



NORMS OF PIETY

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Booklets

 Scepter

Nos. 61 & 62

SCEPTER BOOKLETS

Nihil Obstat:

Daniel V. Flynn, J.C.D. Censor librorum

Imprimatur:

James P. Mahoney, D.D. Vicar General Archdiocese of New York

January 9, 1977

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1977 Scepter Publishers Printed in the United States of Americaa



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PO Box 360694,
Strongsville, Ohio 44136

Toll Free: 800-322-8773 (US & Canada only)
Tel: 212-354-0670
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www.scepterpublishers.org

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Second Edition, © 2017
Booklet and Cover design by Nicheworks

ISBN: 9781594172991

This booklet is dedicated to all the men and women who work every day in the middle of the world; good hearted people who desire to become better spouses, parents, workers—as the case may be—that they may grow closer to God, and then share His closeness with others.

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EVERYONE'S LIFE today seems to be filled with all kinds of activities. If a person wants to keep on top of his work and his social relations and not overlook other important aspects of his life, he has to organize himself, plan things out, not leave things to last minute improvisation. In a word,-he needs a plan of life. This plan should be concrete and flexible at the same time, capable of adapting itself to changing circumstances. It should include professional work, the family, and apostolate, while at the same time forming a synthesis in the unity of life which should be characteristic of every Christian. Such a plan should not be a straitjacket, but rather like rails along which a train, symbolizing our life as a Christian, moves swiftly and safely.

This fully personalized plan, the result of reflection, will enable us to accomplish more with the time we have available, and will help us to be realists. In this sense a plan of life expands in a practical way to embrace both the human and the spiritual. For a Christian, the full life is nothing more than human life itself lived in a Christian manner. Hence the importance of religious formation and of the interior life in order to sanctify human activities and, at the same time, to turn them into instruments of apostolate.

When electrical engineers are planning a high-tension line, they mark out the tower sites at prudent distances according to the shape of the terrain. From these will be suspended the cables along which electrical current will pass to light up a city and drive thousands of motors. If the towers were to be set further apart because they got in the

way, the cables would be stretched out too far, they would touch ground, and the line would be rendered useless. This is a simple comparison but it helps us understand the importance of certain `norms` of piety which should be part of our plan of life, and which will sustain the supernatural life in us throughout the day. So distributed, according to the dictates of prudence and the activities which absorb us, they are like the towers of a high-tension line: our interior life is mounted on them. If we spread them too far apart because they take time from our daily pursuits, our humanity will be left without supernatural light. To fulfill these “norms,” to live them, to love them, is to care for our interior life and to draw closer to God.

What follows are some of these norms of piety. They are not all of those practiced by ordinary Christians. Indeed, some very important ones, like the day of recollection, annual retreat and aspirations, have been left out. But in this and the following booklet (Scepter Booklet No. 62) you will find fifteen norms, each with a brief explanation to help you live them better.

THE MORNING OFFERING

Beginning the day with a “Hello, Lord” is a good way to launch us immediately out of bed, like the soldier who overcomes his fear and leaps from the trench to the attack. To be able to rise and have one’s whole day ahead is a great gift. This in itself merits a “thank you.” In contrast to such a gift, however, all we can offer is that “heroic minute” of punctuality (1).

I realize that sanctity is not something abstract; nor is virtue, or dedication, or vocation. All I have is today: a day filled with a thousand details and perhaps something a little bigger. Thus has the Lord given me this day in order to sanctify myself in it. I must sanctify myself, then, by means of the things of this day: in them I must live my dedication and my love for God. In them I can make a reality of my vocation and love my fellow men. They are the material out of which my sanctity is made. Just as the bull fighter ceremoniously dedicates the bull to some important person in the bull ring and then feels a greater obligation to perform well, so the morning offering presents to the Lord the day’s work and thus obliges us to carry it out with greater nobility, elegance and finesse. Because of this we might be afraid to

seem ridiculous in making a morning offering, for it would be ridiculous to promise everything and give little. “Forty centuries of glory gaze upon you,” Napoleon cried out to his soldiers before entering battle. But that is little. God, the angels, the saints, my fellow men are going to be watching the battles of this new day. Later, at night, I will rejoice if I have “fought the good fight” (2 Tim 4:7).

In the morning offering we enliven the present moment, which is the only time we have. More than an act it is an attitude of service and of dedication which begins at the very moment when we meet the new day. It means turning into an offering and a gift the commonplaces of one more day. It means making yesterday’s resolution reach into today. In this way our dedication to God takes on flesh and blood. We begin again: “Your interior life has to be just that: to begin. . . and to begin again” (2).

The morning offering is something very personal. Everyone will make it in his own way. But we all say more or less the same thing: “here I am Lord, because you have called me”; “I will serve you, I will be faithful to you,” and so on.

Our resolutions are always about a future we do not yet possess. The morning offering includes a resolution which that day will make a reality. “Today”; what a marvelous word! Out of sleep awakens the joy of a new day filled with noble ideals. The purpose, the full joy of living, working, and speaking about God, of loving others and making them happy. These are the noble ideals of a child of God who

wants to show his love for his heavenly Father. He loves with his heart and the deeds of today. This is what it means to be a realist.

To offer the day is to enter life's playing field on the right foot. It is the "procedamus in pace in nomine Christi" of the liturgy of the Church ("Let us set out in peace in Christ's name"). It is my Christmas present in this morning of dreams and light. How much these simple words contain: "I offer you the deeds of this day," or these more familiar ones: "Good morning, Lord."

MORNING PRAYER

St. Mark has left us the schedule of one day in the life of our Lord. It is the tight schedule of one day among many: “And rising up long before daybreak, he went out and departed into a desert place, and there he prayed” (Mk 1:35). That was his morning prayer.

We know that the Lord prayed, sometimes at length. He sought the peace of the mountain side and he spent hours “alone” with his heavenly Father. He even spent a whole night in prayer when he was about to choose his apostles. Other times he prayed surrounded by people awaiting a miracle in order to believe. There was the long and intense prayer in the garden and the painful prayer on the Cross. We find many periods of prayer in the life of Jesus Christ.

He encouraged his apostles to pray. Sometimes he used parables to teach them the importance of prayer: “And he also told them a parable that they must always pray and not lose heart saying, ‘There was a judge in a certain town...’” (Lk 18:1). Other times he exhorted them: “Pray, that you may not enter into temptation. . . Rise and pray” (Lk 22: 40, 46). On another occasion he showed them the efficacy of prayer: “Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and you shall

find....” “If you, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him” (Mt 7:7,11).

The Lord even taught the apostles a prayer, the “Our Father” (Lk 11:2), and he told them how they should pray: “When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogues and at the street corners, in order that they may be seen by men.... But when you pray, go into your room, and closing the door, pray to your Father in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. Do not multiply words, as the Gentiles do.. . for your Father knows what you need before you ask him (Mt 6:5-9).

To pray must, then, be something great, because the Lord prays and openly encourages it. “You wrote to me: ‘To pray is to talk to God. But about what?’ About what? About him, and yourself: joys, sorrows, successes and failures, great ambitions, daily worries—even your weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions—and love and reparation.

“In short, to get to know him and to get to know yourself—to get acquainted!” (3). We pray in order to hear him, and so that he will enlighten our countenance as he did for Moses when he came down from the holy mountain, and with the light of faith we will begin the day’s work. *Gallo canente spes redit*, says one of the hymns from Lauds (“When the morning cock sings, hope is reborn”). Morning prayer brings back to life our supernatural outlook on life and work; it enkindles our desire to return to the battle

in the same place as yesterday: “You wrote me, and I well understand:—Every day I spend my “little time” in prayer. If it weren’t for that. . . !” (4).

Morning prayer is a very filial norm. It is the dialogue of a child of God with his Father in heaven; with Jesus Christ, our older Brother; with the Blessed Virgin, our Mother; with our guardian angel and the saints, our family in heaven. Sometimes we will have to get up early, as the Lord did. It is necessary to organize ourselves well in order to find the best time. Don’t pay attention to excuses: “I don’t have time, I don’t know how, they don’t hear me....” When we are fully convinced that we need something or someone, when we really want it, we can find time. For a Christian, God is always someone important whom he cannot forget, unless he wants to lessen the value of his life and make it sterile forever.

It is impossible to live without breathing, and it is impossible to become a saint without praying. Each new day must be used well: “God does not lose battles, and if we are united to him, we will never be overcome. On the contrary, we can call ourselves victors and indeed be victors: good children of God” (5). Each morning we have to raise our hands, like Moses. Today’s battles require the help of morning prayer. In order to work well we need our hands and our head; but, besides hands and head, in order to sanctify his work the Christian raises his heart to God, too. Then “let us exult and rejoice, because from the beginning of the day we are filled with your mercy.”

HOLY MASS

The first of the commandments of the Church says: “We must attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation,” and furthermore, “To knowingly break one of the commandments of the Church in serious matter is a mortal sin” (6). This leads us to suppose that attending Mass must be something of vital importance for a Christian. From the fact that the Church commands this minimum under pain of mortal sin, it is clear that for our spiritual health we need the holy Mass.

Pope Paul VI wrote on August 22, 1973: “The observance of the Sunday and holy day Mass precept more than ever retains its gravity and its fundamental importance. The Church has granted faculties to make this observance possible. The one who is conscious of the content and of the purpose of this precept ought to consider it not only a primary duty, but also a right, a necessity, an honor, and a good fortune which no intelligent and aware believer can set aside without grave reasons.”

Holy Mass is the renewal in an unbloody manner of the sacrifice of Calvary. “Between the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice of the Cross there is this difference and

relation: on the cross Jesus Christ offered himself, shedding his blood, and merited for us, while on the altar he sacrifices himself without the shedding of blood, and he applies to us the fruits of his passion and death” (7). Without the merits of Christ I cannot save my soul, nor sanctify my work, nor give to God the glory that is due him, nor do apostolate. I need the Mass because “as often as the sacrifice of the Cross in which Christ our Passover was sacrificed is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried on” (8). Thus we cannot be content with the

minimum necessary for supernatural life; the personal call to sanctity and the duty of apostolate demand more of us—daily Mass and Communion.

I want to insist on this: We have been born to give glory to God and the fullest glory we can give him is through Jesus Christ: “Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.” Through holy Mass we give all the glory to God.

Holy Mass “is the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ,” and in the Mass we find the ends which are proper to every sacrifice: the end of latria or adoration of God the Father; that of thanksgiving for the redemption and all the benefits we have received; of reparation for the sins we have committed; and petition for all our needs. Only a little reflection is needed in order to see the need we have for all of these. Without them our lives are narrow and without meaning, and overwhelmed by the weight of our sins and

our needs. To the extent we feel the obligation of apostolate and realize that without grace all our efforts are in vain—”without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:17)—we will be fully convinced of the need for the Mass. It is for this reason that “a very important characteristic of the apostolic man is his love for the Mass” (9). In it priest and laity are united in the most sublime of tasks: the world’s redemption. This is achieved not by direct improvement of earthly structures (which is really secondary) but by personal conversion, the work of sanctifying grace in the depths of the human soul. For this reason “the Mass should be the center of the entire life of the Christian community” (10). On it rest our interior life, the sanctification of our work—in a word, redemption and eternal life.

How, then, should we live the Mass? The first condition is our presence. We can apply here what is said of the Olympic games: “the important thing is to take part in them.” And then: a dignified posture, the correct responses, an alert mind, a heart in love, and firm resolution of the will. We go to learn, to adore, and to receive: To learn through the liturgy of the word from the Scriptural readings and the homily, in the sacrifice, where he is really present through the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into his body, blood, soul and divinity; we receive Christ himself in Holy Communion, which “is the most perfect participation” (11) in holy Mass. And after this we add a few minutes of personal thanksgiving, recollected in holy silence following the Mass: “It should be pointed out to the faithful that, after

the eucharistic banquet, they ought not neglect to make a sincere and fitting thanksgiving corresponding to each one's capacity, state, and occupation" (12).

The pious, recollected, daily assistance at Mass and on Sunday the more solemn and sung Mass make up the sole sacrifice of our Christian religion which perpetuates the work of redemption until the end of the world. We must not ignore this treasure so close at hand.

READING OF THE GOSPEL AND OTHER SPIRITUAL READING

In the Gospel our Lord reminds us that we Christians are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mt 5:13, 14). Salt gives taste and prevents corruption, while light guides and illuminates the way. How clear it is that in order to be a good Christian we need to be good salt and to possess clear light. These qualities are not improvised nor do they come to us by direct revelation; we acquire them by reading and study.

If, like St. Paul, we want to “glory in the knowledge of Jesus Christ” until we achieve “the sublime knowledge of Jesus, my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things” (Phil 3:8), then we must frequently read the gospel. For although “in many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets,...in these last days he has spoken to us by his son” (Heb 1:1-2). The teachings of Jesus are principally in the Gospel and in the other books of the New Testament. Attentive and serene reading of the Gospel makes all of this familiar to us, and over the years

we gain a deeper penetration of revealed doctrine; the tenth reading will uncover details that previously escaped us, as we perceive with ever greater clarity the marvelous figure of the God-Man, Jesus Christ. It is only one more step to fall in love with the Lord, and in this love we will understand him better. “You don’t understand me? If you loved me you would understand me,” is a frequently heard dialogue between married couples. First comes a personal association which is converted into prayer; then, as we try with St. Paul to “put on” Jesus Christ, striving to imitate him, to feel ourselves members of his Body, we reach the point of crying out in astonishment like the apostle: “It is not I who live, it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). The necessary consequence of this fullness of divine life will be a desire to bring other souls to God. Gospel and apostolate go hand in hand in the life of a true Christian: “May your behavior and your conversation be such that everyone who sees or hears you can say: ‘This man reads the life of Jesus Christ.’” (13).

The Gospel is our book; of no other book can this be so properly said. In it “we are told about the inner life of God” (14). “The sacred synod forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful... to learn ‘the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ’ (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures.” “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (15).

“Prayer should accompany the reading of sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and

man” (16), and divine truth fills the heart.

In addition to the Gospel we should not neglect to read other good spiritual books: “(Spiritual) reading has made many saints” (17). Thus, the intellectual dimension, too, has a place in our interior life. Heart and head must go hand in hand in total dedication to God. Accordingly, spiritual reading, as the source of intellectual enrichment, is absolutely necessary. St. Francis de Sales wrote: “If prayer is the flame of the sanctuary lamp, then spiritual reading is the oil that feeds it.” Simply devoting a few minutes each day to spiritual reading represents at the end of a year an impressive wealth of ascetical and mystical formation.

Our lives as ordinary Christians pass through different stages from infancy to adulthood. These are not only chronological but, more importantly, steps toward intellectual and spiritual maturity. Hence our spiritual reading should be accommodated to the stage in which we find ourselves at the moment if we are to receive proper intellectual and spiritual formation. It goes without saying that a spiritual director can and ought to help us choose appropriate reading for each phase of our development.

Like the river “that always sings the same stanza but with different water,” our daily reading of the Gospel and of a sound spiritual book gives us the same doctrine, but in different forms, with greater profundity and solidity, and with the warmth of life itself. Spiritual reading is a daily norm that enriches the head while it moves the heart to serve God.

THE ANGELUS

Have you ever contemplated that painting of Millet entitled “The Angelus”? A man and a woman at midday, in the midst of their work, stand with basket and wheelbarrow in the middle of a field. From a tower in the distance sounds the melodious bell: it is time for the Angelus. He takes off his cap; she bows her head. The two pray to the holy Virgin in the well-known words of the Gospel.

In St. Peter’s Square in Rome the Holy Father appears at noon to pray the Angelus with the Christians who have come there. It is the hour of the Angelus. In your everyday work, in the shop, the classroom, the office, the street, the time of the Angelus arrives every day. The Angelus times are “those characteristic moments of the day—morning, noon, and evening—which set off the times of work and constitute an invitation to stop a few minutes to pray” (18).

Pope Paul VI tells us: “Our words about the ‘Angelus’ are meant to be a simple but vibrant exhortation to retain this customary prayer wherever and whenever possible.” It is a simple prayer that “over the passage of centuries preserves its unalterable value and its freshness intact” (19).

Its content is thoroughly theological: It recalls the first

step in the Redemption, the Incarnation of the Son of God in the virginal womb of holy Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. It points out the role of the Blessed Virgin in the work of Redemption, and the intimate relation and cooperation of her life with the life of Jesus. Let us admire her humility: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.” Let us contemplate in awe her greatness as the Mother of Jesus: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” We begin to penetrate the mystery of her office as mediatrix between Jesus and men, and we ask her to pray for us “so that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.” and finally, our constant supplication is that we may obtain that grace through the merits of Christ and be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

In the Angelus we recall the most intimate scene in the life of the Blessed Virgin: her calling to be Mother of Jesus and our Mother. “We contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, the greeting to the Virgin and her merciful intercession” (20).

The Angelus brings us to the Blessed Virgin. This is something very important, because devotion to Mary is an essential part of the Christian life. “There can be no fully Christian life if it is not Marian,” Bishop Ramon Masnou of Vich (Spain) has written: This common denominator unites everyone. At the hour of the Angelus we keep our appointment with the Blessed Virgin; this blessed hour of noon, as it circles the globe with the sun, is the burning torch which we all carry, like athletes in a relay race, as the

early Christians did that night in Ephesus when the fathers of the Ecumenical Council defined the dogma of the divine maternity of Mary.

After the important persons in this prayer (the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, the Virgin, the Archangel Gabriel), it becomes our own as we ask for and desire the “glory of the resurrection.” And through it we develop a more familiar devotion to the Holy Spirit, to our Mother, holy Mary, and to the Guardian Angels.

During Eastertide the “Regina Coeli” replaces the Angelus. This is a hymn of joy over the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word “alleluia” is repeated while we remind the Virgin of the Incarnation and the wonderful triumph of the Resurrection: “He whom you were made worthy to bear has risen as he said.” The final petition is our desire to obtain the joys of eternal life.

A VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, has said about eucharistic worship: “The faithful should not neglect each day to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, which ought to be reserved in churches in a most worthy place with maximum honor according to the liturgical laws, since this visit is proof of gratitude, a sign of love, and a duty of adoration to our Lord Jesus Christ who is present there” (21).

If we are striving to live the reality present in the tabernacle, and our hearts are not asleep, we will not be able to pass a tabernacle where Jesus awaits us without stopping. Perhaps we cannot enter the church and remain for a brief time, but we can always “enter” it in spirit, making acts of love and reparation, our thoughts fixed on the tabernacle. Church steeples do more than hold up the bells and the clock: “As you make your usual way through the city streets, aren’t you happy when you discover another tabernacle?” (22)

Let us recall once more something Pope Paul VI said in his encyclical on the Eucharist: “While the Eucharist is

reserved in a church or oratory, Christ is truly Emmanuel, that is, God with us. ‘No other nation has a God as close to us as our God.’ This closeness gives us an incomparable dignity; it orders moral actions, nourishes virtue, consoles the afflicted, and strengthens the weak.” All of this well merits a “thank you.” Christ need not have remained in our tabernacles; he chose to do so out of no need of his own, but because of our need. He knew that we would need him. Love’s ingenious inventions are like that: “God so loved the world...;” “I shall be with you until the end of time.”

A Christian’s life revolves around Christ in such a way that He is “the spiritual center of the religious and parish community, and even more, of the universal church and of all mankind” (23). At the same time he is the center of all our affections and aspirations, the “center of all hearts” (24). Having begun the day with holy Mass and Communion, how natural it is to conclude it with a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. To return a visit is only the polite thing to do.

It is a duty of adoration. “Reserved in the Eucharist, Christ should he adored because he is substantially present there by that conversion of the bread and wine which, according to the Council of Trent, is properly called transubstantiation” (25). For this reason “an external and public manifestation is con-natural to faith in the real presence of the Lord” (26). If there were only one tabernacle in the world how happy we would be if we could adore him there a few times in our lives. God has made it easier, more human. Those who go to him there “enjoy an intimate association with him; they

open their hearts in prayer for themselves and for their families, and for the peace and salvation of the world” (27).

By visiting our Lord we learn something not found in books, for love is born and grows through personal association. We can begin to understand something of the reason for the Eucharist only by identifying with people who love each other. Present together, their eyes say everything, almost without a need for words. “He looks at me and I look at Him,” an old man told the Cure of Ars about his visits to the tabernacle. There, without realizing it, we are contemplatives: I know he is there; I really am in the presence of the Most High. One might suppose that the natural thing would be to feel small. But here the natural thing is to know that he loves you and to say to him with the confidence of St. Peter: “Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you” (Jn 21:17).

- (1) Cf. J. Escriva de Balaguer, *The Way*, n. 206 and 191.
- (2) *Ibid.*, n. 292.
- (3) *Ibid.*, n. 91.
- (4) *Ibid.*, n. 106.
- (5) J. Escriva de Balaguer, *Christ Is Passing By*, n. 66.
- (6) St. Pius X, *Catechism*, n. 467 and 474.
- (7) *Ibidem*, n. 657.
- (8) Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 3.
- (9) *The Way*, n. 528
- (10) Vatican Council II, *Christus Dominus*, n. 30.
- (11) Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 55.

- (12) Sacred Congregation of Divine Worship, Jan. 25, 1973, *Immensae Caritatis*, n. 3.
- (13) *The Way*, n. 2.
- (14) Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum*, n. 4.
- (15) *ibid.*, n. 25.
- (16) *Ibid.*
- (17) *The Way*, n. 116.
- (18) Pope Paul VI, *Maria/is Cultus*, n. 41.
- (19) *Ibid.*
- (20) *Ibid.*
- (21) Pope Paul VI, *Encyclical Mysterium Fidei*.
- (22) *The Way*, n. 270.
- (23) Pope Paul VI, *Op. Cit.*
- (24) *Ibid.*
- (25) *Ibid.*, n. 3.
- (26) *Ibid.*, n. 49.
- (27) *Ibid.*, n. 50.

AFTERNOON PRAYER

“Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, as an evening sacrifice” (Ps 150:2), “a prayer to the God of my life” (Ps 41:9).

It was evening. The Lord had preached to five thousand men and multiplied and distributed the loaves and the fishes to feed them. Then he had dismissed them, and the disciples had gotten into the boat. Weary, he retired to the mountain to pray alone (Mt 14:23). After the day’s work Jesus makes his afternoon prayer.

These are moments of intimacy with God. The body is tired and seeks rest, but faith speaks to us of another rest which lies beyond human things. The body worn out, but the soul alert; the failing light of dusk, and the eternal light of God’s face. In the midst of this contrast of lights and shadows arises the suppliant prayer of the blind man: “Lord, that I might see.” The soul opens itself to God, and we find ourselves confiding more in him. The desire of the psalmist takes form: “As the deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, o God. My soul thirsts for God,

for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?” (Ps 41:1-3)

What great moments of intimacy with God these are. He is like the father in the parable who goes out to welcome and embrace his son, weary from the journey in the heat of the day and repentant for his mistakes. “We are sons, and that is why we call him: ‘Abba! Father!’ “ With the boldness of Peter we dare to tell him: “Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you.” Now is the time for the “Our Father, who art in heaven...”

The body’s weariness reminds us of the day’s work, and a sincere and repeated “thank you” can fill a few minutes: Thank you for the work of my hands, for this day which is ending, for Holy Mass and Communion, for that conversation with a friend who is on his way back to you, for that apparent failure,...for everything. Thank you is a simple and well-known phrase. Everyone knows how to say it, but only God deserves it. “Thank you” is a phrase of gratitude which brings in its train new favors.

The afternoon prayer is apostolic. In it the apostle entrusts to God the work of his hands and asks of him souls for the vineyard. “The harvest is great but the workers are few. Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest” (Mt 9:38). Christ sows these apostolic desires in pure hearts. He it is who gives brilliance to your light, and flavor to your salt. He gives you the holy madness of wanting to love God above everything else and wanting others to love him in the same way. He it is who rekindles

the fire he brought to the earth, making use of us to inspire in souls the love of God.

The afternoon prayer is a time for making apostolic plans, which become effective through silent and fruitful prayer. It ascends like incense to “the God of;my life,” and the divine dialogue ends in an appeal for help to Our Lady, the Mother of God and our Mother.

THE HOLY ROSARY

“**D**o you want to love our Lady? Well, then, get to know her. How? By praying her rosary well” (1).

This devotion is centuries old and constantly recommended by the Popes. The words of the Second Vatican Council fully apply to the rosary: “The practices and exercises of devotion recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of centuries are to be highly esteemed” (2).

This is not a time to argue but to pray, to pray the holy rosary. It is “a prayer which well becomes the sense of the people of God,” Pope Paul VI has said. In every home people enjoy looking at the family album, remembering loved ones, and commenting on the pictures as they pass from hand to hand. We, the People of God, are a big family and scenes from the lives of our loved ones, Jesus and Mary, are very dear to us. We contemplate them and “make comments” about them.

Contemplation is an essential characteristic of the Christian life. Praying the rosary fosters this theological dimension of life as we contemplate the mysteries in the lives of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, and then pray with

that dialogue of praise and petition. And not just once, but many times, because great love is not content with a little.

A Christian's ordinary life is made up of joys and sorrows, and of hope for better days. These are our joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries. Because all of us are called to be saints, every circumstance in life can be sanctified. It is always possible for us to meet Christ and to live in the presence of his Mother. The Lord chose to be born of her, to live with her during most of his life on earth, and to die in her presence. The rosary is the life of Jesus as related by the Blessed Virgin and contemplated by us. Wherever there is a child who knows how to cry out to his mother there, too, can be a Christian who knows how to pray the rosary. Take the pilgrim's rosary, prayed along the way to a shrine of our Lady during the month of May; or the family rosary said in the evening on an ordinary day; or that deliberate rosary on the lips of a sick person; the fast-moving rosary as one drives along the highway; the often-interrupted rosary on a crowded street or bus; virginal rosaries in the silence of the cloister; little rosaries in the minds of children; the well-said rosary of lovers; the well-worn rosaries of those who have been married for years; friendly rosaries in the hands of a priest; maternal rosaries of the sister who cares for the sick or teaches the young. All are different and yet all are the same.

Pope Paul VI writes: "Your rosary is a stairway; you ascend it together, step by step, approaching our Lady, which means meeting Christ. This is one of the characteristics of

the rosary, the most important and the most beautiful of all: It is a devotion which leads us to Christ through his Blessed Mother. Christ is the goal of this lengthy and repeated invocation of Mary. We speak to Mary so as to reach Christ: She brought him into the world; she is the Mother of the Lord. And she brings us to him if we are devoted to her” (3). “Our particular desire is that little by little and everywhere the practice of praying the rosary begin to flourish again, beginning with families” (4). The rosary leads us to a closer association with the Blessed Virgin, contemplating her life in Christ, reminding her that she is a mother with other children, and asking her to “pray for us now and at the hour of our death.” Then follow the litanies of praise and of gratitude. This is an everyday practice which is understood by those who are in love with God. If the rosary had not already been invented, I am sure that someone with deep insights into human nature, love and theology would invent it today.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

In medieval castles, the night watch was indispensable and effective. Is an enemy near-by? Are the gates secure? Once everything is put straight, then comes security and peace. The examination of conscience is like the night watch of each one's personal castle. In it we correct whatever has to be corrected, pronounce a sincere "thanks," and then comes a great peace.

"Examination of conscience. A daily task. Bookkeeping—never neglected by anyone in business. And is there any business worth more than that of eternal life?" (5)

Examining our conscience enables us to know ourselves better. Thales of Miletus wrote: "The most difficult thing is to know oneself; the easiest is to criticize others." That most difficult thing is precisely what St. Paul recommends: "Let each one examine his own deeds" (Gal 6:4).

The examination of conscience is a sign of interior life, for it indicates that there is struggle. It also presupposes humility, the recognition that we have defects, that we are worth very little, and that we are sinners who want to be

better. Moreover, the examination of conscience shows love of God in the desire to rid ourselves of everything that separates us from him, and in it we seek closer union in order to love him more.

This is a difficult practice because of weariness after the day's work, sleepiness, the suspicion that we will only discover the same things as yesterday, and the suggestion that we are probably not even capable of variety in our sins. It is the hour to "beware of the devil that ties your tongue" (6).

How should we make the examination of conscience? In St. John's Gospel the Lord examines Peter: a few questions, only three; perhaps even the same question three times, until we get to the root of things. Read that passage slowly and apply it to the three aspects of your day: your relationship to God, to others, and to your work. How did I pray today? How have I treated others? How did I do my work? Then we go on to examine our norms of piety and how we have dealt with the family and our friends. We should be interested in the "how" of things: By discovering how things have gone in point of fact, we can see how they should have gone, and this gives rise to a resolution for the next day.

The examination of conscience is not for - one day only, but for every day; sanctity is the work of a lifetime. Faith, our personal vocation, apostolic effectiveness, professional work, cheerfulness; all these come into play. In a calm, nightly review of each day's activities we are surprised to discover that our mistakes are frighteningly ordinary and

that they repeat like the squeaking of a rusty wheel. Heavy summer storms at our house used to bring out the water pails. It was only a matter of a few drops; nobody would have drowned on account of them. But it was clear that the moisture would eventually ruin the floor. Likewise, even though our mistakes are small, they may occur every day. Write down, if you wish, the results of your daily examination of conscience for a whole week and you will discover the leaks in your life. “Whoever does not repair the leak ends up repairing the whole house.”

In the parable of the prodigal son, the young man “came to himself” one after-noon, made an examination of conscience, saw the bitter reality of his situation, and remembered that in his father’s house “the hired servants had bread enough and to spare.” That was already the beginning of his improvement: “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him. . .” (Lk 15:18). The banquet and the music and the father’s joy began with an examination of conscience. At the end of our day it is necessary to make an examination of conscience, for our Father God is awaiting his child’s return at the door of the banquet hall.

FREQUENT CONFESSION

When Jesus issued the challenge, “Who can accuse me of sin?” the answer was total silence. The same silence greeted his invitation: “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone” (Jn 8:7). Two things stand out clearly: Christ became like us “except in sin” (Heb 4:15), and all the rest of us are sinners. Hence the need for the sacrament of penance, “the sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to forgive sins committed after baptism” (7).

Penance is the sacrament of good health for the soul; “in it are forgiven mortal sins and even the venial sins that we confess and for which we are truly sorry.” But the value of the sacrament goes further; “it turns eternal punishment into temporal punishment, and the latter it forgives in a greater or lesser degree according to the dispositions of the penitent. In addition it restores the merits of good works done before the commission of mortal sin, it gives the soul the necessary helps to avoid sinning again, and it returns peace to the conscience” (8).

This sacrament is absolutely necessary for the forgiveness of serious sins. Contrition by itself is not enough. The act of perfect contrition forgives mortal sins only if

it is accompanied by a desire to receive the sacrament of penance: “Even though it may happen that this contrition is perfect, motivated by love, and thus reconciles man to God before the sacrament is in fact received, nevertheless, that reconciliation should not be attributed to contrition alone, apart from the desire for the sacrament which is included in it” (9). Accordingly, no one in the state of mortal sin may receive Communion without first going to confession. To quote the Council of Trent once more: “In order that so great a sacrament (the Eucharist) not be received unworthily. . ., this holy Council establishes and decrees that those who are conscious of mortal sin, no matter how contrite they may consider themselves, must necessarily previously make a sacramental confession, so long as there is a confessor available” (10).

Even after the soul improves and grave sins disappear, penance continues to be necessary: “In order to make progress each day with greater fervor on the path of virtue, we desire earnestly to call to mind the pious use of frequent confession, which has been introduced by the Church not without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. With it proper self-knowledge is increased, Christian humility grows, bad habits are rooted out, lukewarmness and spiritual laziness are con-fronted, the conscience is purified, the will is strengthened, a healthy spiritual direction is received, and the grace of God is increased in virtue of the sacrament” (11). In the same vein Pope Paul VI says in the *Ordo Poenitentiae*: “The frequent and diligent use of this sacrament is of great

usefulness also for venial sins. This is not a mere ritual repetition nor a psychological exercise, but rather an assiduous desire of perfecting the grace of baptism, so that the life of Christ becomes more and more manifest in us” (12). “With regard to the practice of frequent or devotional confession, priests should not dissuade people from it. On the contrary, they should praise the abundant fruits that it brings to the Christian life; let them show themselves always ready to hear confessions whenever they are reasonably asked” (13).

Since every sin both offends God and harms the Church, the sacrament of penance reconciles us to the Church if we first reconcile ourselves to God, but not vice versa (14).

In preparing ourselves to receive this medicinal sacrament, we should bear in mind the usual five conditions: examination of conscience, sorrow for our sins, purpose of amendment, confession of our sins, and fulfillment of the penance imposed by the priest.

With regard to the confessional Pope Paul VI has said: “You will hear specified and corrected, certain inexact ideas which have been spread concerning the new rite of the sacrament of penance such as the suppression of the confessional; the confessional, as a protective screen between the minister and the penitent, guarantees the absolute secrecy of the conversation between them, a condition which they both intend; hence it must clearly remain” (15).

Calling to mind once more the parable of the prodigal

son, we can see in the father's embrace of his son at the gates of the father's house a clarifying image of the nature of this personal encounter with Christ, signified by and effected in the sacrament of penance.

Here, then, is a norm of piety which is indispensable to the interior life: the frequent reception of the sacrament of penance. "Consider what depths of mercy lie in the justice of God! For according to human justice, he who pleads guilty is punished, but in the divine court he is pardoned. Blessed be the holy sacrament of penance?" (16).

PRAYING THE HAIL HOLY QUEEN ON SATURDAYS

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin “is a most noble part of that sacred worship in which the height of wisdom and the summit of religion come together; consequently it constitutes a primary duty of the people of God” (17). The Blessed Virgin occupies a singular, a unique place in the plan of redemption worked out by Jesus Christ, and for this reason a singular devotion belongs to her (called hyperdulia or highest veneration).

The calendar of the Roman liturgy presents us with abundant feasts of the Blessed Virgin throughout the year. They enable us to live “the memorial of the Mother within the annual cycle of the mysteries of the Son” (18). Remembering our Lady each Saturday presents one more possibility of honoring her frequently. “An ancient and modest commemoration,” Pope Paul VI has called it (19). There are many ways to venerate her; one of them is to continue this old Christian custom of reciting or singing the beautiful and ancient hymn, Hail Holy Queen (*Salve Regina*), on Saturdays.

In order to understand the Hail Holy Queen we must “become like little children” and even like the “bawling little rascals” we are, as Msgr. Escriva has put it. This prayer bears a great similarity to the Hail Mary, in which we remind the Blessed Virgin of her wonderful titles, “Full of grace,” “the Lord is with you,” “blessed among women,” and then reach out our hand to her: “Holy Mary. ..pray for us, sinners. . . .” If you want to make a comparison with everyday life I would say that the Hail Holy Queen is like the letter a young student away from home for the first time might write his mother from the dorm. “Dear Mom: How often I think of you and all the things you did for me! Life in the dorm is not very comfortable and my roommate is a real pain; the food in the dining hall is awful. Please send me some money. I hope I can get home to see you soon. Love, your son.” Isn’t the Hail Holy Queen much like that? “Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness and our hope.” Her children address her in majestic terms because they recognize the greatness of their mother and want to move her to generosity; she is “our hope.” Like weeping children we paint the picture of our sufferings: “poor banished children of Eve..., mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.” Then follows the filial request: “turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy upon us.” A mother’s eyes are never blind; she always attends to her child’s suffering. And finally: “Show us the fruit of your womb, Jesus. . . .” Holy shrewdness. Where is the mother who does not like to see her child admired? But this petition has a deep theological stamp: in the economy

of salvation, the lives of Jesus and of the Blessed Virgin are so intimately joined that true devotion to Mary leads us to Christ. For this reason there cannot be a fully Christian life unless it is a Marian life.

Praying or singing, the Hail Holy Queen on Saturdays leads us to venerate the Blessed Virgin as mother and mediatrix of all graces, and to feel ourselves to be her children.

ALWAYS: PRESENCE OF GOD

Let us recall a couple of questions from the catechism: “Where is God? God is in heaven, on earth, and everywhere. Does God see everything? Yes, God sees everything, even our innermost thoughts.” The simplicity of these answers should not hide their doctrinal richness and depth. A child sees it clearly. A theologian is pensive and awed. An ordinary Christian rejoices and walks confidently.

Human reason can arrive at the truth of God’s existence unaided, and likewise with regard to his attributes. “This natural knowledge helps us to accept that other knowledge which is more elevated—the knowledge of faith. God is everywhere, present to all things, because the effect of his power is in all of them” (20). He gives them being; he preserves them in being; he moves them, and he governs them. We are dependent on the hand of God in everything: “In him we live, we move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). In consequence of the Redemption, the presence of God rises to new supernatural dimensions: the personal or hypostatic presence of the incarnate Son while he walked in the world; the sacramental presence of Christ now in the tabernacle; the indwelling of the Triune God in every soul in grace. And

let us remember the words of our Lord: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them.”

How are we to live this presence of God? The mother with a small child walks around the house with an eye and an ear attentive to the cradle. The slightest sound draws her thoughts to the child. We can say that this mother lives in the presence of her infant. She does not let the child out of her sight. In the same manner must we be attentive to God, never losing sight of him during the rush and activity of human events. Even the thought of our own wretchedness leads us to desire never to be separated from him.

A certain spirit of contemplation is proper in the life of every Christian. We should all be contemplatives in that corner of the world where we work and live. The presence of God helps make real to us this supernatural dimension of our lives.

Further, this practice leads us to a more refined conscience. We will not give way to fear, like the driver who spots a policeman in his rear view mirror and slows down. Rather, it will stir up in us the love of a son who wants his father to be happy with the way he acts. “Children—how they seek to behave worthily in the presence of their fathers! And the children of Kings, in the presence of their father, the King—how they seek to uphold the royal dignity! And you—don’t you realize that you are always in the presence of the great King, of God, your Father?” (21)

If we live the presence of God we will never feel alone, not even when life becomes hard, as it did for Martha and

Mary at the death of their brother, Lazarus. For “the Lord is here and calls for you (Jn 11:28). And when a miracle blossoms forth, as happened to the Apostles on the shores of the lake of Genesareth, with the contemplative eyes of John we will discover that “It is the Lord” (Jn 21:7).

The way of living this norm is very personal. Each one has his or her own way. Perhaps an aspiration will inspire you with devotion, or the sight of a church steeple, or an image of the Blessed Virgin, or a red traffic light, or greeting our Guardian Angel, or a thousand other little things. In the book of Genesis God says to Abraham: “Live in my presence and you will be perfect” (Gen 17:1). Living in the presence of God is a way of living, of working, of walking, and of praying. We could put it in the elegant phrase of Andre Frossard as he left a chapel in the Latin quarter of Paris: “God exists; I have met him.”

CONSIDERATION OF OUR DIVINE FILIATION

When the apostles asked our Lord to teach them to pray, he said: “When you pray, say: Our Father, who art in heaven. . .” (Lk 11:2). Imagine the apostle’s surprise. For them the God of Sinai was one who announced his presence in the midst of thunder and lightning. And now Jesus tells them to call him Father. And he insists on it: “When you pray, go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father” (Mt 6:6). “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Mt 10:29). “I am ascending to my Father and your Father” (Jn 20:17).

St. Paul says: “You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship which makes us cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Rom 8:15). And St. John: “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of-God; and such we are . . . Beloved, now we are the children of God, . . .” (1 Jn 3:1, 2).

This is a basic truth in the economy of salvation. Our lives revolve around God. We are his adopted children, but

it is a special kind of adoption. When human parents adopt, the child enters their family; they give him their name and the right to inherit from them. But that child will never carry the parents' blood in his veins; in the intimate reality of his being he will always be an outsider. But our adoption by God is not an external thing; we do have, as it were, the blood of the Father, which is divine grace, the same grace that Jesus Christ, our older Brother, had, although we possess it in a lesser degree.

To consider our divine filiation is to become aware of the reality of our situation and to live in the light of our Father, God. Everything that happens to us comes from his hand. "And we have come to know, and have believed, the love that God has in our behalf" (1 Jn 4:16). Here is the great secret of the interior life. Divine providence—God's watching out for us with the love of a Father—seems the most natural thing to us. The angels are one more manifestation of this loving care of our Father; and the same is true of the sacraments. Belief in the love of God made St. Paul cry out from his prison in Rome: "For I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that he is able to guard the trust committed to me against that day" (2 Tim 1:12); and "The Lord will deliver me from every work of evil, and will preserve me for his heavenly kingdom; ..." (1 Tim 4:18).

The knowledge that we are children of God will give us an adaptable spiritual life and will fill us with a deep sense of responsibility, the result of such a great dignity to which we have been raised. The frequent consideration of

our divine filiation creates around us a new environment which each one of us will carry with him. An engraving over the entrance of a European castle could be applied to this practice: “Here the air is purer, the sky is more open, God is closer.”

WORK

Of all the norms we have seen up to now, the one we are about to consider, work, is the most secular and the most timely. As a human activity, work is necessary for the individual and for society. Further, to work and to sanctify ourselves in our work corresponds to the unity of life which is typically Christian. No wonder, then, that the ordinary Christian's call to sanctify himself in his daily life in the world is one of the most striking teachings of the Second Vatican Council (22).

In the Book of Genesis we read: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15). This law of work is readily found throughout Scripture: "Man is born to work as the bird is born to fly" (Job 5:4). "A man goes forth to his work and to his labor until evening" (Ps 103:23). Christ condemns the servant who does not allow the talent he received to bear fruit, and he curses the fig tree because it did not produce. St. Paul glories in having worked with his hands, and he pronounces severely: "Whoever does not work does not eat."

This law of life receives a new grandeur from Christ: "By his work man.... can exercise genuine charity and be a partner in the work of bringing divine creation to perfection. Moreover, we believe by faith that through the homage of

work offered to God, man is associated in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ whose labor with his hands at Nazareth greatly ennobled the dignity of work” (23). Work forms part of the divine command: “Fill the earth and subdue it,” beautify it, discover its laws and its secrets, finish it. At the same time, with his work, man perfects and sanctifies himself.

It is only just to point out that years before the Second Vatican Council Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, the Founder of Opus Dei, was speaking about the sanctifying and sanctifiable reality of work: “Work for us is dignity of life and a duty imposed on us by the Creator, for man was made ‘*tit operaretur*—to work’. Work provides the means for man to share in creation; hence it is not only worthy (whatever kind it may be), but it is also a means of human (earthly) and supernatural perfection. Humanly speaking, work is at the origin of earthly progress, of civilization, of well being. We Christians are obliged to help build up the earthly city, both for reasons of charity towards all men and out of a desire for personal perfection” (24).

The transcendent value work receives from God escapes all human calculation. A person’s first motive in working is to earn a living; the second one reaches out to embrace the social contribution that work makes to the good of society. But for a Christian the human dimension of work—the material benefits it confers within the confines of this world—is not the whole story. Every noble human task can be sanctified, can sanctify the worker himself, and can be

a means of sanctifying others. Thus, while work begins in the hands of man it ends in the hands of God. To divorce work from God is to diminish its reality and its meaning, to reduce it to the merely human.

To live well the norm of work, it is necessary to work well—with intensity and with supernatural awareness. This means no sloppiness or laziness, and no pietistic pretense. Each one ought to work at what interests him, and according to his possibilities strive to be a good professional person. Probably the majority of us aren't even halfway there. We have to love our work. The late German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, in an article published after his death, wrote: “The best way to succeed is to make the work one is doing important.”

After the initial motivation, the second consideration is intensity—planning things out, using one's head; in a word: fighting the laziness which the theologian Garrigou-Lagrange calls a sin opposed to the glory and love of God. The devil of laziness is surely one of the hardest working.

Finally, then, the supernatural outlook gives work the true meaning that it has from God: “Add a supernatural motive to your ordinary professional work and you will have sanctified it” (25). Seen from this supernatural perspective any distinction between important and unimportant disappears; all work becomes important. In the words of Goethe: “It is better to do the most insignificant thing in the world than to despise the crumbs of time.” Even these can become treasures.

Our Lord's question in St. Matthew is addressed to us all: "How is it that you are standing here all day idle?" (Mt 20:6) Consider these words of Msgr. Escriva de Balaguer: "I like your apostolic motto: `Work without resting'" (26); or these: "Your ordinary contact with God takes place where your fellow men, your yearnings, your work and your affections are. There you have your daily encounter with Christ" (27).

We have in work a norm of piety to "work at."

CHEERFULNESS

Some might find it strange to count cheerfulness among our norms of piety, but if we think about it carefully the reason will become apparent. Cheerfulness is a virtue, and one that is proper to Christians. It is the atmosphere surrounding and summarizing the other norms. It is the way we are to serve the Lord: “Serve the Lord with gladness.” It is the dish on which we offer the deeds of every day, together with our prayers and our apostolate.

But what kind of cheerfulness is this? “The cheerfulness you should have is not the kind we might call physiological—like that of a healthy animal. Rather, it is the supernatural happiness that comes from abandoning everything, including yourself, into the loving arms of our Father, God” (28). Our title to practice true cheerfulness is being children of God. It takes three conditions in order to live it: total dedication, the desire to do God’s will in everything, and the conviction that St. Paul was right when he said, “Omnia in bonum. . .—for those who love God all things work together unto good.”

In the last hours of his life, when humanly speaking everything was going against him, our Lord bade farewell to

the apostles by speaking to them of cheerfulness, of joy: “I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.” What things was he referring to? Union with him, being his disciples, purity, being heard by the Father, bearing fruit. The tense atmosphere of the Last Supper, Calvary now within sight, is the moment for Jesus to repeat: “I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall take from you” (Jn 16:22).

Thus we can understand the advice of St. Paul: “Live always in joy.” “Rejoice; again I say to you, rejoice.” In itself, joy signifies abundance of life. The Christian virtue of cheerfulness, of joy, indicates the fullness or depth of interior life. The surface of the ocean, whipped by strong winds, leaps in mad, towering waves, but far down, in the deep, all is peace and serenity. In the same soul, too, there is always room for the depth of interior life; for joy as well as sorrow, for peace along with war.

The joy of serving: “I was sleeping and dreamt that life was nothing more than joy. I awakened and saw that life was nothing more than service. I began to serve and I saw that service was joy” (R. Tagore). “There is the joy of being well and of being good; but above all there is the beauty, the immense joy of serving” (Gabriela Mistral). Without joy it is impossible to serve God well.

The joy of struggle: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. . .” (2 Tim 4:7). This is the joy of the hundred for one. The joy of making the

lives of others cheerful, of making the way of virtue and of sanctity lovable, of bringing souls closer to God.

Cheerfulness cannot be bought and sold; it has to be earned. The secret lies in piety, in sincerity, docility, and hard work. Of course we come home at the end of the day tired, worn out. But sad?—never. And why? “Cheerfulness is an integral and necessary part of Christian psychology, even in the midst of adversity and tribulation” (29). God made us to be happy, eternally in our heavenly home, but the happiness of heaven belongs to those who have known how to find happiness on earth. It is a norm for which we have to train.

(1) J. Escriva de Balaguer, *Holy Rosary*.

(2) Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 67.

(3) Pope Paul VI, *Discourse*, October 10, 1964.

(4) Pope Pius XII, *Ingruentium malorum*.

(5) J. Escriva de Balaguer, *The Way*, n. 235.

(6) *The Way*. n. 236.

(7) St. Pius X, *Catechism*, n. 673.

(8) *Ibid.*, n. 691.

(9) Council of Trent, *Sess. 14, Chapter 4*.

(10) *Idem*. *Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament*, n. 11 and *Decree on the Eucharist*, Chapter 7.

(11) Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, n. 39.

(12) Pope Paul VI, *Ordo Paenitentiae*, n. 7.

(13) *Pastoral Norms*, June 16, 1972, n. 12.

(14) *Document of the Spanish Bishops*, Sept. 29, 1971.

(15) Pope Paul VI, General Audience, April 3, 1974. Reconciliation rooms in addition to confessionals are allowed at the discretion of the Bishop.

(16) *The Way*, n. 309.

(17) Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, n. 1.

(18) *Ibid.*, n. 2.

(19) *Ibid.*, n. 9.

(20) Sheed, Frank, *Theology and Sanity*.

(21) *The Way*, n. 265.

(22) *Lumen Gentium*, n. 41.

(23) Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 67.

(24) J. Escriva de Balaguer, *Letters*, Rome, May 31, 1954.

(25) *The Way*, n. 359.

(26) *Ibid.*, n. 373.

(27) *Conversations with Msgr. Escriva de Balaguer*, n.113.

(28) *The Way*, n. 659.

(29) Pope Paul VI, General Audience, July 18, 1973.

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