

SS. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Mission

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To Restore and Defend Our Ecclesiastical Traditions of the Latin Rite to the
Diocese of Harrisburg

SS. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Chapel

129 South Beaver Street, York PA 17401



“...this missal is hereafter to be followed absolutely, without any scruple of conscience or fear of incurring any penalty, judgment or censure, and may freely and lawfully be used... **Accordingly, no one whatsoever is permitted to infringe or rashly contravene this notice of Our permission, statute, ordinance, command, precept, grant, direction, will, decree and prohibition. Should any person venture to do so, let him understand he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.**”

Pope St. Pius V, Papal Bull, *QUO PRIMUM*, Tridentine codification of the “received and approved” immemorial Roman rite of Mass

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

Like the whole liturgy of this season, the purpose of the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent is to prepare us for the twofold coming of Christ: His coming in mercy at Christmas; and in justice at the end of the world. Allusion is made to the first in the Introit, Gospel, Offertory and Communion, and to the second in the Epistle; while the Collect, Gradual and Alleluia can be applied to either of the two.

In this mass we meet once again with the three great figures that are before the mind of the Church throughout Advent, Isaias, St. John the Baptist, and our Lady. The prophet Isaias foretells of St. John the Baptist that he will be “A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths...and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” And “the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the Baptism of penance for the remission of sins” (Gospel). “John,” St. Gregory explains, “told those who hurried in crowds to be baptized: “Ye brood of vipers, who hath told you to flee from the wrath to come?” Now the wrath to come is the final chastisement, which the sinner will not be able to escape unless he have recourse now to the lamentations of penance. The friend of the Bridegroom warns us to bring forth not fruits merely of penance but worthy fruits. These words are a call to each man’s conscience, bidding him lay up by means of penance a treasure of good works, the greater in proportions to the ravage of sin which caused it (3rd Nocturn). And St. Leo says, “God Himself teaches us by the prophet Isaias: I will lead the blind in a way that they know not, and I will turn the darkness before them into light and I will not forsake them.”

The Apostle St. John makes clear to us, the way in which this mystery is fulfilled, when he says, “And we know that the Son of God is come. And He hath given us understanding that we may know the true God and may be in His true Son” (2nd Nocturn). The liturgy continues: Because of the great love that God has manifested towards us He has sent on earth His only begotten Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. Also in the Communion sentence the Church recalls to us the prophecy of Isaias: “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son: and His name shall be called Emmanuel.” And again, in the Offertory, she combines in a single salutation the words addressed to our Lady by the archangel and by St. Elizabeth. St. Gregory writes: “Gabriel, whose name means Strength of God, is sent to Mary, since he comes to announce the Messiah whose will it is, to appear in humiliation and abasement, in order to subdue all the powers of the air. It was fitting that He should be heralded by Gabriel the ‘strength of God’; He, who was to come as the Lord of Might, the All-powerful and Unconquerable in battle, to crush the powers of the air in universal defeat” (Sermon 35).

In the Collect, just as we are reminded of the display of our Lord’s “great might” which will take place at the time of His second coming, when as supreme Judge, He will come in the splendor of His divine Majesty to render to each according to His works, so we find an allusion to this same great power manifested in His first coming. It was as one clothed in His weak and mortal human nature that our Lord put the Devil to flight.

As we think of our Lord as nigh at hand in one or other of His “comings”, let us say, with the Church, “Come, Lord Jesus, and tarry not.”

INTROIT:

Isa. 45: Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Savior.

Ps. 18: The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands. Glory be, etc. Drop down dew, etc.

COLLECT:

O Lord, we pray Thee, raise up Thy power, and come, and with great might succor us; that, by the aid of Thy grace, that which is hindered by our sins may be quickened by Thy merciful forgiveness. Who liveth and reigneth, etc.

O God, who wert pleased that Thy Word should, at the message of the angel, take flesh in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, grant that we, Thy suppliants, who believe her to be truly the Mother of God, may be helped by her intercession with Thee. Through our Lord, etc.

Mercifully hear the prayers of Thy Church, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that all adversities and errors being overcome, she may serve Thee in security and freedom. Through our Lord, etc.

EPISTLE: *1 Cor. 4, 1-5*

Brethren: Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful. But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day; but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me, is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise from God.

How should priests be regarded by the faithful?

The Church wishes to inspire us with respect and veneration towards priests, who are ministers of Christ, dispensers of the mysteries of God, and advocates of religion. The Scripture says "Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5, 17). "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke 10, 16).

Why is this epistle read today?

The Church wishes, by pointing to the second advent of Christ, to remind the faithful to avoid judging their neighbors, but to judge themselves, and to cleanse their hearts for the reception of Jesus as our Saviour, that they may not have to shrink from Him when He comes as Judge.

Can priests administer the holy sacraments as they please?

No, for, as the stewards of Jesus Christ, they must observe His will, which is that they should administer the sacraments for the glory of God and the salvation of the faithful. They are not permitted to "give that which is holy unto dogs" (Matt. 8, 6), and cannot, therefore, give absolution, or any sacrament, to those who are unfit, lest they thereby condemn themselves.

Why should they esteem it a small matter to be judged by men?

Because men generally judge by appearances and not by reality, St. Paul says: "If I please men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1, 10). But not only priests, the faithful also, must seek to please God more than men. How foolish are they who follow all silly and scandalous fashions in dress, gesture, and manners; who neglect the holy exercises of religion, and ask constantly, "What will the world say?" but never, "What will my God and Saviour say?" if I do this or that.

Why does St. Paul say, "But neither do I judge my own self"?

Because he could not know how God would judge him, "For man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccles. 9, 1); therefore he adds, "I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." We should, therefore, examine ourselves thoroughly whether we are in sin; but if we find nothing in us which displeases God we are not on that account at liberty to think ourselves better than others, for before the mirror of our self-esteem we look quite different to what we are in truth before God, Who cannot be bribed. Oh, how many, who now think themselves innocent and holy, shall appear at the day of judgment stripped of their disguises, and the most secret workings of their hearts revealed by God to their eternal disgrace! This should determine us not to *judge before time*, either ourselves or any one else, of whose hearts we must know even less than of our own. "Let us therefore work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2, 12).

Aspiration.

O Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified (Ps. 142, 2).

GRADUAL:

Ps. 144: The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord; and let all flesh bless His holy name.

Alleluia, alleluia. Come, O Lord, and do not delay; forgive the sins of Thy people Israel. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: *Luke 3, 1-6*

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea, and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas; the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins. As it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaiahs the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Why is the time at which St. John began to preach so minutely described?

Because in that happy year the prophecy of Jacob was fulfilled, and the sceptre being taken from Juda, the long-expected Messiah showed Himself to the world, was baptized by John, and declared by His heavenly Father to be His beloved Son, Whom men should hear. Accordingly, that this time should never be forgotten, the evangelist, contrary to his usual custom, describes it particularly, mentioning the names both of the spiritual and temporal rulers.

What is meant by: "The word of the Lord came to John"?

It means that John was commissioned by divine inspiration, or by an angel sent from God, to preach penance and announce to the world the coming of the Lord. He had prepared himself for this work by a penitential, secluded life, and intercourse with God. We learn from

his example not to intrude ourselves into office, least of all into a spiritual office, but to await the call from God, preparing ourselves in solitude and quiet, by fervent prayer and by a holy life, for the necessary light.

What is meant by: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths"?

It means that we should prepare our hearts for the worthy reception of Christ, by penance, amendment, and the resolution to lead a pious life in future. To do this, every valley should be filled, that is, all faintheartedness, sloth and cowardice, all worldly carnal sentiments should be elevated and directed to God, the highest Good, by firm confidence and ardent desire for heavenly virtues; the mountains and hills should be brought low, that is, pride, stubbornness, and ambition should be humbled, and the obstinate will be broken. The crooked shall be made straight, that is, ill-gotten goods should be restored, hypocrisy, malice, and double dealing be renounced, and our intentions turned to God and the performance of His holy will. And the rough ways shall be made plain, that is, anger, revenge, and impatience must leave the heart, if the Lamb of God is to dwell therein. It may also signify that the Savior put to shame the pride of the world, and its false wisdom by building His Church upon the Apostles, who, by reason of their poverty and simplicity, may be considered the low valleys, while the way to heaven, formerly so rough and hard to tread, because of the want of grace, is now by His grace made smooth and easy.

Aspiration.

Oh, that Thy way, Jesus, may be well prepared in my heart! Alas! assist me, O my Saviour, to do what I cannot do by myself. Fill up the valley of my heart with Thy grace, and straighten my crooked and perverted will, till it shall conform to Thine own. Soften my rough and unruly mind; bring low, destroy, and remove whatever in me impedes Thy way, that Thou mayest come to me without hindrance, and possess and govern me forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY:

Luke 1: Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

SECRET:

Be appeased, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and accept the sacrifice now being offered, that it may help our devotion, and avail for our salvation. Through our Lord, etc.

Confirm in our minds, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the mysteries of the true faith, that we who acknowledge Him who was born of the Virgin to be true God and true man, may deserve by the saving power of His resurrection to attain to everlasting joy. Through our Lord, etc.

Protect us, O Lord, who celebrate Thy mysteries, that holding fast to divine things, we may serve Thee with body and soul. Through our Lord, etc.

COMMUNION:

Isa. 7: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel.

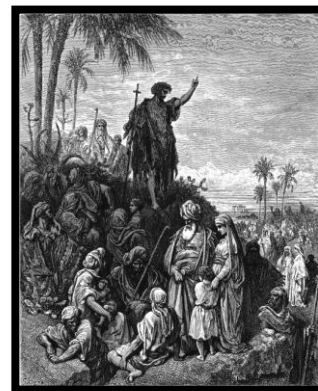
POSTCOMMUNION:

Having just received Thy gifts, O Lord, we beseech Thee that the more we frequent this mystery, the more effectually may our salvation be wrought out. Through our Lord, etc.

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our heart, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son, was made known by the message of the angel, may, by His passion and cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through our Lord, etc.

We beseech thee, O Lord, our God, that Thou permit not those to whom Thou hast given a participation of divine things to succumb to human dangers. Through our Lord, etc.

Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.



By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him. In this is charity...He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. (1 Jn. 4, 9-10)
While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy almighty Word leapt down from heaven, from Thy royal throne...into the midst of the land (Wis. 18, 14-15)

"It is a greater miracle, by the word of preaching, or by the aid of prayer, to convert a sinner from his sin than to raise the dead to life." St. Gregory the Great

PROPER OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 21st:

Date	Day	Feast	Rank	Color	F/A	Mass Time and Intention
21	Sun	4 th Sunday of Advent	sd	V		Mass 9:00 AM; Rosary of Reparation 8:30 AM; Confession 8:00
22	Mon	St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, V	d2cl	W		Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
23	Tue	St. Thomas, Ap [From Dec. 21 st]	d2cl	R		Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
24	Wed	Vigil of the Nativity		V	F/A	Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
25	Thu	Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Day St. Anastasia, M [2 nd Mass]	d1cl	W		Mass 9:00 AM; Rosary of Reparation 8:30 AM
26	Fri	St. Stephen, First Martyr <i>Within the Octave</i>	d2cl	R	A	Mass 8:30 AM; Rosary of Reparation before Mass
27	Sat	St. John, Ap <i>Within the Octave</i>	d2cl	W		Mass 9:00 AM; Confession 8:00; Rosary of Reparation 8:30 AM
28	Sun	The Holy Innocents, Mm <i>Within the Octave</i>	d2cl	R		Mass 9:00 AM; Rosary of Reparation 8:30 AM; Confession 8:00

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ss. Peter & Paul Chapel is open to its members at any time of the day or night for visits to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

If you would like to contribute for the decorations for the chapel for Christmas please contact Claudia Drew.

Christmas Message:

“Without faith, it is impossible to please God.” The primary duty of every Catholic is to profess and defend the Catholic faith. Ss. Peter & Paul Roman Catholic Mission defends the right of every Catholic to the immemorial ecclesiastical traditions, in particular, the “received and approved rites customarily used in the solemn administration of the sacraments” (Council of Trent), that without which the faith can neither be known nor communicated to others. This is done, and can only be done, by defending Catholic dogmas as *dogma*. That is, revealed truths of divine revelation that have been formally and infallibly defined by the Magisterium and constitute the proximate rule of faith for every Catholic. Many Catholics are granted by legal concession a privilege to practice the traditions of our Church on the condition that they will regard these traditions as matters of mere discipline, that is, simple accidents that can be changed or eliminated at the discretion of the legislator at any time and for any reason, and what is worse, they agree to keep their mouths shut when the dogmas of our faith are trampled underfoot by enemies of the Catholic faith within the hierarchy of the Church. Simply said, these Catholics have traded the Catholic faith for crumbs from the table pleading that obedience will excuse their supine cowardice. Our gift to them this Christmas is to let them know that it will not.

“Neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him.” Why cannot the thought of the good things God has prepared for us enter into our hearts? Is it that pride lifts up the heart and grace cannot flow in? It would seem so, for every proud spirit, like Satan, exalts itself above God. God wishes His will to be done; the proud man prefers to do his own. What folly! God desires His will to be carried out only in those things which reason approves; the proud man will have his will accomplished without reason, and even contrary to reason. This is a height to which the streams of grace cannot rise. “Unless you be converted, and become as this little child,” says our Lord, “you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” He is Himself the little and humble Child whom He sets for our Model. He is the Fountain of life, in whom dwelleth and from whom floweth the fullness of all grace. Prepare, then, the way for the waters of grace. Cast down the heights of earthly and proud thoughts. Be conformed to the Son of man, not to the first and fallen man, for the streams of grace cannot “enter into” the heart of the proud and carnal—that is, of the earthly-minded man. Cleanse your “eye,” that you may be capable of beholding the most pure light of faith. Incline your “ear” to the call of obedience, that you may one day attain to perpetual rest and peace upon peace. That future life is called “light” because of its serenity, peace because of its tranquility, a fountain because of its abundance and its eternity. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermon on the Vigil of the Nativity

"He that cometh to God, must believe (Heb 11, 6). Faith is the proximate and proportionate means whereby the soul is united with God; for such is the likeness between itself and God, that seeing God and believing in Him... God manifests Himself to the soul in divine light which passes all understanding. And therefore, the greater the faith of the soul, the more closely is it united with God." St. John of the Cross

Today, Holy Mother Church makes a last effort to stir up the devotion of her children. She leads them to the desert; she shows them John the Baptist, upon whose mission she instructed them on the third Sunday. The voice of the austere Precursor resounds through the wilderness, and penetrates even into the cities. It preaches penance, and the obligation men are under of preparing by self-purification for the coming of Christ. Let us retire from the world during these next few days; or if that may not be by reason of our external duties, let us retire into the quiet of our own hearts and confess our iniquities, as did those true Israelites, who came, full of compunction and faith in the Messiah, to the Baptist, there to make perfect their preparation for worthily receiving the Redeemer on the day of His appearing to the world. Dom Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, Fourth Sunday of Advent

BEHOLD THE SAVIOR COMES

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRESENCE OF GOD - I place myself at the feet of Jesus and ask Him to prepare my heart for His imminent coming.

MEDITATION:

I. "Call together the nations, tell it among the people and say: Behold our Savior cometh!" (*RB*). The message becomes more and more urgent: in a few days, the Word of God made flesh will show Himself to the world. We must hasten our preparations and make our hearts worthy of Him.

The incarnation of the Word is the greatest proof of God's infinite love for men; today's liturgy very appropriately recalls to our mind the wonderful words: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee" (*Jer. 31: 3*). Yes, God has loved man from all eternity, and in order to draw him to Himself, He did not hesitate to send "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (*Rom 8: 3*). With hearts full of love, we must run to meet Love who is about to appear "incarnate" in the Infant Jesus. May it be a love that is faithful in great things as well as in small, an ingenious love that is always seeking opportunities to repay God's infinite love. "Love is repaid by love!" This is the motto which has made saints, and spurred a multitude of souls to greater generosity.

With this love prepare for Christmas, be in this love faithful, for as St. Paul says in the Epistle (*I Cor 4: 1-5*), "What we desire is that everyone may be found faithful."

2. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." The voice of John the Baptist, the great Advent preacher, is heard again in today's Gospel (*Lk 3: 1-16*), inviting us to prepare "the way of the Lord."

This invitation is especially a call to humility; John was not only the herald of this virtue, but its model too. We know, by the testimony of Jesus Himself, that he was "more than a prophet" and that "there hath not risen among them, that are born of women, a greater than John the Baptist" (*Mt 11: 9-11*). John claimed to be nothing more than a mere voice, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord," and declared that he baptized only with water, while another would come who would baptize in the Holy Spirit, another of whom John protested himself unworthy to loose "the latchet of His shoe" (*Jn 1:23-27*). And further, speaking of the Savior's coming, John adds, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (*ibid. 3:30*). Today's Office gathers up all this magnificent testimony of St. John the Baptist, as if to give us a concrete idea of the profound sentiments of humility with which, in our heart, we ought to make smooth "the way of the Lord." If the valleys, that is, our deficiencies, are to be filled up by love, then the mountains and hills, that is, the vain pretenses of pride, must be made low by humility.

A heart filled with self-love and pride cannot be filled with God, and too small will be the place reserved in it for the sweet Babe of Bethlehem.

COLLOQUY:

"O almighty, omnipotent, eternal God, what greater proof of love could You give Your poor creatures than the gift of Your Word, Your only-begotten Son? For our sake, You clothed with human flesh, like the flesh of sin, Him who is eternal splendor, the perfect image of Your substance!

"God of goodness, who art above all goodness, You alone art sovereign good! You gave us the Word, Your only Son, to live with us, to assume our evil, corrupt nature. Why did You make us such a gift? Out of love, because You loved us even before we existed.

"O eternal Greatness, O fathomless Bounty, You lowered Yourself to ennoble mankind! Wherever I turn, I can see nothing but the abyss and fire of Your charity" (*St. Catherine of Siena*).

"Whenever I think of Christ, I should remember... how great is Your love, O Father, which in Jesus has given us a pledge of such great tenderness; for love begets love and although I am only a beginner and very wicked, I shall strive ever to bear this in mind and awaken my own love. Once You, O Father, do me the favor of implanting this love in my heart, everything will become easy for me and I shall get things done in a very short time and with very little labor. O my God, give me this love, since You know how much I need it, for the sake of the love You bore us and through Your glorious Son who revealed it to us, at such great cost to Himself" (*T.J. Life*, 22).

Love will fill the valleys in my heart, and humility will level its mountains and hills. Destroy my pride, arrogance, and vanity, O Lord, by the powerful fire of Your love. By the might of Your all-powerful arm, tear out of my heart every fiber which is infected with the poison of self-love, and which, therefore, does not belong to You. O Lord, I, too, wish to decrease, decrease that You may increase in me, so that on Christmas day You may find my heart entirely empty and free and therefore ready for the total invasion of Your love.

The place is Bethlehem, *Out of Bethlehem*, says the Prophet, shall he come forth that is to be the Ruler in Israel. The Jewish Priests are well aware of the prophecy, and in a few days hence will tell it to Herod. But why was this insignificant town chosen in preference to every other to be the birth-place of Jesus? Be attentive, Christians, to the mystery! The name of this City of David signifies the House of Bread : therefore did he who is the living Bread come down from heaven, choose it for his first visible home. Our Fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead, but lo! Here is the Saviour of the world, come to give life to his creature Man by means of his own divine Flesh, which is meat indeed. Up to this time the Creator and the creature had been separated from each other; henceforth they shall abide together in closest union. The Ark of the Covenant, containing the manna which fed but the body, is now replaced by the Ark of a New Covenant, purer and incorruptible than the other : the incomparable Virgin Mary, who gives us Jesus, the Bread of Angels, the nourishment which will give us a divine transformation; for this Jesus himself has said : He that eateth my flesh abideth in me, and I in him. Dom Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, The Mystery of Christmas

Christmas Day Mass

December 25, 2025

The Word, begotten from all eternity by the Father, has raised into personal union with Himself the blessed Fruit of the virginal womb of Mary; in other words the human and divine natures are joined in our Lord in the unity of a single Person – the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Further, since when we speak of a son we mean a person, Jesus must be called the Son of God, because as the Son of God He is a Divine Person. From this it follows, that our Lady is called the Mother of God; not that she has begotten the ‘word but because from her is derived the humanity that the Word has united to Himself in the mystery of the Incarnation.

Of this mystery the first manifestation to the world was the birth of our Lord at Bethlehem. Whence we see the reason why every year at Christmas the Church says “Puer natus est nobis et Filius datus est nobis.” (“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given”). It is the Son of God, who is now begotten of the Father as Man in the day of the Incarnation: Ego hodie genui te. “By the taking of the Manhood into God,” says St. Athanasius, the Son of Mary is born to the divine Life. As it was at midnight that our Lady brought her first-born Son into the world and laid Him in a cradle, so Mass is celebrated at midnight in St. Mary Major, where the relics of the crib are kept.

“With great devotion,” says St. Leo, “has the Incarnate Word given Himself to win for us the fight against Satan, for not in His divine Majesty but in the weakness of our flesh He waged war against this cruel enemy.” The victory which He has gained, in spite of His weakness, shows Him to be God. It is “God of God, Light of Light,” (Credo) who disperses the darkness of sin. “Christ is the true Light who comes to enlighten the world, plunged in darkness” (Collect). “By the mystery of the Word made Flesh,” says the Preface, “the light of Thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind: so that while we acknowledge Him as God seen by men, we may be drawn by Him to the love of things unseen.” “The grace of God our Savior hath appeared to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires...that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, and zealous in good works” (Epistle). He is made like unto us that we may become like unto Him (Secret), and by His example may be enabled to live a holy life (Postcommunion). Thus shall we live soberly, justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Epistle). As we saw in Advent, the first Coming of our Lord prepares us for the second.

INTROIT:

Isa. 9: A child is born to us, and a son is given to us; whose government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel.

Ps. 97: Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle, for he hath done wonderful things. Glory be, etc. A child is born to us, etc.

COLLECT:

Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that the new birth of Thy only-begotten Son in the flesh may deliver us who are held by the old bondage under the yoke of sin. Through the same Jesus Christ, etc.

EPISTLE: Heb. 1:1-12

God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, In these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath he said at any time, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith: And let all the angels of God adore him. And to the angels indeed he saith: He that maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But to the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And: Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth: and the works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou shalt continue: and they shall all grow old as a garment. And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the selfsame, and thy years shall not fail.

INSTRUCTION: The greatness of Jesus Christ, the dignity of His divinity and humanity, the love and goodness of His Heavenly Father, who has given Him to us as our teacher, could not be more gloriously described than in this epistle. Learn from it how much you are obliged, because of this, to serve God, to be grateful to Him, and to follow Christ who governs heaven and earth; and whom the angels serve.

ASPIRATION: I thank Thee, a thousand times, O Heavenly Father, that Thou hast spoken to us through Thy only-begotten Son, in whom Thou art well pleased. With my whole heart, O Father of Mercy, will I listen to Him, and be obedient to all His instructions.

GRADUAL:

Ps. 97: All the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God: sing joyful to God, all the earth. The Lord hath made known his salvation; he hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles.

Alleluia, alleluia. A sanctified day hath shown upon us. Come, ye Gentiles, and adore the Lord for this day a great light hath descended upon the earth. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: John 1, 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew

him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

What does St. John mean by the Word?

That the Son of God, who was begotten and brought forth like a word of the mouth from the Father, but in a manner incomprehensible and inscrutable to us, is one with the Father in the divine nature, but different from Him in person; He is also called Word of the Father, because through Him the Father has spoken and made known the divine will. (Heb. 1,2; Matt. 17, 5)

What is meant by : In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God?

When all things had their beginning the Son of God already was, not made or created, but born of the Father from eternity, with whom and in whom He therefore existed from all eternity. St. John here teaches the divinity, the eternity, and the equality of Christ with the Father.

What is meant by: All things were made by Him?

That the Son of God, Himself true God, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, has made all things, visible and invisible.

What is meant by: In Him was the life?

It means: The Son of God is the origin and fountain of the spiritual life of our souls upon earth, and of the glorious life in eternity. To give this true life to us, He became man, whereby we are born again, newly created, as it were, from the death of sin to the life of grace and righteousness.

Why is this life the light of men?

Because this true life of the soul which Christ has obtained for us, consists in the ever increasing knowledge of God and his salvation, which knowledge also comes from Christ, either externally through holy words and examples, or inwardly by divine inspiration.

How did the light shine in darkness?

The Son of God has given the necessary grace to find the true faith to mankind. He still imparts to all men the necessary light, especially by his holy Word which is preached to them, but the hardened sinners reject it, because they wish not to hear of faith and repentance.

How did St. John the Baptist bear witness of the light?

By announcing the Saviour to the world, and even pointing Him out when He appeared.

Who receive Christ?

Those who walk in the light of His grace, cooperate with it, and so become the children of God.

How are we to understand: The Word was made flesh?

We are to understand by it that the Word was not changed into human nature, but that He became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, thus uniting in Himself two natures, the divine and the human. So Christ is true God, and as the same time true man, therefore God-Man; consequently there are in Christ two wills, the divine and the human. In His humanity He is less than the Father (John 14, 28), in His divinity He is equal to the Father (John 10, 20). His humanity filled Him with a natural terror of His sufferings, but His divinity was perfectly united with the will of His Heavenly Father, and could pray: Not my will, but thine be done.

ASPIRATION: O God, our Heavenly Father, who this night hast given to us sinners, in the form of a child from the immaculate womb of Mary, Thine only-begotten Son as our Mediator and Redeemer, we give Thee thanks with heart and lips, and humbly beseech Thee that Thou wilt never permit us to forget such a grace, and that we may sustain ourselves by it in all temptations; that we may be ever grateful to Thee for it, and until death praise, honor, and serve Thee in sanctity. Amen

OFFERTORY:

Ps. 88: Thine are the heavens, and thine is the earth, the world and the fullness thereof thou hast founded; justice and judgment are the preparation of thy throne.

SECRET:

Sanctify, O Lord, our offerings by the new birth of Thine only-begotten Son, and cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through the same Lord, etc.

PREFACE:

It is truly meet and just, right and profitable unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God. For by the mystery of the Word made flesh the light of Thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind: so that while we acknowledge Him as God seen by men, we may be drawn by Him to the love of things unseen. And therefore with the angels and archangels, the thrones and dominions, and the whole host of the heavenly army we sing a hymn to Thy glory, saying again and again: Holy, Holy, Holy, etc.

THIRD PRAYER OF THE CANON:

We pray in union with and keep that most holy night, in which the spotless virginity of the blessed Mary brought forth a Savior to this world; and also reverence the memory, first of the same glorious Mary, ever virgin, mother of the same our God and Lord Jesus Christ; likewise of thy blessed apostles and martyrs, Peter and Paul, etc.

COMMUNION:

Ps. 97: All the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.

POSTCOMMUNION:

Grant, we beseech thee, O almighty God: that as the Saviour of the world, born today, has regenerated us to a divine life, so He may further bestow upon us the gift of immortality. Who liveth and reigneth, etc.

LAST GOSPEL: Matt. 2, 1-12

When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to adore him. And king Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet: And thou Bethlehem the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; And sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come to adore him. Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country.

A Christmas Offering By Our Forefathers In Our Holy Faith

Diocletian and his colleagues in the Empire had recently published the famous edict of persecution, which waged against the Church the fiercest war she had ever sustained. The edict was torn down from the Emperor's palace at Nicomedia by one of the Christians, who paid for the holy daring by a glorious martyrdom. The faithful of the same city were ready for the combat, and feared not to brave the Emperor's power by continuing to frequent their Church, which was condemned to be pulled down. Christmas Day came, and several thousands of them had assembled there, in order to celebrate, for the last time within those walls, the Nativity of our Saviour. Being informed of it, the Emperor became furious, and sent one of the officers of his court to order the Church doors to be fastened, and a fire to be enkindled on each side of the building. This being done, the clang of the trumpets was heard, and then a herald's voice proclaiming to the faithful, in the Emperor's name, that they who wished to save their lives would be permitted to leave the Basilica, on the condition of their offering incense on an altar of Jupiter, which had been placed near the door; but that otherwise all were to be left a prey to the flames. One of the Christians thus answered, in the name of the whole assembly; 'We are all of us Christians; we honour Christ as the one only God and King; and we are all ready to lay down our lives for him on this Day.' The soldiers were commanded to set fire to the Church which was soon an immense flame. Whence was offered to the Son of God – who deigned to begin in this same day the human life he had assumed- the generous holocaust of these thousands of lives, laid down as witness to his having come into this world. Dom Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*

The Martyrs shall bear the closest resemblance to their Lord and King. They shall be, as he said, like Lambs among wolves. The world shall be strong, and they shall be weak and defenseless: so much the grander will be the victory of the Martyrs, and the greater the glory of God who gives them to conquer. The Apostle tells us that Christ crucified is the power and the wisdom of the God, the Martyrs, immolated, and yet conquerors of the world, will prove, with a testimony which even the world itself will understand, that the Christ whom they confessed, and who gave them constancy and victory, is in very deed the power and the wisdom of God. We repeat, then it is just that the Martyrs should share in all the triumphs of the Man-God, and that the liturgical Cycle should glorify them as does the Church herself, who puts their sacred Relics in her altar-stones; for thus the Sacrifice of their glorified Lord and Head is never celebrated without they themselves being offered together with him in the unity of his mystical Body. Dom Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, Feast of St. Stephen, Martyr

The first recompense given by Jesus to his Beloved John, a profound penetration into divine Mysteries: The Word Was God, and this Word Was Made Flesh for the salvation of mankind. The second was the imparting to him of a most ardent charity, which was equally a grace consequent upon his angelic purity, for purity unburdens the soul from groveling egotistic affections, and raises it to a chaste and generous love. John had treasured up in his heart the *Discourses* of his Master: he made them known to the Church, and especially that divine one of the Last Supper, wherein Jesus had poured forth his whole Soul to *his own*, whom he had always tenderly loved, but most so *at the end*. He wrote his *Epistles*, and Charity is his subject: *God is Charity- he that loveth not, knoweth not God- perfect Charity casteth out fear*. Dom Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, Feast of St. John the Apostle

"Full of Grace" - This is only said of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary and, St. Stephen
And Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people. [...] And all that sat in the council, looking on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel. Acts 6: 8 & 15

The Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of our Emmanuel, blesses, in his name, a Sword and Helmet, which are to be sent to some Catholic warrior who has deserved well of the Christian world. The sword is sent to some Prince, whom the Vicar of Christ wishes to honour in the name of Jesus, who is King : for the Angel said to Mary : *the Lord will give unto him the Throne of David his father*. It is from him alone that the power of the sword comes, for God said to Cyrus : *I have girded thee with the sword*; and the Psalmist thus speaks to Christ of God : *Gird thy Sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty!* And because the Sword should not be drawn save in the cause of justice, it is for that reason that a Sword is blessed on the Night, in the midst of which rises, born unto us, the divine Sun of Justice. On the Helmet, which is both the ornament and protection of the head, there is worked, in pearls, the Dove, which is the emblem of the Holy Ghost; and this to teach him who wears it that it is not from passion or ambition that he must use his sword, but solely under the guidance of the divine Spirit, and from a motive of spreading the Kingdom of Christ. Cardinal Reginald Pole to Queen Mary of England and to Philip II of Spain, her husband.

"Herod, sending, killed all the Children!"

O God, whose praise the holy Martyrs, the Innocents, published this day, not by speaking, but by dying; mortify our vicious inclinations: that we may show forth in our actions Thy faith which we profess with our lips.

Roman Missal, Collect, Feast of the Holy Innocents

Let us, my Brethren, rejoice this day is sacred, not because of the visible sun, but because of the Birth of him who is the invisible Creator of the sun... He chose this day whereon to be born, as he chose the Mother of whom to be born, and he made both the day and the Mother. The day he chose was that on which the light begins to increase, and it typifies the work of Christ, who renews our interior man day by day. For the eternal Creator having willed to be born in time, his Birthday would necessarily be in harmony with the rest of his creation. St. Augustine

We must regard pride as the king of all vices and follow the wise advice given by the king of Syria to his captains: "You shall not fight against any, small or great, but against the king only" (3 Kings, 23, 31). Judith too, by killing the proud Holofernes, conquered the whole Assyrian army. And David triumphed over all the Philistines by slaying the proud Goliath; and in like manner we shall also triumph, because by conquering pride we shall have subdued all other vices. King David erred in one thing, for knowing Absalom to be the chief of the rebels he yet commanded that he should neither be killed nor hurt: "Save me the boy Absalom" (2 Kings, 17, 15). Alas, how many imitators he has found! We know full well that pride is the chief rebel among all our passions, but notwithstanding it is the one which we seem to respect the most, and which we almost fear to offend displaying even a tendency to encourage it.
Fr. Cajetan Mary da Bergamo, Humility of Heart

Of course charity itself is impossible without faith and hope. Could anyone love a man if he did not believe it was possible to be or become his friend? Or if he despaired of ever gaining his friendship? So it is with man in relation to God as He is in Himself. Man must believe it is possible to attain a perfect friendship with God in Heaven and he must hope to attain this friendship through God's power before he can love God as his supernatural destiny.
Fr. Walter Farrell, O. P., My Way of Life, Pocket Edition of St. Thomas

Those therefore who after the manner of wicked heretics dare to set aside Ecclesiastical Traditions, and to invent any kind of novelty, or to reject any of those things entrusted to the Church, or who wrongfully and outrageously devise the destruction of any of those Traditions enshrined in the Catholic Church, are to be punished thus: **IF THEY ARE BISHOPS, WE ORDER THEM TO BE DEPOSED; BUT IF THEY ARE MONKS OR LAY PERSONS, WE COMMAND THEM TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE COMMUNITY.** Second Council of Nicaea 787 A.D.
The Church is built on the Rock of Peter, and he who eats the Lamb outside this holy dwelling has no part with God.
Blessed Pope Pius IX

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

CHRISTMAS DAY - THE SAVIOR HAS APPEARED

PRESENCE OF GOD - Behold, I am at the feet of my Incarnate God, who has become a Child for love of me! I adore, I thank, I love!
MEDITATION:

1. God is charity: He has loved us with an everlasting love! "I think God must have said to Himself: Man does not love Me because he does not see Me; I will show Myself to him and thus make him love Me. God's love for man was very great, and had been great *from all eternity*, but this love had not yet become visible.... Then, it really appeared; the Son of God let Himself be seen as a tiny Babe in a stable, lying on a little straw" (St. Alphonsus). This is the mystery of the Nativity; this is St. Paul's exultant cry: "The grace of God our Savior hath appeared to all men The goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared" (Ep 1st and 2nd Masses: *Tim 2, 11-15; 3, 4-7*). These are the blessed tidings "of great joy" brought by the Angel to the shepherds; "This day is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!" (*Gosp 1st Mass: Lk 2, 1-14*). The texts in today's liturgy, following each other in tones of increasing exultation, sing the praises of the sweet Child Jesus, the Word made Man, living and breathing among us: "Whom have you seen, O shepherds? Speak and tell us who has appeared on earth? We saw the new-born Child and choirs of angels loudly praising the Lord" (RB). "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth exult in the presence of the Lord!" (RM). Our God is here in the midst of us, He has become one of us. "A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us His name is Admirable, God, Prince of peace, Father of the world to come!... Rejoice, O daughter of Sion, sing, O daughter of Jerusalem.... Rejoice, ye inhabitants of the earth! Come, ye nations, adore the Lord!" (RB). Come! Come, adore, listen, and rejoice! Jesus, the Word of the Father, speaks to us a wonderful word: God loves you!

2. The three Christmas Masses place before us a majestic picture: the touching description of the birth of Jesus as man alternates with the sublime one of the eternal birth of the Word in the bosom of the Father; and there are also allusions to Christ's birth in our souls by grace. However, this three-fold birth is but one single manifestation of God who is Charity. No one on earth could know God's love; but the Word, who is in the bosom of the Father, knows it and can reveal it to us. The Word was made flesh and has shown to us the love of God. Through the Word, God's incomprehensible, invisible charity is made manifest and tangible in the sweet little Babe, who from the manger holds out His arms to us. Today's Preface solemnly declares it: "O eternal God, because of the mystery of the Word made flesh, the light of Thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind: that while we acknowledge Him to be God visible, He may draw us to the love of things invisible." Yes, this "Child, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger" is our God, who, for us, has made Himself visible: our God, who shows us in the most concrete way His infinite charity. One cannot contemplate little Jesus without being captivated and enraptured by the infinite

love which has given Him to us. The Infant Jesus reveals to us God's love, He manifests it in the clearest, most touching way. St. Paul says in the Epistle of the Third Mass (*Heb 1, 1-12*): "God, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son . . . the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance." Jesus, the Incarnate Word, in His silence as a helpless Child, speaks to us and reveals to us the substance of God: His charity.

COLLOQUY:

"O all-powerful and eternal Trinity! O sweet, ineffable charity! Who would not be inflamed by such love? What heart could keep itself from being consumed by You?

"O abyss of charity! You have so closely bound Yourself to Your creatures that it seems that You cannot live without them! Nevertheless You are our God! You have no need of us. Our good adds nothing to Your greatness, for You are immutable. Our misfortune cannot harm You, O God, sovereign, eternal Goodness! Then what urges You to such mercy? Love - for You have no obligation toward us and no need of us. Then, O infinite God, who brings You to me, a little creature? No one but Yourself, O Fire of Love! Love alone has always urged You, and love still urges You!

"O sovereign sweetness, You have deigned to unite Yourself to our bitterness; You, brilliance, with our darkness; You, wisdom, with our stupidity; You, life, with death; You, who are infinite, with us who are finite!" (*St. Catherine of Siena*)

O sweet Incarnate Word, O most amiable Infant Jesus, behold me at last at Your feet; let me contemplate You; permit me to delight in Your beauty, Your goodness, Your immense charity! In this little Child who smiles, and holds out His baby arms to me, I find Your infinite love, living, breathing - for this Babe is You, O my God! How can I ever thank You for Your exceeding love? How can I ever make You a return of love?

"You, who are so great and rich, have made Yourself little and poor for us! You chose to be born far from home, in a stable, to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, to be nourished at Your Virgin Mother's breast, to be laid in a manger between an ox and an ass. Today is the dawn of the new redemption, of the old restoration, of eternal happiness; today, the heavens have distilled honey throughout the whole world! Then, O my soul, kiss this divine manger, press your lips to the Infant's feet and embrace them. Meditate on the shepherds watching their flocks, contemplate the angelic hosts, prepare to join in the heavenly melody singing with your lips and with your heart: 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will'!" (*St. Bonaventure*)

"I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall be always in my mouth"

To thank God, finally, is, moreover, salutary, that is, promotes the temporal and eternal welfare, inasmuch as it enriches the soul with great blessings and precious graces. Gratitude opens to us the treasures of the divine liberality. Inasmuch as we sincerely thank God for benefits received, we draw down new and more special graces upon ourselves. God takes complacency in a grateful heart; nothing shall be wanting to it. Hence gratitude is salutary, profitable and rich in blessings; while ingratitude is a scorching wind that dries up the spring of divine goodness, the dew of heavenly mercy and the streams of grace. "The gifts of grace cannot abound or flow in us, because we are ungrateful to the Giver; and because we do not return them all to the fountain-head. For grace will ever be given him who dutifully returns thanks. Be grateful then for the least, and thou shalt be worthy to receive greater things" (*Imit. of Chr. II, 10*). To cultivate a spirit of gratitude toward God is, therefore, a practice "truly meet and just, right and salutary": but how far must we go — what is the extent of this thanksgiving? This is made known by the words, that we "should always and in all places" (*semper et ubique*) give thanks. There is no time or place in which we should not from the fulness of our heart say: *Deo gratias!* — "Thanks be to God!" Even in the hour of tribulation and in the night of adversity, even when on the couch of suffering and in a home of direst poverty, gratitude towards God should never be silent on our lips or in our heart. When St. Elizabeth on a cold winter's night wandered about an outcast and forsaken, she entered a Franciscan church and had the *Te Deum* sung, to thank the Lord for the tribulations wherewith He had in His mercy visited her. Hence do you also repeat with the Psalmist: "I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall be always in my mouth" (*Ps. 33, 2*).

Rev. Nicholas Gühr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*

St. Francis de Sales, on his Catholic Mission

In writing to you it is unnecessary to explain my difficulties and the needs of this diocese, I look upon Geneva as a wretched daughter of Babylon, as a city sucked into the jaws of heresy. As for myself I am as one sent to preach to an apostate people, hard of countenance and hard of heart, and am as a dweller in the abode of fierce scorpions. Wherefore I beseech you to intercede for me with the Holy See, and help me against the workers of iniquity. Do you, with the spirit of the mouth of Christ, with the two-edged sword of the Annals, which you have wielded with such power hitherto, do what you can to procure protection for me, living in the midst of this heretical people.

St. Francis de Sales, Letter to Cardinal Cesare Baronius, the author of the *Annals*, shortly before the Cardinals death

Purity means that crystalline, morning-fresh artlessness and selflessness in relating to the world, as it becomes a reality in the person when the shock of a deep pain brings him to the limits of existence or when the nearness of death touches him. In Sacred Scripture it says, "Serious illness sobers the soul" (*Sir. 31:2*); this sobriety belongs to the essence of purity... Purity is the unreserved openness of the entire being, from which alone the word can be spoken: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" (*Lk. 1:38*)....purity not only is the fruit of purification but also comprises in itself the readiness to accept God's purifications, perhaps terrible and deadly, with the brave openness of a trusting heart and so experiences its fertile and transforming power.

Josef Pieper, *A Brief Reader on the Virtues of the Human Heart*

"Catholics who remain faithful to TRADITION even if they are reduced to but a handful, they are the True Church of Jesus Christ." St. Athanasius

The “Traditional Evangelization” – Conversion to the True Faith in the Catholic Church

- Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned. Jesus Christ, Mark 16, 15-16
- “There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved.” Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council 1215
- “We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*, 1302
- “The most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics, can have a share in life eternal; but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before death they are joined with Her; and that so important is the unity of this ecclesiastical body that only those remaining within this unity can profit by the sacraments of the Church unto salvation, and they alone can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, their almsgivings, their other works of Christian piety and the duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pour out his blood for the Name of Christ, can be saved, unless he remain within the bosom and the unity of the Catholic Church.” Pope Eugene IV, *Cantate Dominio*, 1441

The “Old-New Evangelization” of Vatican II – Ecumenical Convergence replaced Conversion

[According to *Lumen Gentium*] the Catholic Church has no right to absorb the other Churches... [A] basic unity — of Churches that remain Churches, yet become one Church — must replace the idea of conversion, even though conversion retains its meaningfulness for those in conscience motivated to seek it.

Fr. Josef Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*

All popes since Vatican II have rejected Proselytism

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The fruit of the ‘old post-Vatican II evangelization’ in the U. S.

No other major faith in the U.S. has experienced greater net losses over the last few decades as a result of changes in religious affiliation than the Catholic Church. Nearly one-third (31.4%) of U.S. adults say they were raised Catholic. Today, however, only 23.9% of adults say they are affiliated with the Catholic Church, a net loss of 7.5 percentage points. Overall, roughly one-third of those who were raised Catholic have left the church, and approximately one-in-ten American adults are former Catholics.

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life

For care must be taken lest, in the so-called "irenic" spirit of today, through comparative study and the vain desire for a progressively closer mutual approach among the various professions of faith, Catholic doctrine - either in its dogmas or in the truths which are connected with them - be so conformed or in a way adapted to the doctrines of dissident sects, that the purity of Catholic doctrine be impaired, or its genuine and certain meaning be obscured. Also they must restrain that dangerous manner of speaking which generates false opinions and fallacious hopes incapable of realization; for example, to the effect that the teachings of the Encyclicals of the Roman Pontiffs on the return of dissidents to the Church, on the constitution of the Church, on the Mystical Body of Christ, should not be given too much importance seeing that they are not all matters of faith, or, what is worse, that in matters of dogma even the Catholic Church has not yet attained the fullness of Christ, but can still be perfected from outside. Pius XII, Instruction of the Holy Office on Ecumenism, Dec. 20, 1949

The first monastic virtue is to despise the judgment of men, and always to bear in mind the words of the Apostle, "If yet I pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ." Some such saying, too, did God address to the Prophets when He told them that He would make their face as a city of brass, and an adamant stone, and an iron pillar, that they might not tremble at the threats of the people, but with unmoved brow tread underfoot the impudent jeers of their adversaries. St. Jerome

The Holy Sacrifice is something so great that three eternities would be needed to offer it worthily: the first to prepare for it, the second to celebrate it, the third to make a suitable thanksgiving for it.

St. John Eudes, Apostle of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, ordained December 20, 1625 and waited until Christmas to offer his first Mass at the Midnight Mass.

We shall never know how many acts of cowardice have been motivated by the fear of seeming not sufficiently progressive. Charles Péguy, French poet, essayist and Catholic convert

"Life holds only one tragedy, ultimately: not to have been a saint." Charles Péguy

"Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth!" Psalm 123:8

I could go on for ever, if I began to quote here all the texts from Holy Scripture in which God commends to you the virtue of trust. It seems as if He were not satisfied even with the thousand instances in Holy Scripture by which He proves how dear and delightful this holy virtue is to Him, and how much He loves and favors those who place their trust in His goodness and abandon themselves entirely to the fatherly care of His Divine Providence. You may read in the third book of *Intimations of Divine Piety*, by St. Gertrude, that Jesus once told her that the filial confidence of a Christian soul is the eye of the holy spouse, of which the Divine Bridegroom says in the *Canticle of Canticles*: *Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa: vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum*. "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast wounded my heart by one of thine eyes" (Cant. 4, g). In other words, the soul that has firm confidence in Christ, and trusts that He can and desires to help it faithfully in all things, pierces His heart right through with an arrow of love; and such confidence does such violence to the piety of Jesus that He can in no way absent Himself from it. St. Mechtilde's *Book of Special Grace* tells us that Jesus said to her also: "It is a special delight to Me when men trust in My goodness and rely upon Me. And so, whoever shall have great trust in Me, yet always with humility, shall be favored by Me in this life, and in the next receive more than he deserves. The more anyone trusts in Me and avails himself of My goodness, the greater will be his gain, since it is impossible for a man not to obtain what he believes with holy conviction, and hopes to gain because it has been promised him. And so it is most advantageous to a man to have firm trust in Me when he hopes for great things from Me!" And again, when St. Mechtilde asked God what was the main thing she should believe of His ineffable goodness. He replied: "Firmly believe that after death I will receive you as a father receives a dear son, and that no father ever so faithfully and lovingly gave all his possessions to an only son, as I will make you a sharer in all that is Mine. Whoever shall believe this of My goodness firmly and with humble charity, will be happy indeed." St. John Eudes, *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus*

It is unlawful to alter the established customs of the Church... Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set. St. Peter Damien

For in many things we all offend. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man. He is able also with a bridle to lead about the whole body. For if we put bits into the mouths of horses, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. Behold also ships, whereas they are great, and are driven by strong winds, yet are they turned about with a small helm, whithersoever the force of the governor willeth. Even so the tongue is indeed a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how small a fire kindleth a great wood. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, which defileth the whole body, and inflameth the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell. James 3:2-6

"To question what the united Church practices as a rule is the most daring madness."

The very ancient practice of the Church of celebrating Mass in the West, not in the living language of the country, but in a dead language, that is, in Latin, for the most part a language unintelligible to the people, has since the twelfth century to the present epoch been frequently made the subject of attack. Such attacks originated principally in an heretical, schismatical, proudly national spirit hostile to the Church, or in a superficial and false enlightenment, in a shallow and arid rationalism entirely destitute of the perception and understanding of the essence and object of the Catholic liturgy, especially of the profoundly mystical sacrifice. In the attempt to the Latin language of the liturgy and to replace it by the vernacular, there was a more or less premeditated scheme to undermine Catholic unity, to loosen the bond of union with Rome, to weaken the Catholic spirit, to destroy the humility and simplicity of faith. Therefore, the Apostolic See at all times most persistently and inflexibly resisted such innovation; for it is an invariable principle of the Church never to alter the ancient liturgical language, but inviolably to adhere to it, even though it be no longer the living language spoken or understood by the people.... For as St. Augustine remarks, "to question what the united Church practices as a rule is the most daring madness." In all such general decrees and usages appertaining to divine worship, the Church is directed and preserved from injurious blunders by the Holy Ghost. Rev. Nicholas Gihl, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Dogmatically, Liturgically and Ascetically Explained*

No attribute of God can be our stay nor give us peace and quiet, except His love and His goodness. We naturally fear His power; His holiness shames our sinfulness. But who can resist God's love? It wins us over to Him by showing us a God descending to our level; and only in so far as God appears in a state of humiliation can we dare to approach Him and to unite ourselves to Him. Only then are we able to look on Him as one of ours, and to call Him a brother.... We recognize love in this, that it is lavish of its gifts. When it has nothing to offer, it gives itself. Thus, Our Lord, after giving all that He had, has left us His adorable Person. He who communicates understands this gift; he knows by experience, so to speak, that God has loved him 'unto the end.' And with this thought in mind, he promises Our Lord in the morning to be virtuous in thanksgiving for his Communion; and in the afternoon he redoubles his devotion and fervor of spirit that he may receive worthily on the morrow. All his actions become as flowers which he hastens to offer to our Lord before they fade. And thus his piety is a living one; for his heart is always ascending to God, and motion is a sign of life. St. Peter Julian Eymard

"The fort is betrayed even of them that should have defended it." St. John Fisher, Bishop and Martyr

The Fundamentals of the Spiritual Life

Union with God, union with Jesus, is the preliminary and indispensable requisite for the efficacy of any apostolic life. This union is accomplished by means of sanctifying grace, it grows with the fervent reception of the sacraments and with the generous practice of the virtues; it is established more firmly and strengthened by prayer, and is consolidated and preserved by recollection and detachment. The more one's union with God increases, the more the action which flows from it will bear fruit for souls...

"Without Me, you can do nothing"... "He who abides in Me bears much fruit"... "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *Divine Intimacy*

If we are guilty of pride let us try and amend and not flatter ourselves that we possess the smallest degree of humility, until by our good resolutions carefully carried out we have mortified our evil tendency to speak ill of our neighbor. Let us hearken to the Holy Ghost: "Where pride is there also shall be reproach, but where humility is there also is wisdom." [Prov. 11, 2]

The proud man is scornful and arrogant in his speech; and the humble alone knows how to speak well and wisely. If there is humility in the heart it will be manifested in the speech, because "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good." [Luke 6, 45] Fr. Cajetan Mary da Bergamo, *Humility of Heart*

Oh, unbounded riches of holy Mass! Grasp well this truth, one and all: It is possible for you to gain more favor with God by attending or celebrating one single Mass, considered in itself, and in its intrinsic worth, than by opening the treasure of your wealth, and distributing the whole to the poor, or by going on a pilgrimage over the whole world, and visiting with the utmost devotion the most famous sanctuaries, such as Rome, Compostela, Loreto, and Jerusalem; and this, indeed, follows most reasonably from the proposition laid down by the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, when he says that in Mass are contained all the fruits, all the graces – yes, all those immense treasures which the Son of God poured out so abundantly upon the Church, His Spouse, in the bloody sacrifice of the cross. St. Leonard of Port Maurice

When men adore Christ, they truly adore God. Christ is Emmanuel, that is God-with-us. In Christ we can, so to speak, see the face of God. It is His human face, it is true. But even this vision is a foretaste of the beatific vision of God which is the inheritance of all those who are members of Christ's Body, the Church. It is their inheritance because Christ is the perfect Mediator between God and men. He stands between God and men - He mediates between them - because He brings God's gifts to men and He takes men to God. As man, He is the perfect Mediator because He occupies a position midway between God and men. As man He is not God, and so He stands below God. But as a man possessing the fullness of grace, knowledge and power, He stands above men. He is thus in a perfect position to mediate between God and men. And this is what Christ is doing ceaselessly for men in and through His Body, the Church. The Incarnation is God's answer to the misery of men without God. God stoops to man to raise him to Himself. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things to Myself." Man has only to accept freely Christ as his Mediator. Not even Christ saves a man against his will. Because man is proud, God has stooped down to him. Since man is disobedient, God has given him the example of the perfect obedience of Christ. As man is ignorant and in error, God has given him Christ, the perfect teacher. Could the love of God do more for man? "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we may have life by him."

Rev. Walter Farrell, O. P., S.T.M. and Rev. Martin Healy, S.T.D., *My Way of Life, Pocket Edition of St. Thomas*

The devil has little hold on souls that are given to prayer and mortification. It would be presumptuous to defy the devil, but it is a sign of weakness to be afraid of him. As St. Augustine says, he is a chained dog, who can bark and worry, but he cannot bite if we keep out of his reach. It is not the devil who is the principal instrument in temptations of the just, *for every man*, says St. James, *is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured*. Such souls are thus only usually exposed to these temptations in so far as God permits them in order to purify their conscience, exercise their patience, deepen their humility, increase their merit, and add brightness to their crown.... And why should we fear temptations? Do we not know that they are necessary for us, since without them we can make no progress in the way of perfection? Of course they are necessary to strengthen us in the very virtues which they assail. We will never reach a high degree of purity, faith, hope, or love for God or our neighbour, unless we are strongly exercised in these virtues. John N. Grou, S. J., *Spiritual Maxims*

The precious light of faith will go out in souls because of the almost total moral corruption... The licentiousness will be such that there will be no more virgin souls in the world... By having gained control of all the social classes, the sects will tend to penetrate with great skill into the heart of families and destroy even the children... Priests will abandon their sacred duties and will depart from the path marked out for them by God. The then Church will go through a dark night for lack of a Prelate and Father to watch over it with love, gentleness, strength and prudence. Our Lady of LaSalette to Melanie

It behooves us unanimously and inviolably to observe the ecclesiastical traditions, whether codified or simply retained by the customary practice of the Church. St. Peter Canisius

"ALL Heretics are Schismatics." St. Thomas Aquinas quoting St. Augustine

Mary: Our model in our First Duty

The field which **Justice** controls is an extensive one; in fact, **Justice** means the discharge of all our obligations. It is respect for the rights of others: and, first of all, of God, by the acts of [the virtue of] **Religion**.... Because God is the Supreme Being, the Lord and Master of all, and we are His subjects, **our first duty is to acknowledge His superiority and our dependence, and to give expression to this religious sentiment by appropriate acts.** The chief acts of divine worship and adoration are faith, hope and charity, prayer and sacrifice. Prayer implies praise, thanksgiving, atonement and petition. Must we not suppose that Mary poured out her soul to God every day of her life by adoring His Divine Majesty, thanking Him for His inestimable gifts to herself and to every creature, pleading for pardon and mercy in behalf of a sinful world and petitioning for help and grace to supply her own needs and those of her spiritual children?

Very Rev. Lawrence C. Diether, P. Carm., *Ave Maria, A short commentary on the Hail Mary*

When the Arian poison had contaminated not only a limited area, but the whole world, almost all the bishops of the Latin Church fell into heresy. Forced by violence or deceived by guile. It was like a fog fallen upon the spirits and hiding which road to take. In order to be safe from this contagious plague, the true disciples of Christ had to prefer the ancient beliefs rather than all the false novelties. St. Vincent of Lerins

"The human race may be now and then afflicted with lunacy, but it is never an idiot. An idiot is one who has just premises, but cannot draw from them just conclusions, that is, one who cannot reason; a lunatic is one who has false premises, but who is, nevertheless, able to draw logical conclusions from them. His insanity is precisely in his inability to seize and hold true premises." Orestes Brownson, Catholic Apologist, Brownson's Quarterly Review, Oct., 1851. p. 453

No doctrine is understood to be infallibly defined unless it is clearly established as such. Canon 749 § 3

All that is contained in the written word of God or in tradition, that is in the one deposit of faith entrusted to the Church and also proposed as divinely revealed either by the solemn magisterium of the Church or by its ordinary and universal magisterium, must be believed with divine and catholic faith... Canon 750

With regard to the tradition of the Church, two precautions had to be rigorously and thoroughly observed, adhered to by everyone who does not wish to become a heretic: first, it must be ascertained whether there exists from ancient times a decree established by all the bishops of the Catholic Church with the authority of a universal council, and second, should a new question arise for which no decree can be found, one must revert to the opinions of the holy fathers; to be more precise, of those fathers who remained in their own times and places in the unity of communion and of faith and who were therefore held as teaching 'probable' doctrine. St. Vincent of Lerins

"It is clear that he does not pray, who, far from uplifting himself to God, requires that God shall lower Himself to him, and who resorts to prayer not to stir the man in us to will what God wills, but only to persuade God to will what the man in us wills." St. Thomas Aquinas

"Let them innovate in nothing, but keep the traditions." Pope St. Stephen I, letter to St. Cyprian, 3rd cent.

A tyrannical law, through not being according to reason, is not a law, absolutely speaking but rather a perversion of law. St. Thomas Aquinas

"Pearls of Great Price" – Every single one of our Immemorial Ecclesiastical Traditions which the "dogs" despise!

What are these mysteries? What are these good pearls? They are not only every doctrine of Jesus Christ and every dogma of His Church, but every holy sacrament, every pious practice, every rule and ordinance of the Church; every means of practicing and advancing virtue and good works; every means of conferring and increasing the sanctifying grace of God, consequently sanctity and holiness of life, which is a pearl of infinite value, and adorns the soul with such transcendent beauty that the mind of man can never conceive its inestimable grandeur and loveliness. Moreover, each of these heavenly gifts was purchased at the infinite price of the precious blood of Jesus, from which it derives all its beauty and virtue. The least of them is worth buying, even the risk of losing all that a man holds dear in this life. Even a drop of holy water or a blessed medal is to time pious believer a "holy thing," a valuable pearl. "The sensual man, who perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God," despise them; they are "foolishness to him." But the true Christian believes that "every creature is sanctified by prayer and the word of God," and when sanctified it is a "holy thing" and not to be given to dogs — that is to say, to such as would have no more respect for them than a dog, if it were given to him. Rev. Joseph Prachensky, S.J., *The Church of the Parables and True Spouse of the Suffering Savior*

"The stones of the pavement ... of that shrine (Canterbury Cathedral, where St. Thomas Becket was martyred) were worn with the kneeling of the idolatrous people, which came on pilgrimage to offer there to that pope-holy saint". St. Thomas Becket, Protestant commentator, 1642