

COME HOLY GHOST

By Richard F. Clarke, S.J.

I.—Ascension Day

The Return of the Apostles to Jerusalem

1. When the Apostles had received from the Angels the message respecting the future return of Jesus, slowly and in silence they left the spot where they had been gazing in ecstasy after their King and Lord : their thoughts in Heaven, their hearts in Heaven, where they knew that their Master was rejoicing at the right hand of God. They would fain have remained still looking up to the place whither He had gone before them. But they had learned the lesson of obedience, and without hesitation or delay they obeyed the Angels' word.

2. How happy they were ! their hearts brimful of joy and delight. Yet they had just lost Him who would, they had hoped, reign as earthly King of Israel. They knew better now. They had learned the true meaning of His promises, and they were content, more than content to wait for the day in the far future, when He should make His enemies His footstool, and reign over the whole earth, King of kings, Lord of lords. So I must be content to wait for that joyful day, and to live in hope.

3. But the chief source of their happiness was the knowledge that He whom they loved better than life itself had returned to the bosom of His Eternal Father. Theirs was an unselfish joy indeed ! What mattered it if they had to suffer persecution and trouble, if Jesus had entered on the reward earned by His Passion and Death ? This should be the joy that I must aim at. I must rejoice at the victory of Jesus Christ, and triumph in His glory.

2.--Friday after the Ascension

The Preparation for Pentecost

1. When the disciples returned to Jerusalem, they went back to the Cenacle, or upper room, where our Lord had eaten the Pasch with them, and had instituted the Blessed Eucharist. There they spent the next ten days, according to their Master's instructions, in a retreat preparatory to Pentecost. Learn from this the importance of a quiet time alone with God as a condition of receiving from Him signal graces.

2. The disciples, we are told, were all of one mind. There was no jealousy now, no strife, no disagreement. Jesus had left His peace with them. They had learned the lesson of charity and submission ; their constant desire was to yield to others, to minister to others. They had now all one heart and one soul, because one Lord, one faith, one end in life. The one object of their ambition was to serve others for love of Him. This perfect harmony is the most certain means of drawing down the Holy Spirit. Do I seek to cultivate it among those with whom my lot is cast ?

3. Joined to the disciples in their retreat were our Lady and the holy women. The presence of Mary sanctified them. She was now their Mother. Christ Himself had entrusted them to her. She had become beneath the Cross the Mother of the infant Church ; they consulted her, learned from her some of the secrets of Divine love that filled her soul, honoured her with a reverence and a devotion which corresponded to their love for Jesus. O Mary, be thou with me, now and always, as my adviser, my hope, my Lady, and my Queen!

3.—Saturday after the Ascension

The Means Employed

How did the disciples spend the time of their retreat ? We are not left in ignorance here.

1. They were persevering in prayer. If there was one lesson which their Master had taught them again and again, it was the necessity of earnest, persevering, patient prayer. How He had enforced it by command, by parable, by His own example ! They had learned the lesson, and now their instinct was to make prayer the chief preparation for the coming of the power from on high. It is prayer that obtains power for us— power over ourselves—power to convert others--wisdom and prudence and all we need.

2. They were always in the Temple. Not only constant at its services, but standing there for long hours in silent supplication, they knew that God was specially present there, and that His ears were specially open to their petitions.

So we must be often before the Blessed Sacrament, visiting from time to time the temple where Jesus Himself is truly present. This is the way to obtain graces from Him. This is the way to win His Sacred Heart.

3. They were constantly praising and blessing God. Thus even before the Holy Spirit descended, they had begun to practise as far as they could the occupation of the Saints and Angels in Heaven. They knew that the best form of prayer is an expression of gratitude and love. Yet how much cause they had for natural anxiety. What a battle, and apparently what a hopeless battle before them ! Their overflowing love made them full of hope and joy. God will always help those who are continually praising and blessing Him.

4.—Sunday after the Ascension

The Gifts Sought

I.—The Gift of Understanding

1. What is the Gift of Understanding ? It is the gift that enables him who receives it to appreciate the truth and beauty of all revealed truths, and to comprehend their drift and meaning. It is not like Faith, a simple intellectual assent. It furnishes reasons for making the assent. It enables the intellect to perceive the consistency and the beauty of supernatural truth. I must pray for this gift if I am to be firm in my faith.

2. This Gift of Understanding extends also to practical matters. It gives the power of perceiving the wisdom of what is done by those in authority, and in general of appreciating what is good in the actions of others. This is the reason why good men always judge so leniently and kindly of the actions of those around, and approve the decisions of authority where others condemn them. It is because they have so large a share of the Gift of Understanding.

3. Even after Our Lord's Resurrection, His disciples had shown a strange want of understanding of the meaning of His teaching. He Himself had reason to upbraid the eleven Apostles with their incredulity and hardness of heart. He reproached the disciples on the road to Emmaus with their folly and slowness to believe the Scriptures. They needed the Gift of Understanding before they could see their true meaning. Without the teaching of the Holy Ghost, Scripture is a sealed book. Heretics may scratch at the surface, but they cannot make its treasures their own. For this the Gift of Understanding is necessary.

5.—Monday after the Ascension

II.—The Gift of Wisdom

1. What is the Gift of Wisdom ? It follows on the Gift of Understanding, and gives men a real taste and relish for all that is connected with God and Divine things. It directs their thoughts straight to God, and teaches them to look at everything in the light of God. It makes them love prayer, and spiritual reading, and Holy Mass. It is the most perfect of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and rules and directs the rest as charity does the other virtues.

2. This Gift of Wisdom is exactly proportioned to our charity. In the Saints it produces an utter indifference to all worldly things, to all the pleasures of sense and to all earthly honours ; nay, it makes them love mortification and the cross, because their burning charity makes them appreciate the true value of suffering. My God, how little have I of this heavenly wisdom ! How little taste for prayer and spiritual things ! The reason is my selfishness, my want of charity.

3. In the Gospels we notice how the Apostles, in spite of our Lord's example and teaching, took to the very end of His Sacred Ministry a low and earthly view of the Kingdom He was come to establish, and of their own privileges in it. They thought that it was to be merely a temporal kingdom, that they were to be held in high honour in it ; and actually quarrelled among themselves who should be first in it. All their tastes and aspirations were after this world's honour. This was because they had not yet that Gift of Wisdom which would teach them to relish most the things of God, which Gift they were to receive at Pentecost.

6.—Tuesday after the Ascension

III.—The Gift of Knowledge

1. The Gift of Knowledge differs from the preceding gifts in that its province is to raise the soul from creatures to the Creator. It enables us to think of God in our daily life, and to make the things around occasions of recalling His

presence. It teaches that all the beauty we see in earthly things is but a reflection of the Divine beauty. It was in, virtue of this that St. Ignatius declared that all the world around recalled God to him. Am I careful to refer all things to Him ?

2. The possession of this Gift of knowledge is necessary for the salvation of my soul. Those who rest in creatures and fail to pass from them to the Creator, can never hope to enjoy the vision in which the Creator is all in all. I must try and recognize God in all around me more than I do. I must pray for a knowledge of His perfections through the means which He has provided, the beauties of the physical world, the many virtues of the Saints and holy people, from whom I can learn so much.

3. Those who were the companions of our Lord could scarcely fail to be continually reminded of God, while they were the associates of God Incarnate. Yet they did not fully recognize Jesus Christ as God, else they would never have doubted of His Resurrection. Their love for Him was rather a personal and natural one than the devotion due to Him as their Lord and their God. They did not judge rightly of the meaning of what He said and did. How often we are narrow in our views, impatient of what God ordains or permits, for want of this Divine Gift of knowledge!

7.—Wednesday after the Ascension

IV.—The Gift of Counsel

1. The Gift of Counsel contains all that is good in human prudence, but goes beyond it. It depends simply and solely on the will of God, so far as we can ascertain it. It leads us always to pause and turn our thoughts to God before we act. Thus it enables us to avoid precipitation, rashness, inconsiderate impulse. It makes us calm and deliberate, and teaches us never to act in any important matter without seeking guidance from God.

2. Sometimes the Gift of Counsel does more than this. It shows us that it is God's will that we should run counter to what the world considers prudent. So Abraham did when he left his home at God's command. So David did when he went out with sling and stone to fight Goliath. So Judith did when she went to the camp of Holofernes. Some such occasions occur to all. When I know God's will, do I generously set all else aside ?

3. The disciples of Our Lord do not seem to have had much of the Gift of Counsel during His life. St. Peter tried to dissuade Him from His Sacred Passion. St. James and St. John wanted Him to call down fire upon the city which would not receive Him. The disciples in general stopped one who was working miracles in Christ's Name. They rebuked those who brought their children to be blessed by Him. They wanted our Lord to absent Himself from Judaea to avoid the dangers to which He was there exposed. All these were the result of trusting to human prudence instead of the supernatural Gift of Counsel.

8.—Thursday after the Ascension

V.—The Gift of Piety

1. The Gift of Piety implants in the soul a loyal, tender, filial affection towards God as our Father. "You have received," says St. Paul (Rom. viii. 15), " the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." This loyalty makes us forget self, it loves to serve God, not as a master, or even as a benefactor, but because it is a joy to us to obey our Father in Heaven.

2. This spirit of loyalty which we thus receive from the Holy Spirit is one of the most powerful, exalted, all-embracing of motives. It puts us on our mettle, and engenders a chivalrous spirit of generous obedience. It makes us serve God with all our heart and soul and strength. If I am a son of God, loyal to my Father in Heaven, how this thought should influence my every act and word and thought.

3. From the first moment that our Lord called the Apostles to follow Him, they had continually entertained a loyal and intense devotion to Him. They had also had the virtue of piety, by reason of which they loved God as their sovereign Lord. But neither of these was the Gift of Piety. The first was a personal affection to our Lord in His Sacred Humanity ; the second was a love for God founded upon the Law, not upon the Gospel. The disciples of our Lord had never fully realized the new obligation of filial affection that was the result of our Lord's Incarnation till after His Ascension. God had become their Father in a new sense and the prayer they were taught by their Master insisted on this first of all. Do I at all realize it ?

9.—Friday after the Octave of the Ascension

VI.—The Gift of Fortitude

The Gift of Fortitude in some degree is absolutely necessary to one who wants to save his soul. All Christians are called upon sometimes to endure for religion sufferings for which mere human courage will not suffice. Those who desire a high place in Heaven are called to a hard struggle and one quite impossible to us in our own strength. Any one may be called on to die for his faith ; most are exposed on some occasion in their lives to ridicule, loss of friends, or contempt.

The Gift of Fortitude makes easy what would otherwise be difficult or impossible. It helps men to bear with fortitude sufferings otherwise unendurable. It makes feeble women endure torture with joy. It makes those naturally weak strong against all the assaults of Satan ; it renders self-denial and self-sacrifice attractive. It sweetens suffering, and makes us content under pain and trouble. O heavenly gift! Grant it to me, O Christ my Lord!

3. The disciples of our Lord exhibited during His life a curious mixture of courage and cowardice. St. Peter had great natural courage, so had St. John, who alone followed our Lord throughout His Sacred Passion. St. Joseph of Arimathea and St. Nicodemus in their burial of Him were bold and generous. But on the other hand, there had been at the time of His Passion sad weakness. All had deserted Him in the Garden when He was arrested. St. Peter had denied Him ; the rest had hidden themselves in fear. Human courage can do little in the face of fierce temptation or sudden alarm. Perhaps I know this by my own experience.

10.—Saturday before Pentecost

VII.—The Gift of the Fear of the Lord

1. The Gift of Fear includes not only that fear which is the beginning of wisdom, but a fear which is the completion and perfection of wisdom. It gives to him who receives it a continual dread of any kind of offence against God, even of sins committed thoughtlessly and without full deliberation. It is not a slavish, cowardly, frightened fear, but a loving, reverential, affectionate fear, founded on intense love. It is joined to perfect confidence in God, and flows from a joyful acknowledgment of His complete dominion.

2. The Gift of Fear produces an intense quickness of perception in the soul, so that we see our smallest faults, and lament over them. It makes us dread any approach to sin, anything that could leave the faintest stain upon the soul. It also produces a great fear of any unfaithfulness to grace in matters where there is no question of sin. Why have I so little of this gift ? It is because my love is so faint and feeble. Why am I so blind to my faults? It is because I am so careless in guarding against them.

3. The fear of the Lord, says the Wise Man, is the beginning of wisdom, and from the very first those whom our Lord chose to be His Apostles and disciples had this fear already existing in their hearts. They had a reverential dread of the judgments of God. They had a fear of the wrath to come. But this preliminary fear was very different from the fully developed gift they needed in order to be Apostles of Christ to the world. We too, if we are to be apostles of Christ, to others, must have this Gift of loving Fear.

11.—Whit Sunday

The Descent of the Holy Ghost

1. At length the retreat of the Apostles was over, and they all assembled together to receive the gift that our Lord had promised to send them after His departure from them. He had promised to ask the Eternal Father to send the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, in His Name to remain with them for ever. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity was to come in His seven-fold power, to dwell in the Church of God, and in the hearts of all its faithful members. What a wondrous gift ! What a proof of the love of Jesus ! He gave the best gift that Heaven itself had to bestow. He gave them the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, coequal with the Father and the Son.

2. The Holy Spirit came like a mighty wind, but yet perceived by each and all. Unsearchable like the wind in that no one is able to trace whence He comes and whither He goes, sweeping away all the mists of earth, purifying, refreshing, invigorating. Has He produced these efforts in my soul ? Have I asked Him to make me more pure and courageous and strong ? Have I cooperated with His grace, or have I hindered His holy influences ?

3. The Holy Spirit in coming filled the whole house where they had met together. So His presence extends to the whole Church. He speaks first through the Vicar of Christ, then through bishops and priests, and also directly to the individual soul. It is this universal gift that makes the Church of Christ no mere collection of individuals, but the living body of Christ, her Divine Spouse. Thank God for the happiness of being a member of it.

12.—Whit Monday The Parted Tongues

At the same time that the sound of the mighty wind filled the whole house, there appeared something more wondrous still. Parted tongues of fire appeared, and descended on the head of each of the disciples who were present. Why did the Holy Spirit's presence manifest itself under the form of tongues ?

1. Because they signified that to each would be given the office of speaking of the things of God, of communicating to others the truth that they had themselves learned. This was the sacred duty to which their whole lives were to be given. So now, on all priests, the same obligation rests, and, in their own degree, on all parents, teachers, all in authority, nay, on every one of the faithful. I too, in Baptism, and still more in Confirmation, have this obligation of communicating to those around me the sacred truths of the Gospel.

The tongues indicated that the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts, either by His holy inspirations or by the voice of those who have authority to teach us. If I wish to speak and act prudently, I must take Him for my guide. Do I listen attentively to His voice, and obey most faithfully its holy utterances ?

The tongues were also to remind us that it is our words which will obtain for us justification or condemnation at the Day of Judgment. Our Lord warns us that " by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned." They are the test of the state of our soul. How often I forget this when I let loose my tongue in foolish and uncharitable words.

13.—Whit Tuesday The Tongues of Fire

The tongues which came down from Heaven and rested upon the disciples were tongues of fire. The fire had its own meaning.

1. It was a fulfilment of our Lord's words, " I am come to send fire upon earth," a fire of charity such as had never been kindled before. He brought to man and taught to man a charity without bounds, ready to sacrifice itself even to the death ; a charity which loved the sinner and the fallen because they were sinners and fallen ; a charity which esteemed it a joy to suffer for others for Christ's sake. Is my charity of this kind ? Is it a self-denying charity ? Is it a charity which extends even to those whom I dislike ?

2. This new fire was a purifying fire, driving out all sin, cleansing the soul of its dross. The fire of Divine Love has a power to consume the gnawing rust of selfishness, and indolence, and jealousy of the success of others. When its work is done, it leaves nothing of spiteful words and hard thoughts and unkind actions ; nothing but the love of God remains behind. Purify me, O God, by the fire of Thy love.

3. This fire lighted up the room where the disciples were assembled. It was to communicate its attractive brilliancy to those on whom it descended, both collectively and individually. It is this fire of Pentecost that still illuminates the Church, and makes it draw men of good-will into it. How thankful should I be in that I dwell where the fire of Pentecost ever brightly burns ! Around the priest there is a halo belonging to his sacred office ; around each individual Catholic there is a light of faith which burns not outside the fold.

14.—Wednesday after Pentecost

The Effects of Pentecost : the Gift of Languages

1. As our Lord, when He became incarnate, brought down Heaven to earth in His own Sacred Person, so, after He returned to Heaven, the Holy Ghost came to plant on earth a tree, the fruits of which were not only designed for the healing of the nations, but were to be a sort of foretaste of the joy of the Saints in Paradise. Jesus Christ had fought the battle and won the victory, and now He sent the Holy Spirit to make the kingdoms of this world the Kingdom of God.

2. These fruits are the graces of the Holy Spirit, some of them gifts given by God according to His good pleasure, apart from individual merits ; others requiring man's co-operation, and imparting a new beauty to the individual soul. The Catholic Church is this tree, sprung from the Blood of Jesus, planted by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost,

to take firm root and never to be rooted up, in spite of all the hatred of the wicked and the malice of Satan. How many graces I have received through the Catholic Church!

3. The first of the graces of Pentecost was the power bestowed on the disciples of speaking so that all men, of every nation and tribe, understood them. They thus anticipated the universal language of Heaven. Each one heard his own tongue. To each, therefore, as it seemed, the words of the Apostles were specially directed. " We all hear them speak in our own tongues." The gift of speaking words suitable to all alike is a great grace. God gives to His faithful servants the power of speaking to the hearts of all, so that all can say, " This is meant for me."

15.—Thursday after Pentecost

The Effects of Pentecost : the Power of Healing

1. Our Lord had promised that the works that He had done on earth, those who believed in Him should do also. (St. John xiv. 12.) Among these works was the power to raise the dead and to heal the sick. Those on whom the Spirit of God descended performed miracles which even their adversaries could not deny. These miracles still continue ; they are the exclusive property of the Catholic Church ; they are one of the proofs of the continual presence of the Holy Spirit. Thank God for this, and make an act of faith in the wonder-working power of the Church.

2. The first miracle performed by the Apostles was the healing of the lame man at the gate of the Temple. He who had been a helpless cripple, came walking, and leaping, and praising God. The fact of the miracle was undeniable. " It is manifest," said the Council of the Jews, " and we cannot deny it." They were more honest than modern sceptics, who explain away miracles for which the evidence is just as strong. Pray that you may have none of the sceptical spirit that is so hateful to God.

3. This miracle was worked in the Name of Jesus by the operation of the Holy Spirit, in fulfilment of our Lord's promise, " He shall glorify Me." All true miracles are wrought by the authority and in the Name of Jesus, and through the power of the Holy Spirit. We shall do wonderful things for God if all we do is done in Jesus' Name, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We fail because we act in our own name, and under our own guidance.

16.—Friday after Pentecost

The Effects of Pentecost : the Commission to Teach

1. The result on the Apostles themselves of the descent of the Holy Spirit was that they at once began to proclaim to others the doctrines of Jesus Christ. They could not keep silence. The Holy Ghost dwelling within them spoke through their mouth. Hence they had Authority in speaking. On all who listened to them, there came a strange awe. It was not poor, ignorant men whose words were listened to, but a Divine power speaking through them, carrying with it the grace of the Holy Spirit. This is why Catholic priests have an influence no ordinary man possesses. They have authority to teach from God. With what reverence, then, should we listen to them, for the sake of their sacred office.

2. Power to convince. It was impossible to resist the force of the Apostles' arguments. They spoke of the things they had seen and heard. Man is born for truth, and God gives him the power of instinctively recognizing truth. Truth has always a strong attraction for men of good-will. If I am such, I shall accept with a joyful spirit of loyalty every truth that the Church teaches.

3. Force to persuade. It would not have been enough if the Apostles had power to convince the intellect. The heart must be reached, the will moved to action. This was the effect of St. Peter's first sermon. They that heard it had compunction in their heart, and said to the Apostles, What shall we do ? Am I moved by sermons, good books, &c., to do more for Christ ? And do I carry out what God suggests to me ?

17.—Saturday after Pentecost

The Effects of Pentecost : the Change in the Apostles themselves

Hitherto we have been dealing with the results of Pentecost on the Apostles, in their official character as messengers of Christ, commissioned to preach the Gospel in all the world. We must now see the change worked in their own souls.

1. They who before had been narrow, selfish, and ready to condemn others, now became full of an overflowing charity

to all the world. Into their hearts the Spirit of Love had descended. Their motto henceforth was : Caritas Christi urget nos, the charity of Christ is the one motive of all we think, and do, and say. What shall separate us from the love of Christ ?

2. They who before were timid, irresolute, almost cowardly, now become as bold and as brave as lions. They challenged the

Jewish authorities with a freedom of speech that the Chief Priests were unable to explain, until they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. They faced the wrath of the Sanhedrin undismayed. " If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye." Have I the same boldness in advocating the cause of God and His Church and the same superiority to human respect ?

3. They who before had shrunk from suffering now courted suffering, and faced death with joy, by reason of the Spirit of Love, which engendered in them an invincible fortitude, and made them regard it as a privilege to suffer for Christ's sake. How little have I of this spirit ! How unwilling am I to suffer ! How prone to avoid all that is opposed to my natural inclinations!

18.—Trinity Sunday

The Mystery of the Blessed Trinity

1. On the octave of Pentecost we celebrate the most mysterious and the most unsearchable of all the mysteries of faith. How God can be Triune, three Persons in one God, altogether exceeds human comprehension. Even under the light of faith, we have to bow our heads, and confess the inability of the reason to grasp the Divine mystery. Make an act of faith in this mystery, and pray for a humble, childlike, submissive faith.

2. Yet this mystery is not contrary to human reason. There is nothing in it that reason revolts against, no contradiction, nothing that we can call impossible. On the contrary, the denial of it, not the assertion of it, ultimately leads to a contradiction. Thank God that you profess a faith which pre-supposes the full exercise of human reason, and is perfectly consistent with reason, instead of being a member of one of those various sects and false religions which ultimately lead those who profess them into an absurdity.

3. Although the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is beyond the grasp of created intellect, yet those to whom God has vouchsafed in large measure the gift of understanding see something of its truth, and glory, and harmony, and necessity in the supernatural order. To the Saints it has a simplicity which is the effect of the Divine light that illumines their souls. They penetrate farther than ordinary men into this deepest of all mysteries, and this because of their exalted sanctity. If the truths of Revelation are difficult to us, may it not be, in part at least, due to our own faults?

19.—Monday after Trinity Sunday

God the Father

1. The First Person of the Blessed Trinity is the primeval fount whence all else proceeds. "Of Him are all things," says St. Paul. (Rom. xi. 36.) From Him proceed the Divine Word and the Holy Ghost. God the Father is first of the Three Persons, not in the order of existence, since all exist from all eternity, nor in order of dignity, since all are equal, but in order of origin. I, too, am from Him. The Eternal Father has deigned to fashion me. I owe my existence to Him. I depend upon Him in my every movement. In His presence, how can I venture to be independent ?

2. To the First Person of the Holy Trinity is especially appropriated the power of God. It was by an exercise of His power that He created the world. His Almighty power alone sustains it in being. All the angels are completely subject to His power, and even those who hate Him are utterly helpless in any attempt to resist Him. It is no want of power that causes God to permit the devils to fight against Him ; it is in the interest and for the benefit of His saints and servants.

3. The thought of this power of God is very comforting when all seems to go wrong, and the Church is persecuted, and all kinds of accusations are brought against her, and her Supreme Head is robbed of his children by the enemy. In times of weakness we should ever remember the omnipotence of God. The day will come when all His enemies will be made His footstool. Do I rely as I ought, on the power of God, and leave myself in His hands, to do with me as He sees fit ?

20.—Tuesday after Trinity Sunday

God the Son

1. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity proceeds from the Father by an eternal generation. As the coequal and coeternal Son, He is, as it were, the model or pattern whose Divine and infinite perfections are reflected in the works of God. By Him, as Creator of the world, the whole of this physical universe was made. " By Him are all things," says St. Paul. By Him, in the unity of the Father, is the Holy Ghost Himself. Adore this mystery, which surpasses our limited understanding, and pray for a firm faith.

2. To the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is appropriated the wisdom of God. He is continually spoken of in Holy Scripture under the name of Wisdom, or the Word of God. It was thus the Wisdom of God that caused Him to become Man. For us He was made foolishness. For us He not only emptied Himself of His glory, but in the eyes of men He lacked that wisdom which is His special prerogative.

3. It was by the Divine Word that all things were created. " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made." Hence, all created things are framed by the Wisdom of God, and are made after His likeness. We ought to respect all things in proportion as they reflect the Divine perfections, even the flowers and the beasts of the field, and above all, man, who bears the image of the Son of God.

21.—The Eve of Corpus Christi

God the Holy Ghost

1. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is the end to which all things tend. He is the Spirit of holiness, and holiness is but another name for likeness to God. And as the end of man is to be conformed to the image of God, in the Holy Ghost all things find their end and their perfection. " In Him are all things," says St. Paul. Am I advancing steadily in this likeness to God which is the gift of the Holy Spirit ?

2. To the Holy Spirit is appropriated the Love of God. He is nothing else than the mutual Love of the Father and the Son. From them the Holy Spirit proceeds, not only in virtue of the love of the Eternal Father for the Word, and of the Word for the Eternal Father, but as identical with that love. Thus it is that God is Love, and he who dwells in supernatural charity for others, truly dwells in God the Holy Spirit.

3. The Holy Spirit is the Author of all the gifts of God to His Church. When our Lord ascended, the Holy Spirit came to take His place to lead men into all truth, to dwell in their hearts, to fill them with the fire of His love. All the supernatural gifts in the Church, all the miracles, all the graces, come to us from the Holy Spirit of God. In the Church He is ever present, and with it He will always remain. He is present in each of the faithful united to God by supernatural charity. Come then, O Holy Spirit, and pour into my heart Thy gifts of love!

22.—The Feast of Corpus Christi

The Triumph of Humility

1. One of the most magnificent of all public ceremonies in Catholic countries is the procession on the Feast of Corpus Christi. The faithful strain every nerve to show the Blessed Sacrament the greatest possible honour by every kind of external symbol of veneration and love. It is indeed a triumphal procession ; music and singing, flowers and lights ; triumphal arches and richly-decorated altars are prepared for the King of kings. Rejoice in all these honours shown to your Lord and God.

2. Why is this day chosen out for this peculiar honour ? Why is the altar more gaily dressed and more brilliantly lighted than at any other season ? It is because God thus rewards the infinite condescension of His Eternal Son. Because Jesus humbled Himself to death, His Sacred Humanity is now exalted in Heaven. Because He humbled Himself still more by taking the form of bread, He is greeted on Corpus Christi day with the jubilant gratitude of those amongst whom He deigns to dwell in this apparent annihilation of all His Majesty. How can I ever thank Him enough for this astonishing mercy ?

3. Thus it is that God shows His appreciation of humility and self-abasement. The lower we stoop for God's sake, the higher He will raise us. Yet how little I have of this spirit. I dislike to be humbled, and want to show off my own

excellence and to pretend to a dignity which I do not possess. I dislike it if any virtue I think I possess is overlooked, and if I am treated as of no account. O Lord Jesus, make me more like to Thee !

23.—Friday within the Octave of Corpus Christi

The Motive of Jesus in the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament

What was the motive which induced our Lord to hide Himself under the form of a little piece of bread ? In His life on earth He had drunk to the dregs of the cup of humiliation, and when His sufferings were over, the time of His exaltation had come. He was to sit for ever at the right hand of His Father. He had fought the battle and won the victory, and trampled upon Satan's head. It seemed unbecoming to His Divine Majesty that He should descend so low. If it was unbecoming to His Majesty, says St. Bernard, it was not unbecoming to His love. Love is strong as death, and our Lord's love for us was far stronger than death. With Divine ingenuity He had devised a way of satisfying His love that enabled Him to render His Sacrifice a continual one, which should last to the end of the world, and by which He should die mystically for us each day upon the altar. He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever. It is not something past and gone, a mere recollection of His Love in the past. It is an ever-present memorial of His eternal love. Would that I could realize more this unceasing, undying love of Christ for me !

3. Each consecrated Host in itself represents the death of Christ. He is present there, motionless, helpless, silent, giving no more sign of life than when His Sacred Body was enclosed in the tomb. He has made Himself thus helpless for love of me. He has once more emptied Himself of all His glory to teach me that even the King of Heaven gives His best gift to men by an infinite humiliation of Himself.

24.—Saturday within the Octave of Corpus Christi

Further Proofs of Jesus' Love for us

1. Our Lord is not satisfied with mystically dying for us day by day upon the altar. He in His unspeakable love must go still further. He must remain in every church all the day and all the night, unable, so to speak, to tear Himself away from those He loves. In spite of all man's base ingratitude and cruel neglect, He still cries out, with that insatiable ardour of His love, " My delight is to be with the sons of men." Was there ever love like His ?

2. But His love has not yet exhausted itself. With an extravagant generosity passing our powers of comprehension, He has determined to give Himself to be His children's food, and in so doing, to give them at the same time eternal life. As He Himself says, " He that eateth Me shall live by Me." He desires to unite Himself to us in bonds of the closest union. He desires to be wholly ours, that we may thus become wholly His. Who save a God would ever have devised such a means as this of satisfying His love ?

3. What, too, was involved in the adoption of this means ? How many frightful insults and outrages inflicted on Him! How many sacrilegious Communions ! Sometimes the trampling under foot of the Sacred Host, sometimes still more terrible profanation ! Jesus knew to what He was rendering Himself liable when He chose this means of showing His love, and deliberately chose it. O my Jesus, how can I ever love Thee as I ought in return for such love as this !

25.—Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi

The Return of Love for Love

1. We all of us shrink from the charge of ingratitude. Whatever else we may be, we flatter ourselves that we are not ungrateful, that we love those who love us, and seek to repay our benefactors with affection and gratitude, if not with some positive and substantial return for all they have done for us. I should not like to be deemed ungrateful. I should resist the imputation of ingratitude. Yet can I say that I am grateful to Christ Jesus for all His wonderful love to me ?

2. True gratitude aims at returning like for like. It is not content to be outdone in generosity. It seeks, if possible, to repay with greater favours the favours shown to it. If I desire to be generous, what sort of return ought I to make to Christ my Lord for giving Himself to me in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar ? Can I ever do enough for Him in return for what He has done for me? What sacrifice that I can make is more than an infinitesimal part of what I ought to do for Him?

3. Gratitude requires of us that if we cannot surpass our benefactor in liberality, we should at least be on a level with

him Is it possible ever to come up to the generosity of Jesus Christ in humbling Himself for my sake to the form of a little piece of bread? If for millions of years I were to sacrifice to Him health, comfort, reputation, I should still not have done a million- millionth part of all He has done for me. What can I do ? I can simply tell Him that I will give Him myself and all I have, and that I would fain give more.

26.—Monday within the Octave of Corpus Christi

Grace increased by the Blessed Sacrament

1. Our Lord's desire to be with us and to unite us to Himself cannot be for His own sake. It is simply in order to promote our happiness that He has instituted the Blessed Sacrament. He loves to see His children happy, and His one object in the Sacrament of His love is that He may have the happiness of seeing us happy. It was for this that He instituted the Blessed Eucharist ; it is for this that He continues to abide in the Tabernacle and to give Himself to us. What greater proof can He give us than this of His devoted love and unselfish generosity ?

2. But how does the Blessed Sacrament promote our happiness ? It is the means appointed by Almighty God to increase in us continually that sanctifying grace on which our happiness in Heaven depends: Each time we receive Holy Communion in good dispositions, this wondrous channel of grace pours fresh grace into our hearts, makes us more beautiful in God's sight, more fit for the company of the Angels and Saints in Heaven. How greatly, then, ought I to value Holy Communion!

3. The Blessed Sacrament does more than this. It also of Itself obtains for us actual graces. Those who often receive Holy Communion have more inspirations from Almighty God, and more help to avail themselves of them. Each such inspiration if accepted, will add to our happiness both here and in Heaven to all eternity. Especially after receiving It, God gives actual graces that He does not give at other times, and inspirations enabling us to know and do His will. While Jesus is our Guest, present within us, He cannot refuse to give us all we ask.

27.—Tuesday within the Octave of Corpus Christi

Sin blotted out by the Blessed Sacrament

What is it that hinders our happiness and our union with God ? Naught else but sin. If sin could be taken away, all misery would disappear with it. If our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament desires to make us happy, it follows that our past sins are thereby blotted out and the power of sin weakened or destroyed. How does it do this ?

1. It excites in us acts of contrition and love, and each such act helps to cleanse our souls from sin. A perfect act of love is incompatible with any deliberate attachment even to any venial sin, and every act of love diminishes the attachment and washes away the guilt. Hence remember to make many acts of contrition and love in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and whenever you receive Holy Communion.

2. Moreover, whenever we receive Holy Communion in good dispositions, the mere fact of worthy reception has the same effect. Even if anything hindered us from acts of love and contrition, the fact of the presence of our Lord cancels sin, and helps to remove the obstacle that it places in the way of our love for God. What a reason this is for frequent Communion.

3. In both these ways, by the mere fact of reception and the acts of contrition and love which it engenders in us, Holy Communion also takes away the temporal punishment of sin, and shortens the time of our Purgatory. Each good Communion of itself blots out some of the penalty still due to God's justice. How wonderful are the effects of Holy Communion! How grateful we should be for it !

28.--Wednesday within the Octave of Corpus Christi

The Effects of Holy Communion

The Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is not only a remedy for sin in the past, but also a preventive of sin in the future.

1. It gives strength against temptation. It is essentially the food of the strong ; the food that imparts strength even to the weakest. We need not be discouraged by our own weakness while we have such a resource as this. It will enable us to overcome every possible temptation. God puts a weapon into our hands with which we must needs conquer. Do I make use of it as I ought ?

2. It also allays concupiscence. It is the great remedy against luxury and impurity. It takes away the overwhelming force with which the allurements of the flesh attack us, and gives us power to resist them, however violent they may be. Frequent Communion is sometimes the only means of saving a man from falling into grievous sin. Thank God for giving us so effective a means of keeping faithful to Him.

3. It also curbs and checks the assaults of the devil. Those who commit sin at other times are often entirely free from his attacks on the day when they receive Holy Communion. Sometimes indeed the day of Communion brings with it stronger temptations, but when this is so, grace enough, and more than enough, is given to ensure a complete victory. Trust then in Holy Communion with implicit confidence, and you will never have any grievous falls, if you are vigilant and do your part.

29.—Octave of Corpus Christi

The Chief Ends of Holy Communion

1. The Blessed Eucharist is above all the Sacrament of love. It is not only the abiding proof of our Lord's incredible love for us, but the chief means by which we are enabled to do something to return love for love. In it we can show our love to God by offering to Him a sacrifice which is far more pleasing to Him than all the sacrifices which the whole of mankind can offer—the sacrifice of His Divine Son. This we can do each time we hear Mass. This we can do still more when we receive Holy Communion and offer ourselves to Christ who is our Guest, as a mark of our love to God.

2. The Blessed Eucharist is also primarily and above all a fount of love within us. As oil nourishes fire, so does Holy Communion nourish our love to God. As fire without fuel soon becomes faint and dim, so our love cannot remain bright and strong unless its flame is fed with the fuel of the Body and Blood of Christ our Lord. As He Himself says : " Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you have no life in you."

3. The Blessed Eucharist is also a fount of love to man. Whence do the saints derive their supernatural charity, if not from Holy Communion ? What else made them patient, meek, forbearing, loving, kind, self-sacrificing ? Was it not Jesus who comes to dwell with them, and who gave them the commandment that they should do for others what He had done for them. Do I derive from Holy Communion this all-embracing charity ?
