reading: St. Lk. 1/26-56, St.Lk. 2, Const. Church Ch. 8

Ejaculations: Mary, Cause of Our Joy, pray for us

My Mother, my refuge!

Thoughts – In the month of Sept. we celebrate the feasts of the Nativity and the seven dolours of Our Lady. Thus her whole life is presented to us for our meditation and imitation, for which we can find ample matter in the dogmatic constitution on the Church.

1. Mary is the Mother of the Word Incarnate, the eternal High Priest. "He for us men and for our salvation, came down from

heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary" (Creed). "As a result, she is also the favourable daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this sublime grace, she far surpasses all other creatures both in heaven and on earth"

(Church-53).

2. Mary is also Our Mother. As St. Augustine says, "Mary who is the mother of Christ in the natural sense of the word, has become spiritually the mother of all the members of the body of her Son". This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross" (Ibid. 62).

3. Bl. Virgin is our Coredemptrix. "She was eternally predestined in conjunction with the incarnation of the divine word, to be the mother of God. . . . In a very singular way she co-operated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls" (Ibid. 61).

4. This co-operation in the redemptive work is still continued by Mary as our advocate and mediatrix. "For taken up to heaven, she did not lay aside this saving role, but by her manifold

acts of intercession continues to win for us gifts of eternal salvation. Mary cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led to their happy fatherland" (Ibid. 62).

5. Mary is the immaculate Virgin. "A Virgin shall conceive and bear a son whose name will be called Emmanuel" (Is. 7/14). "Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness; the virgin of Nazareth is, on God's command, greeted by an angel messenger as "full of grace" (Ibid. 56).

6. Finally the council fathers present Mary as "a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim people of God". Mary as the privileged object of the benevolence of the Holy Trinity stands a striking witness to the infinite goodness of God towards mankind. Again, she is the solitary and sublime boast of our human nature, in the eternal and supernatural glorification of both body and soul.

7. Mary is the example, par excellence for all christians and especially for priests. She lived in this world, but completely preoccupied with the redemptive work of her Son. She is the perfect model of Christian holiness.

How to imitate Our Lady?

1. Desire for imitation results from tender love and sincere devotion. So we should have fervent devotion toward Mary. Bl. Virgin as the most holy mother of God and exalted above all angels and men, has been venerated from most ancient times, under the title of "God bearer". Hence the most holy synod "admonishes all the sons of the church the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Bl. Virgin be generously fostered. It charges practices and exercises of devotion toward her be treasured as recommended by the teaching authority of the church in the course of centuries. . . .(Ibid. 67).

2. We should have a tender filial love toward our heavenly mother. Let us entrust ourselves to her motherly protection and seek her help in all our needs.

3. Try to make her know, so that all may come to Jesus through Mary.

4. Be conscious that, by our veneration and love for Mary we are gradually perfecting our resemblance to the Saviour.

5. Let us imitate Our Lady in her sinless and perfect life by fostering a salutary fear for sin and avoiding all dangerous occasions.

6. We are to be humble, as this "Handmaid of the Lord", in all our acts both internal and external.

7. Let her perpetual virginity instil into our hearts ardent love and regard for the life of celibacy to which we are called.

8. Her zeal for the salvation of the world should be imitated by us all, who are to become pastors of souls.

9. Let us be ever vigilant to her motherly admonition at the marriage feast of Cana: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." We should obey Jesus in our superiors and in the rules of conduct given to us.

10. "He took her for his own" - Let us imitate the beloved disciple of Jesus and take Mary for our own and associate her in all our works.

Self Examination

1. Do I find pleasure in studying more about the unique place of our Lady in the history of salvation?

2. Do I lovingly reflect on the mutual relations of Jesus and Mary fostered during the earthly life, and try to imitate her during the

divine sacrifice, holy communion and visits to the Bl. Sacrament

3. Am I fervently devoted to Mary? How do I manifest it?

4. Have I fully entrusted myself to her motherly protection?

5. Do I pray to her and seek her help in all my undertakings?

6. How do I foster filial love toward my Divine Mother?

7: In building up my vocation, do I imitate Mary in her piety, humility purity, obedience, charity and self-Sacrifice?

7. Do I find true happiness and satisfaction in realising that I am a child of Mary?

16. Priests Today

Patron. St. John Maria Viany

Sp. Reading- Is. 53; John. 15-17; Heb. 5, 7-10

Decrees on Priestly Formation and the Ministry and life of Priests.

Ejaculations. O Jesus, keep the priests close to Thy Sacred Heart. Make me a saint O Lord, and don't spare me in the making

"Eternal Word, only begotten son of God
 Teach me true generosity
 Teach me to serve you as you deserve.
 To give without counting the cost,
 To fight heedless of wounds,
 To labour without seeking rest,

"

St. Ignatius

1. I have chosen you

"Every high priest has been taken out of
 mankind and is appointed to act for men in their
 relations with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices
 for sins, and so he can sympathise with those
 who are ignorant or uncertain because he too
 lives in the limitations of weakness" (Heb. 5/1).

"You did not choose me, no, I chose you"
 (Jo. 15/16). Because of his special predilection
 for me Jesus has called me. My vocation is a
 gratuitous gift. I do not deserve it in any way,
 The Apostles were simply captivated by the
 personality of Christ. Because of that they
 readily abandoned all that they had, and stead-
 fastly adhered to him.

II Go out to bear fruit

"And he has entered the sanctuary once
 and for all, taking with him not the blood of

goats and bull calves, but his own blood, having won an eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9/12)
 "So get rid of all the old yeast, and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread, unleavened as you are meant to be" (1 Cor 5/7)

"Worship him . . . in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God" (Rom 12/1)

The priest of today has necessarily to be a victim in order to be true to his vocation. His very ministry demands this of him. He will have to exercise his ministry "in the diaspora of unbelief, of the church's social insignificance, of the world's in comprehension of God". He has to remain in the midst of this world a believer, a man with a meaning and a message. Only the priest who has offered himself as a burnt offering on the altar of the cross will save the present day world.

Exam. of Conscience

1. As the future present how do I respond to the Lord's Call? Am I convinced of the need of a life of real sacrifice?

2. How shall I live my victim role here in the seminary? What is my attitude to the

difficulties that are part of this life? With what earnestness and sincerity do I observe the rules and regulations realising they are to train me in discipline?

3. Do I pray constantly for light and strength to approach the altar of sacrifice that is my future ministry fully prepared?

Part III - Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

1. Mediation.

1) Let us affectionately contemplate in the Manger the Infant Jesus who has come to reconcile heaven and earth. (2) Let us earnestly pray to understand His boundless love, and also respond to it by a life devoted to Him.

1. The Mediation of Our Lord.

1) By the sin of man, a terrible reciprocal aversion existed between God and man.

(a) On the part of God - His infinite goodness was ignored, He was deprived of the praise due to Him, by the sin of man for whom all this universe was created. What an ingratitude! what an infidelity!

(b) On the part of man What a horrible disorder he is turned away from God for Whom he was created. He is like a vessel tossing on a rocky coast with no hope of reaching the heaven.... Let us have a holy hatred for mortal sins, and also for all venial sins. (2) Let us consider how desperate the situation was.

a) The entire human race with all its sufferings and sacrifices could do nothing to get out of it, but sank deeper in misery and corruption.

(b) An angel or all the angels incarnate and crucified also could not save the situation.

3) Then the mediator appeared.

a) "Tunc dixi ecce venio", the son of God said: Happy words! what a comfort do they bring! The words of a child wrapped in swaddling clothes, from a manger willing to sacrifice Himself in satisfaction for the sin of man - ample reparation, because it is done by God - man. It shows infinite wisdom, goodness and condescension. What a solution! Let us glory in the happiness of being reconciled to God.

b) Consider this child. It is from the heart of this child that the words of comfort have come, and it is there that we find the love which made Him assume the mission of the mediator, by dying on the cross. Let us thank His heart and always be devoted to it. Let us ask Him to show us how best we can show our devotion to His Sacred Heart.

II. Our Office of Mediation.

1) It is an honour for us to be mediators. He invites us: "Come to me all". But many do not heed His call. We have heard His call. It is out of

His mercy and love that He has called us. We should be grateful to Him and we should train ourselves to be mediators in bringing souls to Him, in saving them from eternal damnation.

2) How can we be mediators.

We must strive to love the Sacred Heart and draw others to love it. (a) For ourselves, the chief means is prayer for this intention: thoughtful meditation on the life Our Lord; intimate union with Him; active participation in the Holy Mass and communion; frequent visits; Way of the Cross devoutly performed and other spiritual exercises fruitfully carried out. (b) For others also: (1) One of the principal means is prayer. We can pray to the eternal Father to make the Sacred Heart known to men; to the Holy Spirit to inspire them to love it; and to the Bl. Virgin to intercede for the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. (2) Another means is our example of a holy life and of intense devotion to the Sacred Heart. It will have great influence on others even when we least suspect it. (3) Special means suitable to our state of life are steady application to the study of useful subjects and to the training in the spirit of the Sacred Heart so that we may become zealous apostles of Christ. (4) Let us commend our endeavours to the prayers of the Bl. Virgin and

invite St. Joseph, uniting ourselves in this office with the choir of Thrones. Let us then, with child-like confidence turn to Jesus, born in the Manger and now present in the tabernacle, and tell Him all our needs, desires and designs in our hearts and the graces we long to possess.

2. Let us express our sorrow for the offences committed against the Holy Eucharist, and with a contrite heart ask for God's mercy and Pardon.

3. Let us have recourse to voluntary mortifications both exterior and interior. In the Scriptures and in the lives of the saints plenty of instances are to be found. Receive our daily crosses and trials in a spirit of mortification.

4. The observance of the First Fridays and the Holy Hour by ourselves and promoting these practices among others My loving Lord, I am really sorry for all my past sins and I purpose never to repeat them. I am sorry also for the sins of others and ask pardon for them. As an act of reparation, I shall be more devoted to the Holy Communion Eucharist in assisting at Mass, in receiving Holy Communion sacramentally and spiritually and visiting Jesus in the Bl. Sacrament and in fostering these devotions in others. Mary, my Mother, help me.

2. Reparation

I. Our Lord in the Bl. Sacrament speaks: "My soul is sorrowful unto death".

II. Let us ask for the grace of feeling the wrongs he suffers so that we may make frequent and generous reparation.

I. The wrongs done to the Bl. Sacrament, which call for reparation.

1. When where and by whom? at all times, in all places and by every class of persons

2. What wrongs does he suffer?

In the hearts - indifference, coldness, contempt, hatred.

On the lips - blasphemy, heresy, scorn.

In actions - disloyalty and desertion.

Men are too careless to visit Him, receive Him and assist at Mass. Unworthy communions and sacrilegious masses - terrible profanations - how patient Jesus is.

3. Our Lord's sorrow My soul is sorrowful unto death. My loving Lord, we offer, Thee our deep and loving sympathy for the many crimes that have grieved Thee in our own times.

II Motives for reparation.

1. Who is suffering these insults? He is our Friend, Benefactor, Redeemer, Our Lord and Our God

2. Why does he suffer? (a) because of His love for us, men. Knowing how much our souls would be sustained and comforted by the Holy Eucharist, He instituted it, though He foresaw all the insults He would have to suffer for it. b) Alas! Are not some of these insults caused by me?

3. Who asks me for reparation? Christ Himself. Recollect the words of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary: "Behold the heart which has so loved men...." Ingratitude and sacrileges, by coldness and contempt towards this Sacrament of Love.... What grieves me most is that among those who... who are especially *consecrated to my service*.. The Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi.... receive communion and make a solemn act of reparation.

4. What does he promise? Grace and pardon. We will abundantly feel the influence of His love if we do so ourselves and induce others to do so.

III The Means of Reparation

1. a perfect fulfilment of all our duties towards the Bl. Sacrament outward respect and inward devotion - altars etc. scrupulously clean - bread and wine pure and fresh - sanctuary lamp, oil.... Often visit the Bl. Sacrament, assist at Holy Mass devoutly, receive Holy Communion

fervently, preparation and thanksgiving carefully done,

3. Adoration

1. Let us contemplate our Lord in the Bl. Sacrament adoring His Father and waiting for worship from us.

2. Let us pray for the grace of being true worshippers of Jesus in the Bl. Sacrament.

I Jesus in His office of adoration.

What is adoration? The profound reverence and perfect submission to God and acknowledgement of His infinite perfections and sovereign dominion.

1. All creatures have an obligation to adore God, their creator - the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. Since they cannot do so, as they have no intelligence, man, in his own name and also in their name, should render this supreme homage.

2. As adopted sons of God, every catholic

3. Very few actually adore Him: Atheists, Indifferent people do not adore Him.

4. No man can so perfectly do this as God deserves. Hence our Saviour - the God-man comes to our aid. He offers this perfect adoration - Let us rejoice that we have Our Lord to offer this perfect adoration.

5. So, turning to Jesus let us unite ourselves to His Sacred Heart and adore God.

II My Office of Adoration.

The object of our adoration is Jesus living in the Bl. Sacrament.

1. Gratitude constrains us to do so.

2. Courtesy or propriety urges us to do this as He has so intimately united us to Him in Holy Communion through the Bl. Sacrament.

3. It is of a sacred trust. In heaven angels and saints adore Him. On earth He is given for us alone. Hence we should treat Him with the greatest respect.

4. At the present day when there is so much impiety and indifference all over the world, it is our special duty to adore Our Lord all the more in the Holy Eucharist.

III Self Examination and Resolution.

1. Do I realize my obligation to discharge the office of adoration, particularly because I am a future priest?

2. Do I often think of this duty?

3. When I enter the church do I adore the Lord as well as possible while

- a) hearing Mass
- b) receiving communion
- c) making visits.

4. Even when I am outside the church, do I go in spirit to all the churches where the Bl. Sacrament is kept, and adore Him lovingly?

4. Love

Let us be present at the revelation of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary when He said "Behold this Heart which hath loved men so much".

2. Let us pray earnestly that the flame of boundless love coming from His Heart may enkindle in our hearts an ardent love for Him.

I He loved me

II (We) I should love Him

1. Real and intimate friendship consists in a mutual desire for each other's society and in interchange of sympathy breaking all distinction and creating equality

1. Let us consider each particular proof of God's love.

a) He had no need for our society as He is all-sufficient in Himself

b) It was infinitely beyond our capacity to receive the gift of Himself

c) It is a miracle that we are raised to Him who is so infinitely above us.

Let us try to grasp these truths and then express our feelings of deep humility. We would then exclaim with St. Peter "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord!

b) His gift is entire as the father of the Prodigal Son said to his first born "My son all that I have is thine". His passion, our strength; His body and blood, our food; His merits, our riches; His heaven, our home; His divinity, our bliss.

c) He establishes equality between Himself and us by living our life sharing our lot, work,

sufferings, sin alone excepted. He calls us friends, brethren, little children.

II We should love Him (1) Many reasons constantly urge us to offer to God these three proofs of our love, (a) to seek Him, (b) to give ourselves to Him. (c) to raise ourselves to Him as He expressly desires.

a) God is everywhere, all creation reveals Him; therefore always He is in our society (b) all that we are, all that we have, we owe to God as St. Ignatius says "I offer Thee, O my Lord, my liberty, memory, intellect, and will, for all that I possess comes from Thee, and I only give Thee back Thy own. Use them as Thou wilt; only fill my heart with divine love and grace. These two gifts are enough for me". (c) We should have earnest desire to raise ourselves to Him to be partakers of the Divine Nature as St. Peter says. 2. We should consider God's loving care and protection. Our Lord said to St. Margaret Mary "All that is mine, is thine; My wounds, blood, my agony....give me then possession of thy heart". So let us offer ourselves entirely to Him and say often "I am thine my loving Lord."

Let love be the motive of all our actions. Sr. Alfonsa's "Loving.... Let us lead a life of love, avoiding selfishness, human respect, worldly

motives, earthly consolations....our desires, aspirations, words, and deeds, must be out of the love of the S. H of Jesus.

Let us unite ourselves with St. Margaret Mary and the choir of the seraphim in this office of "Love" and lead a life of love today and this month. My mother help me.

"O Heart of Jesus burning with Love for us inflame our hearts with love for Thee.

5. Disciple

1. Let us contemplate the scene when St. Mary Magdalen exclaimed "Rabboni, Master."

2. Let us pray for the grace of understanding the greatness of our master and of becoming His obedient disciples in all things.

I Jesus is our Master

II Our Duties as Disciples

I Jesus is our Master: 1) How great is our need for a master? We have many perplexing problems such as the end for which we are born and the principles that should guide us. Our unaided reason would make us stumble and

would lead us astray as in the case of many heathen sages and philosophers. 2. Jesus is a master such as we need. (a) The apostles called Him by the endearing term "Master" and listened to Him. (b) When Mary Magdalen recognized Jesus whom she had taken for the gardener, with rapturous joy she exclaimed "Master." (c) Even the enemies called Him "Master." "You call me "Master" and "Lord" you say well, for so I am", He said to the apostles.

3) What a master we have in Jesus! He is infinite greatness....wisdom....power....kindness....love....Should we not be happy in having such a master, and then should we not offer ourselves entirely to His service?

II Our Duties as Disciples:

The general duty is one of respect, gratitude and confidence. The Pythagoreans said "Ipse dixit" (The master said so) as conclusive. How much more about Jesus! (2) The special duties we owe Him are: (a) A certain pride in belonging to Him. Trampling under foot all human respect, we should follow Him. See Veronica's example.

b) Implicit faith and confidence in all He teaches us setting aside the opinions of mankind

and the world. c) Complete loyalty as expressed by the words of St. Peter, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (d) Entire submission of intellect and will adhering to His teaching as the only truth, and taking firm resolution to act up to it by observing even the smallest rules in detail. Let us say with St. Peter, "Lord I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and to death."

3) Let us examine ourselves seriously on this point. Have we found true and lasting happiness when we have listened to the voice of the world? On the contrary, when we followed the teaching of Christ have we not found true peace of conscience? Wither will the principles of the world lead us? And those of Jesus Christ? How many have followed the world, and what is their testimony?

Recall the last days of Solomon and his saying. Recall also the testimony of saints who have closely followed Jesus. Let us be sorry for the past when we have listened rather to the world than to Christ, and resolve to follow our Lord always and everywhere henceforth as closely as possible, so that we may hear from our heavenly Father, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him." We

may unite ourselves in this office with the choir of the Cherubim and with St. Margaret Mary, and pray to our Blessed Mother to help us.

Say often, "Lord, I shall follow Thee wherever Thou goest."

6. Victim

This time we are considering a very important feature of true devotion to the Sacred Heart: self-sacrifice with and for Jesus. A life really consecrated to Our Lord must aim at self-surrender.

I P. Let us contemplate the scene of the Presentation. O. L. in the temple offering Himself . . . as victim.

II P. Let us pray . . . to understand His sacrifice so that we may love Him more and follow Him more closely.

I. Our Lord as Victim.

II. Let us also be victims.

I. 1) He is a victim both of God and of man - whether in his mortal life, or on the cross, or in the Holy Eucharist. God in His love for us did not spare

Him, but delivered Him up to death for us all (Rom. VIII, 32).

a) **In His mortal life:** He was a victim. He sacrificed pleasure, wealth and glory after which men run. As the 'Imitation' says, there was not a moment misunderstanding, surrender of our personal interests and gratifications. Offer all the mortifications and self-denials for the glory of God and for the expiation of our sins and those of others.

Colloquy.

1. Let us make a voluntary sacrifice of what we are, and what we have for God and souls.

2. Confessing our weakness to do this perfectly, let us unite ourselves with our Blessed Mother, St. Margaret Mary, the choir of Virtues of the angels, and approach the Sacred Heart.

3. Let us then ask Him to make good all our shortcomings, and help us to live always and in particular today and during this month discharging the office of victim, imitating Him, the true and perfect victim. Whatever we do or suffer, let us do or suffer as victims.

The Sacred Heart is a victim for me.
I am a victim for Him.

7. Service

1) Let us picture our Lord at the last supper washing the feet of the Apostles. (2) Let us pray earnestly for light and strength that we may serve God according to the desires of the Sacred Heart.

I. God deigns to serve us. It belongs to the essence of God that He as creator and Lord of all things, should be served by all other created beings. Still He deigns to serve us. (a) by creating many things for our use eg. sun, moon, stars water, air etc. (b) and by waiting patiently for us to hear our prayer. (c) our Lord - God in human form - came to us in order to minister to us and not to be ministered unto as He Himself said. (d) He was submitted to Mary as well as Joseph, to Caesar, to Pilate, to the chief priest and finally to His executioners. (e) In heaven He is serving us as our mediator. (f) In the Holy Eucharist He is at our service offering Himself continuously for us and also serving as our spiritual food.

It is by His service that we are freed from the slavery of Satan.

Can we reflect on these things without being touched by such tokens of infinite goodness? Yet

many men refuse to serve our Lord. What must be our attitude? . . . We must feel in our hearts a free desire to love Him and dedicate ourselves to His service renewing our consecration to His Sacred Heart.

II. We ought (1) to delight to serve God remembering the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians "All things are yours, . . . you are Christ's and Christ is God's (2) It is a privilege that God allows us to serve Him, such a perfect, good, and loving master and Father. "To serve anything else or any other person is folly and vanity, as Solomon has testified. (4) Let us therefore awaken in our hearts an ardent desire to serve Him perfectly, and also to make reparation for those who do not serve Him.

III. Exam. of Conscience and resolutions:
 (1) Have we shown ourselves the faithful and devoted servants that we had promised to be several times in the past? (a) We ought to serve Him in His own way; yet we often prefer our own. Have we not often yielded to impatience, discontent and vain desires for more strength, more talents or different circumstances than that environ us? (b) We ought to serve Him by all the means that He desires: by prayer, work, charity and patience, and not by one or other means. (c) We ought to value nothing else in

comparison with this service. Still we often cling to other things. (2) Resolutions: (a) Let us accustom ourselves to regard everything - our sorrows and failures not less than joys and success - as means of serving God. (b) Let us be mindful of our Lord's teaching that as He served us, we should serve others even washing their feet for His sake. (c) If we are superior to others in talents or position, this fact should place us all the more at their service.

Let us converse with our Lord offering ourselves and all that concerns us to His Sacred Heart with the help of our Blessed Mother. In this Office we unite ourselves with the choir of Archangels, and St. Margaret Mary will aid us and also St. Joseph, who was a model of faithful service.

I came to minister and not
to ministered unto.

To serve God is to reign.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, teach us to serve
others always.

5. If our apostolate should produce ample fruits, we, as priests and seminarists, must be men of intense prayer supplicating not for ourselves only, but for others as well according to the words of O. L. "Pray we therefore the

Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into His harvest" (Lk. 10,2.)

Let us resolve to pray always with confidence, persistence humility, mortification and generosity with a communitarian spirit attaching our minds and hearts to God, our heavenly Father through our Lord. Let us also implore the help of our Blessed Mother, St. Margaret Mary and the Choir of the Angels.

- I. Our Lord's example of prayer.
- II. How we ought to pray
"Lord, teach us to pray".

8. Suppliant

(ie. of the one who is praying).

I. Let us contemplate our Divine Lord spending the whole night in prayer on a mountain, or in the tabernacle interceding for us before His heavenly Father.

II. Let us earnestly beg for the grace of learning from Him the true spirit of prayer.

I. Our Lord's Example

1. The part of his life occupied by prayer:

a) Though we know very little of His early life, we can very well guess that it must have been spent in an uninterrupted prayer at Nazareth together with hard work.

b) Before He began His Public life, withdrawing into a desert, He passed forty days and nights in penance and prayer.

c) During His public life amidst tiring labours He spent whole nights in prayer.

d) In the Bl. Sacrament He is spending days and nights in ardent prayer.

2. Under what circumstances did Our Lord Pray?

a) He prayed before all the chief actions of His life ie. before calling the apostles, before raising Lazarus to life, before instituting the H. E. and before his passion.

b) He prayed when he was successful as when the people wanted to make Him King.

c) He prayed when He was in sorrow and in agony.

d) He prayed when He was about to leave His Apostles.

3. How did He pray?

a) He prayed retiring from the crowd and His disciples, in solitude.

b) He prayed even when He was fatigued during night and day.

c) He prayed in the most perfect manner for us and also for making up for our shortcomings.

II. Our Lord's teaching on Prayer

1. "...that we ought always to pray and not to faint" (Lk. 18, 1.) ie. we should have the spirit of prayer, reciting the vocal prayers, offering all our works to God in union with those of our Lord, asking His light and His blessing on them. Let us examine our life here about prayer.

2. "And I say to you: Ask and it shall be given to you: Seek, you shall find: Knock, and it shall be opened" (Lk. 11,9:) ie. we should pray with confidence and persistence.

3. "When you are praying speak not much as the heathens, for they think that in their

much speaking they may be heard". (Mt. 6, 7). Our hearts and minds must be drawn and attached to Him.

4. Our prayers must be humble, and generous towards all, with mortification remembering the words of O.L., "This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer, and fasting." (Mk. 9, 28).

Zelator

1. Let us contemplate Our Lord traversing the Holy Land in order to find the Kingdom of God.

2. Let us beg God to give us the grace to be filled with zeal...for His Glory and for that of the Sacred heart of Jesus.

1. Our Lord's Zeal

1. Our Lord came into the world in order to be a victim, but up to the time of His sacrifice He spent His life in working zealously for God's glory.

2. Characteristics of His Zeal

a) It took complete possession of Him.... He could say always, 'I seek the glory of Him Who sent me' (Jo. 7, 18).

b) His zeal was pure, free from all desire of gain, wealth, honours, natural consolations (mother and native place), satisfactions of seeing the fruit.

c) Consuming zeal that never flagged "the zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up" (Ps. 68.10).

d) His zeal was always wise restricted to the aims of His work-sent to the Israelites rebuked the excessive ardour of St. Peter and the other Apostles.

e) His zeal was gentle and strong gentle to sinners, strong to pharises....

f) His zeal was animated with the spirit of sacrifice....

3. Fruits of His Zeal

a) God's glory is promoted in a far higher degree.

b) It procured salvation for us and for all men.

We should be happy that we are allowed to share this grace so rich and abundant. If we are able to do any good it is owing to this grace, and so all honour should be ascribed to Him and to His Zeal.

II It is our duty to be Zealous

1. Motives for zeal on our part.

a) As we owe our salvation to the zeal of the Sacred Heart gratitude and love must animate us to be zealous in God's service as well as we can.

b) There are millions of people who do not know and love Him. This fact should urge us to dedicate ourselves entirely to His service and be truly zealous.

2. The characteristics which our zeal ought to have.

a) We should not crave for change and activity but should stick to our place and do our best.

b) We should not, do things for pleasing us or others but for pleasing God, our Father

c) Our zeal ought to be persevering till the end of our life.

d) Our zeal ought to be generous forgetting our tastes and sacrificing our interests.

e) Our zeal ought to be prudent and submissive to authority.

3. The object of our zeal

God our Supreme end and Jesus Christ our more immediate aim and his S. H. our special object today and this month.

III How can we practically show our zeal

1. We should not waste our energy by

dreaming about what we are going to do *in future* but show our zeal in our actions at present, hic et nunc.

2. Let us do so

By means of prayer that Christ's Kingdom may spread all over the world, that all may know, love and serve him, that all may be in the state of grace, and that all may reach heaven to sing His praises for ever; we shall pray thus fervently especially during Mass, after communion and at visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

b) Let us offer all our actions and sufferings for this intention and renew it often.

c) Let us lead an edifying life setting good examples.

d) Let us use all our talents always and everywhere for this end by serving and helping others whose salvation may be depending on us.

Let us unite for this purpose with the Choir of the Principalities, St. Margaret Mary and our Blessed Mother. Recall often the fiery words of the prophet Elias, "with zeal have I been zealous for the Lord, God of Hosts" (3 Kings 19, 10, 14.).





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