

¡Adorada sea la Santa Faz de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo!

**IGLESIA CRISTIANA PALMARIANA
DE LOS CARMELITAS DE LA SANTA FAZ**

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One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian Church

TWENTIETH APOSTOLIC LETTER

Palmarian Youth

We, Peter III, Sovereign Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Saint Peter, Servant of the servants of God, Patriarch of Palmar de Troya, de Glória Ecclésiæ, Herald of the Lord God of Hosts, Good Shepherd of souls, Aflame with the Zeal of Elias and Defender of the Rights of God and Church.

Fearsome tribulations are approaching for the entire world, and soon there will be very great sufferings for the whole Church. You, the faithful, are you prepared for this? The best preparation consists in great love for God and His Most Holy Mother, but it seems that there are few who love God intensely. It is urgent that this situation be remedied, taking into account the example of Saint Thérèse who, thanks to her ardent love for God and for souls, showed such fortitude amid pain. You should often repeat this simple invocation: "Jesus, I love You," including at work or out walking, since such acts of love purify the soul and obtain for us the necessary graces to bear up under the great sufferings to come, and strengthen us in the Faith, for we need to have great love for God to be able to accept our cross and suffer deeply. If everyone strives hard to say very often: "Jesus I love You", they will then get to love Him with such intensity as to be prepared to die for Him, and will thus receive special graces to grow in the love of God and preserve Grace in his soul, the only thing of real importance in this life. When a person makes continuous acts of love, he then grows in the love of God, and becomes so united to Jesus in his heart as to be ready to bear any suffering rather than offend God. Only thus will he be able to overcome the great trials to come in the not distant future. It is the love of Jesus that has most value, as Saint Thérèse explains: "The smallest work, the most hidden, done for love, has many times more value than great works. It is not the value or even the apparent holiness of actions that count, rather only the love put into them, and no one can say he is incapable of giving such trifles to God, for they are within reach of everyone." The observation of the Apostle Saint Thaddeus is for these times: "Keep yourselves staunchly united, beloved children, in prayer and watchfulness. These are very difficult times, and Satan does not cease in his infernal ambition to win souls to his cause."



We have arrived happily at the end of this Glorious Holy Year of the Holy Face, and those faithful who have recited the Holy Way of the Cross to the Holy Face of Jesus, or the Holy Gregorian Way of the Cross, every day during the entire Holy Year without fail, have by now gained, on the 31st of December, the General Indult for all excommunications and sins of the past, for the greater peace of souls, if they have always rightly confessed and presented their excommunications, without knowingly hiding anything.

Thanks to this Holy Year of the Holy Face General Indult, we trust that you all have your souls as clean as after Baptism, and further strengthened to face up to the coming tribulations. Persevere assiduously in praying the Holy Way of the Cross every day without fail and, above all, maintain that purity of soul, more necessary now than ever. It is Our greatest desire that Palmarian faithful continue the pious custom of praying the Holy Way of the Cross to the Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ every day. This will bring down many graces and blessings on the Church

and on families. How many benefits do we owe to the prayer of the Holy Way of the Cross during the Holy Year of the Holy Face! See, for example, the increase in religious vocations, or God's protection over Palmarian families amid the restrictions. During the New Year now beginning, the special graces you receive by accompanying Christ laden with the Cross along the Way of Sorrows will be even more necessary, so that We insist: ever keep on with the daily recital of the Holy Way of the Cross.

At the beginning of His public life, Our Lord Jesus Christ withdrew to the desert for forty days, to teach us the great need for recollection, accompanied by prayer and penance, to overcome Satan and perfect us in the Christian virtues. For a second time, in the year 34, Jesus withdrew to the Mount of the Quarantine with His Apostles, and again stayed there for forty days dedicated in a special way to prayer and rigorous fasting, owing to His approaching Passion and Death, and also to teach His Apostles and disciples how to prepare for future events.

The Holy Year of the Holy Face was a preparation like Christ's Quarantine, and we have to continue to prepare. We should not lose heart at the world situation; the moment is coming for us to be more vigilant than ever, and show the valour characteristic of Christ's soldiers. In the Gospel our Saviour announced these terrible apocalyptic events which are now upon us: "When you see wars and hear rumours of further wars and rebellions, do not be troubled. For it is fitting that all this happen first. But it will not yet be the end; because first peoples shall rise up against peoples, and kingdoms against kingdoms; and there shall be loathsome diseases and ravaging epidemics, and earthquakes in different places, and famine, and terrible things and great signs from Heaven. And all this shall be but the beginning of grief. But keep watch over yourselves... Wickedness shall spread to the point that charity will disappear in many, owing to the great apostasies. But whoever perseveres to the end shall indeed be saved." Then Christ added words of encouragement: "When you see all these things, know that the Kingdom of God on earth... is at hand. When all these things, then, begin to happen, look up, and hold your heads high, because the day when the earth shall be purified and renewed is at hand."

The Lord spoke those words precisely for us, so that we might have greater faith, confidence and love for God. Christ spoke in that same way to His disciples before His sacred Passion. "You will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sad, but your sadness will turn to joy... Well, you too are now surely sad, but I am to see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one shall take your joy away... I say these things while in the world so that, at this moment, they participate to the full in My joy at the imminence of Redemption."

We are already living the passion of the Church; the decisive moments are coming, the moments of dolour preceding the glorious triumph of Holy Church. These times of chaos and gloom for the worldly at the world situation should be times of hope, prayer and confidence for Palmarians. The great sufferings we are all undergoing now show that Christ is reviewing His army, preparing us for the decisive battle. Prayer and penance are the best remedy and preparation for this battle which is clearly approaching. Fill your hearts with generous sentiments of love for God, and have trust in His loving providence, so as to be ready to bear the cross



He sends you, in reparation to the Eternal Father to obtain the eternal salvation of souls, and take heart with the words of Saint Thérèse: "Sanctity does not consist in saying nice things or even in thinking them or in feeling them. It consists in suffering and in suffering every kind of suffering. 'Sanctity has to be conquered at the point of the sword! We must suffer. We must agonize.' A day will come on which shadows disappear and then there will be nothing other than joy, inebriation. Let us profit from our only moment of suffering! Let us look at nothing other than the present moment. One moment is a treasure. A single act of love will make us know Jesus better, will bring us closer to Him for all eternity."

Those who rule the world are imposing rigid restrictions and obligations with a heavy hand. And we too should act with greater vigour. How? By spiritualizing ourselves, forgetting worldly things, looking heavenwards and, above all, growing in love for Jesus, with continuous acts of love, accompanied by the sincere purpose of serving Christ and Mary.

The General Indult is for this, to begin a new life. If in your past life you have had many falls, now is the moment to begin again, with the soul clean as after Baptism, this time doing everything well, trusting in the help of Mary Most Holy and practising that which is so necessary amid the present crisis: True Devotion to Mary.

In the world, moral corruption continues to spread everywhere; since, sadly, every vice is being taught to youth. Young Palmarians are the future of the Church, and it is vital at all costs to prevent them from being drawn along by this tide of perversion. To this end We address them the following counsels and exhortations.

Beloved children: Let your ideal be a youth with character: a youth able to be strong willed, able to master his senses, able to overcome cowardice and indifference, who holds in just esteem his immortal soul and can battle to keep it pure; a youth who trains his understanding, his soul, and even after much studying can smile with spirit drenched in sunshine; a youth with a brawny physique whose eyes shine with joy, whose countenance glows with happiness when at games, but who is serious and thoroughgoing, persevering and diligent when at study; a youth who, above all the goods of this earth, appreciates Divine Grace as the greatest treasure of all, and the only one we may keep for eternal life. Let your ideal be the youth who never loses sight of the one, true, holy objective and, cost what it may, decides that it is necessary to persevere in the Faith and reach sanctity. And how do you want to be?

Willpower is what distinguishes a man of character. Only the vigorous, decided man with firm will is capable of undertaking great enterprises, be they physical, intellectual or spiritual. Saint Teresa of Jesus explains that this firmness of character is the best way of overcoming the devil and attaining sanctity, saying: "It means much to begin the way of prayer with great determination, for in this way the devil will not be so free to tempt; he has great fear of determined souls, with the experience he has of the great harm they do him, and when he sets about harming them, it turns to their own and to others' profit, and loss to him. He doesn't dare so much to assault those prepared, as he is a true coward, yet if he sees negligence will do great harm; but if he knows someone to be changeable, unresolved to do good and to persevere, then he will not leave him for a moment, will give him never-ending fears and difficulties. I know this very well by experience, and say that no one knows the importance of this. Another thing very much to the point is that whoever is thoroughly determined battles with greater force; and knows that come what may there is no turning back. Like someone in battle, knowing that if overcome his life will not be spared, and that if he does not die in battle, will die later, combats with greater determination, and would sell his life dearly, as they say, and does not fear blows so much, as he bears in mind the most important, the victory, and that his life depends on overcoming. It is also necessary to begin with the certainty that if we do not let ourselves be vanquished, we shall bring the venture to a happy end; this without any doubt, that however little we gain, we will end up very rich."

This is the most important matter in this Apostolic Letter: We are deeply worried, for a great number of Palmarian youths, in the face of the terrible events to come, are in grave danger of giving in, owing to the weak and fluctuating will they have. The urgent remedy to be applied is to strengthen the will, which is achieved if we make many acts of love of God and many small sacrifices to please God. Let us be faithful in doing our



duties punctually and with great care, and always in God's presence. It is prophesied that some day in the near or distant future, many Palmarians will have to suffer martyrdom to stay in God's Grace. Are you ready for this? The best preparation is to have a will firmly resolved to die rather than sin, not trusting in your own strength as did Saint Peter, but praying and watching so as not to fall in temptation.

Learn from the example of the Saints you know, like the Martyr of Purity Saint Maria Goretti, of whom We spoke in our fourteenth Apostolic Letter. For her, Mary, the Rosary and contemplation of the Crucifix were the fount which nurtured her intense love for God as well as a deep horror of sin. Constant Communion led her to greater love for purity and inspired her to take the resolution to die rather than commit any sin against chastity. Likewise Saint Dominic Savio, whose byword was 'die rather than sin'; and Saint Thérèse, who blazed with the desire to die for Christ.

One of the best examples of the resolute soul is Saint Joan of Arc, a humble, pure and pious farm girl unable to read or write, for she had never been at school, but showed herself to be better educated than anyone, for her character was firm and resolute in fulfilling God's Will in the face of the most tremendous obstacles, ever humbly confident of divine protection. God moved her to free France from English domination, and despite the compromising heavenly messages, she obeyed without doubting. Showing an unshakeable faith, absolute abandonment to the divine will, great prudence and extraordinary capacity, she decided to carry out the enterprise. She was later tried in a rigged court, and burnt alive at nineteen years of age, confessing that her heavenly visions and voices were true. Remember the prayer written by Saint Thérèse, inspired in Saint Joan of Arc: "Lord, God of Hosts, who said to us in the Gospel: 'I have not come to bring peace, but warfare', arm me for battle. I burn with the desire to battle for Thy glory, but I ask Thee to strengthen my courage... My sword is none other than Love; and with it I will drive the foreigner out of the kingdom and have Thee proclaimed King

of the souls who refuse to submit to Thy divine Power. It is true, Lord, that Thou dost not need an instrument as weak as I am; but as Joan, Thy virginal and valiant spouse, said: 'For God to give victory, we must battle'. Well then, my Jesus, I will battle for Thy Love until the evening of my life. Since Thou didst not will to enjoy rest on earth, I would follow Thy example..."

Life is a battle to reach sanctity, and in these apocalyptic times the struggle is far fiercer still. Saint Ignatius, to draw the heart of the young Saint Francis Xavier to his cause and to undeceive his worldly dreams, told him that it would serve him nothing to gain the whole world if he were then to damn himself eternally. These words, based on the Gospel sentence: "what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and harm himself by losing his soul?" penetrated the young man's soul so deeply that he soon began to work with ardour to gain the whole world for Christ, and is known as the missionary who after Saint Paul won most conversions.

In the Gospel, Christ said that in the Last Times charity would grow cold: "And wickedness shall spread to the point that charity will disappear in many, owing to the great apostasies." However, for the holy founder of our Carmelite Order, the apostasies had the opposite effect, for they made him burn with zeal and charity, so that he exclaimed: "I burn with zeal for the Lord God of Hosts, for the majority of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Samaria have abandoned You and live with their backs to You." The Prophet Elias was burning with zeal precisely because his fellow countrymen had apostatized; likewise we too, if we truly love God, have



greater motives for burning with zeal for the Lord God of Hosts amid the present great apocalyptic apostasy. This same loving zeal produced the fire of "James the Greater's most vehement preaching, since neither Jews nor Gentiles could resist the heavenly wisdom and apostolic fire that burned and consumed the soul of this 'son of thunder'. James the Greater's labour drew many to the Faith of Christ in Jerusalem, until his death."

At springtime the farmer goes out to look at his land, and is absorbed on gazing at the silent furrows, as though asking: "Fields of mine! What will you give me this year?" But the land questions back: "You, rather, tell me: what you will give me?" So too, the youth at the mysterious threshold of the life awaiting him: "Life! What will you give me? What awaits me?" But life questions back, like the field to the farmer: "It depends on what you give me. You will receive according to the work you put in, and will reap the harvest you have sown."

On promulgating the Ten Commandments, the Lord said: "I am the Lord Your God... You will have no God other than Me. You shall not commit idolatry." The danger of adoring false gods violently assaults present-day man. At the start, he just wants to render worship to the idols at the same time as to the true God; but those idols (money, sensuality, fame, an easy lifestyle) gain ever more ground and finally come completely to exclude from the soul the worship of the true God. The reckless Jews in the desert adored the golden calf. All children, amazed, learn this in their lessons on Sacred History; but what was that in comparison with man's idolatry today, adoring this globe of the earth full of clay and rendering it worship as though it were a god?

As from the Universal Flood, men have never laboured so hard to acquire knowledge, done so much scientific research, as at the present. We can grant this. How many books, how many magazines, how many schools, how many laboratories, how many museums, how many libraries! One discovery follows another, one hypothesis annuls the previous one, one theory digs the grave of the one in vogue yesterday... It is a fact: there has been no age following the Flood to have developed such restless activity in the field of thought.

And yet there is something that powerfully calls our attention. We see no blessing resulting for mankind from this feverish labour. Today we can know a hundred times more than our forebears knew a hundred years ago, but are we as well a hundred times happier than they were? It would be in vain to deny that we are far more nervous. We are uneasy. Who doubts it? Are we stronger as well and more hopeful in life? Who dares to answer "yes" to that question?

The new machine culture has accustomed man to hurry, to live in a rush, and yet according to an oriental saying: "Rushing is from the devil". Everything in a rush, and always something new! Hence rushed production by the dozen in every field, without excepting art. Where does a Raphael paint today? Where does a Michelangelo sculpt? Time is needed to conceive a well thought out idea.

Let us examine the concept a typical modern man has of life. What is his desire? "To live well." But what does he understand by this expression "to live well"? For one thing, to have much money. Another, much free time. Thirdly, order many others about. And furthermore, to be able to eat lavishly... This is the life that modern man leads...

We see men concerned, overwhelmed, morally destroyed, driven by money; always by money... Men without rest, without peace, without time to eat, sleep, smile...; men without time even to be men... For them nothing other than money exists... And the result?

Ah! The result is horrifying! Men cannot live at peace one with another... Character is lost, good faith is lost, honour, morals, a clean hand, a pure heart. If we carry on like this, soon no one will believe anyone else. A man's word is no longer sacred, an oath no longer holy, family life has ceased to be a sanctuary. A man scrupulous in fulfilling his duty is called out of date; one who leaves another's money untouched when he has a chance to steal it in secret is branded an idiot; and if anyone leads a morally pure life, he is ridiculed.

Woe to mankind if she allows earthly values to swallow up the higher demands of the soul! In the face of materialistic culture, technology, machinery, man does not dominate material things, it is they who dominate him. As the fly sticks to gum paper, so does the poor soul struggle, immersed in earthly interests, caught up in material things, in the mire. And yet, according to the divine plan, we should be eagles! What do you want to be, an eagle or a fly? A free flying eagle soaring in the heights or a fly stuck to gum paper?

Ask what life is and no one will know the answer, for life is the greatest secret in the kingdom of Nature. A little pebble, lifeless, inert, is there in my garden. I am going to sow it..., they will laugh at me. It will be what it was, a lifeless pebble. I sow a bean; it is just as small, insignificant, inert, as the pebble; and lo! After a few days, it sprouts up, and grows, and flowers, and gives fruit. Who can understand this mystery? And We do not know what life is and, nonetheless, life swarms all around us. On all sides we discover a wonderful purpose and instincts which amaze us. Who directs the destiny, the course of this exuberant life?... And we arrive at the most mysterious enigma of all: the life of man... a being completely different from the rest on this earth, a being endowed with free will, a being able to become enthusiastic, able to love, able to speak, able to raise his gaze heavenwards, and able to say to the invisible Creator: Father!...

Why do I live? Perhaps, beloved youth, have you never in your life had one of those solemn moments in which the great question appears: Just why do I live on earth? Perhaps you are still too young for this question. Yet it could be that this thought has already taken hold of you.

You take a look around you: you see how men run, how they jostle each other to win their daily bread, burdened with earthly miseries; how can they bear fifty, sixty, seventy years in the galley of life, and afterwards... Afterwards? They die. At death, is it all over? Then why did they live?

It is a question of the utmost importance. A man who had spent his entire life doing nothing but run after pleasure said on his deathbed: "Engrave this epitaph on my tombstone: Here lies a fool, who departed from this world without any idea of why he came."



"Fool!" Why sun? To brighten and warm. Why rain? To fertilize the earth. Why woods? To renew the air. Everything has its purpose in this world. Why does man exist? Must he be the only one without a purpose? What is his purpose? Some incredulous philosopher says that there is no way of knowing the purpose of man.

Who knows, then? Ask Holy Church: "What is the purpose of man's creation?" Ah! That is what I want to know! Now then, what is that purpose? "To know, love and serve God in this life and then to see Him and enjoy Him in the other."

Saint Gregory XVII explains: "God created the soul firstly to serve God, to serve and enjoy Him; and afterwards to be glorified; but beforehand to serve God. We have been created for this, to serve God; and as a grace from God freely given, to participate in His glory. God is so loving, so immensely and infinitely charitable, that, being eternally happy, He did not wish to remain thus eternally. He wished to create us in order to have us participate in His happiness: a proof of the love of God Who, not needing us, created us to have us share in His glory. That is the supreme charity of God towards us: to create us to have us share in His eternal happiness. God, seeing Himself eternally happy, overflowing with happiness, an infinite happiness which only He can possess being God: exploded with love, and decreed Creation. Creation was an effect of divine Love, an explosion of divine charity, charity which constructs. It is as though, unable to contain that happiness within Himself, God wished to outpour Himself exteriorly. And nothing existed, only He, God, One in Essence and Three in Persons. There was nothing exteriorly, because there was only He, God, One in Essence and Three in Persons. There was nothing else, nor did He need anyone. However, God exploded... like a real divine bomb, namely the Charity of God surging forth and fashioning Creation. One breath of divine love: the bomb exploded, and all was done." "God is sovereignly good towards His creatures. Creation was a loving explosion of His Divine Nature."

A whole world opens up before your eyes here. Is this the purpose of life? Is this why we are here on earth? Or is it to pile up a lot of money? Or cram ourselves at parties? Or run breathlessly in pursuit of pleasure? No! That would be far easier, and to serve God sometimes becomes difficult. And it is thankless work to keep the desires of the senses under control. Our whole existence turns into a continuous struggle if we want to persevere in God's service! But man's purpose is not earthly life, but eternal life. Therefore, if struggle we must, at least I will win a priceless treasure by this combat.

How many dangers there are for the soul of a youth, with modern life contaminated by frivolous thinking. At each step, in the street, at school, in books, in the company of your friends, everywhere, you will come up against the sad mockery of the Creator's plans, temptation will assault you with impetus, the dreadful danger of immorality, impurity, and you will find young people of that same type.

Soldiers have a byword: "Keep watch!" A magnificent warning! It is also one of the fundamental principles of the spiritual life: Keep watch!, so that no occasion for a good work escapes you. But, keep watch, too, against temptation! Be on your guard so that your soul may not fall into sin. Keep watch!, so that no sin may rob you of Divine Grace in your soul.

Beloved youth: Do not be weak. Do not expect to find happiness by breaking God's laws. Countless is the number of youths who believed the devil's swindling words, and only discovered the dreadful lie they concealed when the momentary pleasure he promised had faded, leaving behind nothing but a soul vanquished and the ruins of a youth sick of life.

What incredible disillusionments many educators have had to suffer in their careers! They knew those boys of twelve or thirteen years, whose eyes were pure and overflowing with joy... and "they grew", but not "in grace" before God. Their legs grew longer by the month, they cut their hair according to the latest style, they dressed up in the fashion of the day, their conversation grew more sparkling, but... their thoughts, their expressions, their behaviour were all more licentious, their souls more sensual and frivolous! One day... the sparkle in their eye tarnished... the rose of the virgin soul drooped in their faces... the interior temple to God collapsed; and the youth, fallen into sin, clasping his hands to his forehead, wept despairingly over his own ruin.

A strange item appeared in the newspapers. At the foot of the great mountains of Switzerland, by a magnificent mountain road, a car was speeding. On a sharp turn in the road there was a large hump... there was no time to brake... and the car passed over the obstacle. It then braked and came to a stop. The travellers alighted. Do you know what the car had run over? A golden eagle. The majestic bird that flies above the clouds was run down by a car that goes along the ground. Why? Because the eagle had found carrion on the road, perched on it and, amid the great banquet, forgot about everything else, did not see the danger threatening on the ground, did not yearn for the serene heights, did not glance at the splendid sun inviting it to soar upwards...



Oh, beloved youth! How many eagle-souls die, run over by the dizzy progress of materialism! How many youths, at sixteen or eighteen years, discover carrion on the ground: immorality, concupiscence, carrion they had not seen before, but which now invites them to go down to earth and no longer feel right in the serene heights!... Son, do not hesitate. Do not abandon the heights of Christ's purity for the carrion which lies by the wayside. And fear not to follow Christ faithfully; your life will not on that account become empty, sad, arid.

But is it not true that a life consistently Christian makes a man sad? Is it not true that it takes the joy out of life, that it reduces work capacity, and turns faces sullen? No. A thousand times, no. Christ too wants deeply religious youths to be at the same time the most cheerful. He doesn't want them to be crestfallen, nor scatterbrained, nor with low sights, nor retiring into a corner, nor to be over scrupulous. This should be emphasized, for sometimes it is precisely young people, more delicate of soul, who have this defect.

We have to turn to Jesus Christ to find the model of this brimming joy of life: we have to turn back to Him, who said truly: "I am life". The Lord's life is precisely the antithesis of the rigidity of the Egyptian mummy, of hardened forms. He Himself is the one who said: "I am the Bread of Life... I am the Light of the world ... I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." So then, outside of Christ there is only waywardness, lies and death.

Today, all the signs are that mankind has reached a crossroads in which she has necessarily to choose one of two things: either modify Christian principles or change our way of life. There is no middle way. The roman church chose to modify Christian principles, unilaterally, without counting on Christ; so those who follow it can thus satisfy their concupiscences and commit every abomination, with the blessing of their antipope and the curse of Christ.

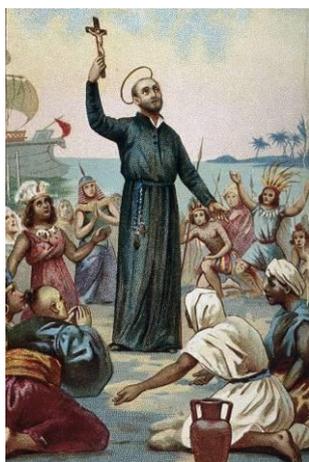
In the solemn entry of Isabella and Ferdinand into a Spanish city conquered back from the Moors, a strange incident took place on chanting the Te Deum: it seemed as though many voices were answering the triumphal chant of thanksgiving from below ground. All were astounded... Then, closer by, a chant of jubilee was heard: "Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord." What was happening? An echo? No. It was the Christians imprisoned in the dungeons underground, who sang and greeted their liberators... It was the triumphal chant of those who were freed from an earthly prison...

With the eyes of our souls let us also see a procession pass, from which is heard the triumphant chant of those who were redeemed. An all-solemn procession! First goes Jesus Christ, bearing the Cross on His shoulder, and following come the pre-eminent, the most select of the human race. The simple fishermen whom He chose to announce His name. There is Peter, the first Pope; behind him an endless line of Popes: almost all those who have occupied the Cathedra of the Fisherman. Thousands and thousands of Bishops; hundreds of thousands of Priests who served Christ faithfully, valiantly, perseveringly. The Fathers of the Church. Millions of Martyrs, wearing on their pallid foreheads a magnificent aureole. Anchorites of the desert and Monks of the cloister. Millions of Sacred Virgins, spouses of Christ and mothers of souls. Behind them, millions and more millions, of all ages, nations and tongues, all chanting and praying in a thousand languages. There are Saints with royal robes, and Saints of the desert. Now come the Heralds of the Lord who addressed their word to the peoples. Then the youths, with limpid gaze; educated by the Church's teachings... And before them all goes He who bears the Cross on His shoulder.



Beside the way by which the procession passes as from two thousand years ago, stand those who now live and hope in the Redeemer. There are the lazy, the curious, the lukewarm, those who were immersed in worldly pleasure; Christ the Redeemer casts His glance over them sadly, as He sees none to give Him consolation. There are the indifferent, the easy-going, for no one urges them to follow along. But there too are those who await with longing, the faraway peoples, half savage, who would joyfully enter the Kingdom of God and pray: "Thy Kingdom come". Come, oh come, Lord Jesus... And there too are the few faithful, who previously numbered millions, those who know about sacrifices, the true children of Jesus Christ... And among them all, amid that great crowd, are you, dear youth. You are there too. But in which group? Among whom? Among the cold? Among the indifferent? Among the resentful? Among the blasphemous? Or among the friends of the Cross?

In the first centuries of Christianity there was a Roman soldier called Mario, who by his invincible courage won a decoration which gave him the right to be able to claim the first post of centurion to fall vacant in the legion. Mario made use of this right on the first occasion and was named centurion. But right then another soldier came up, an enemy of Mario's, and denounced him as a Christian, and therefore unworthy to be raised to the rank of centurion; the post pertains to him, the denouncer. They asked Mario. He does not deny it: "I am a Christian". He is given three hours to consider. Mario goes to the Bishop to ask his opinion. The Bishop takes the soldier into the Chapel, takes the sword from its cincture and, holding it in his hand while in the other he takes the Gospel, tells him: "Choose between the two: between military glory and the Gospel; between life and death." The soldier chose the Gospel. He did not wait till the three hours had gone by and appeared before the tribune. He was martyred at once...



Choose! Will your ideal from now on be that of young Catholics, a Saint Louis Gonzaga, a Saint Dominic Savio, a Saint Ignatius, with sturdy arm, forehead raised to the stars, soul pure as snow, or instead a student of modern life, with wearied countenance, dulled eyes, continually going out on the town and bowed under the weight of pleasure? Choose! And you, beloved young woman, will your ideal from now on be a Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a Saint Maria Goretti, a Saint Joan of Arc, ablaze with divine love, or will it be a dissipated girl, with an insolent, provocative, shameless gaze? Choose. You, what will you choose? Ask Heaven to enlighten you.

You should be educated. Educate yourself interiorly. Model your soul. There is no finer art in the world than the cultivation of your own soul; for no sculptor has such noble marble or such valuable bronze as the precious treasure which is ours to model: our soul.

The success of education depends as much on the teachers as on the pupils. In today's schools you already know that the teachers are committed to teaching materialism and moral corruption. Hence all moral and religious education depends on the zeal of Palmarian parents, and the response of their children. When Saint Thérèse looked after two girls and wanted to see good relations between them, instead of promising toys or sweets to the one who gave in first, spoke to them of the eternal reward the Child Jesus would give to good children in Heaven. "Observing these innocent souls so closely, I understood the great misfortune it is not to train them well from their first awakenings, when they are like soft wax on which one can leave the imprints of virtue, but also the imprint of evil. I understood what Jesus says in the Gospel, that it would be better to be thrown into the sea than to scandalize even one of those little ones. How many souls would reach sanctity if they were well directed! I know very well that God has no need of anyone to carry out His work. But just as He permits a skilful gardener to grow delicate plants and gives him the necessary knowledge, reserving to Himself the mission of fertilizing them, in the same way, Jesus wants to be helped in His divine cultivation of souls. What would happen if a clumsy gardener did not graft the trees well? If he didn't know well the nature of each and insisted on making a peach tree bear roses? He would cause the tree to die; which, however, was good and capable of bearing fruit. In the same way one has to be able to recognize from childhood what God asks of souls and how to back up the action of His grace, without ever quickening it or slowing it down. As little birds learn to sing by listening to their parents, so do children learn the science of the virtues, the sublime canticle of the love of God, from the souls entrusted to bring them up."

Use your time well, use your youth well. With what a sad accent the wise Seneca's words pulsate: "Men usually spend the greater part of their lives doing evil; in great part doing nothing, and their whole lives in not doing what they ought."

A flighty youth, warned on one occasion to amend his life, answered with certain pride: "I still have time. If I don't enjoy myself now while young, when shall I? Youth is precisely for letting the reins go free." "I still have time!" Do you really? Are you quite sure? Has the Lord of life granted you a deed in writing assuring you of forty, or fifty, or sixty years of life? Did He not rather say: "So too you should be ready, because at the time you least expect, the Son of Man is to come"?"

Time is gold. Whoever dodges his duties and the care of his soul, and counts on "still having time", will be stunned to see how swiftly time passes for the dreamer, and will have to appear with empty hands before the eternal Judge demanding an account of him.

He will live wisely who meditates on the continuous agony that life is. What a serious thought! In vain will you turn back the hands of the clock; you will but wind up the clock of death, with yet greater force as well, and time will fly by without cease, on swift wings. All that we have lived up till the present moment of our life already pertains to death. How old are you, my child? Sixteen? You see? You have already given sixteen years to death. And how many do you still have? Who can say, other than the Almighty? So then, take firm hold of each hour. The past has already escaped you; the future is not yet yours; you have no more than the present



moment; make good use of it then; for if you reach old age, you will be able to remember the years of your youth with gladness, spent to your profit.

Yes, profit from your youth; you have to make the best possible use of it. Not by giving free reign to all your instincts, but by working on the formation of your soul and character with holy seriousness, with perfect knowledge of what the years of adolescence mean in life. With your youthful strength, throw yourself into your work and make use of your energies to perform your daily duties in the most perfect way possible. You are working for eternity.

Saint Francis de Sales, on the occasion of Saint Francis Xavier's canonization, exclaimed: "He is now the third Francis canonized. I will be the fourth." And he kept his word. That is how to form a vigorous character. But you will surely understand that a momentary impulse would not have sufficed. Many youths 'want many things', 'would wish' and 'would like things to be this way or that'; yet do nothing effective. Think it over well, undertake it with tenacity and persevere with constancy; that is the way to have character.

Character that stands out for a firm and decided will to do good is the result of a struggle, a combat, for our sacrosanct religion prescribes the practice of self-denial to help us to educate our soul, to strengthen our will and weaken the force of the enemy's assaults; or in military language: "the school of combat", to achieve a loftier spiritual life... to which we give the name of vigilance, Christian self-denial. Without sacrifice and self-denial no great success is possible on this earth; and you, do you want to arrive at crowning success, namely holiness and nobility of character, in a luxury train? Does the struggle for eternal glory grieve you?

And note: another interesting thought. In life, everyone has to make sacrifices; the difference is only in the motive for them. For example, do you know anyone grasping? What a miserable life he leads, how he counts down to the last farthing! He hardly eats, his clothing is tattered, he doesn't dare to take a walk so as not to wear out his shoes. He stifles all his wishes; lives without joy and without friends. And why all this? To pile up money. The grasping person sacrifices his personality, his joy, his honour, for money... Can we possibly call this sacrifice! Is it not worth our while to make sacrifices for loftier goals, a thousand times more sublime?

Look at the covetous man. How he rushes about! He is on his feet from morn till night, not a moment of rest. Why? For money. Look at the conceited. See how he dares to put his very life at stake, as long as he becomes famous! How they hurry, how they sweat, how many sleepless nights for those who go to dances and soirées! Could they not sacrifice just half of that to help their neighbour?

"Inside every man there is a saint and a criminal," said a French orator. The criminal gains strength in your interior by itself, and grows without minding; but for the saint to take possession of you, an arduous and persevering labour is required. You truly work for eternity when you care for your soul. And will you find the work too hard? Harder and loftier than any work of art is the modelling of the soul, since art works just with colours, with paintbrush or with chisel, but to embellish a living soul, it must abandon itself into the mould which is Mary Most Holy.

Man was created to the image and likeness of God. By his spiritual and immortal soul, by his understanding, by his free will he is God's image; but above all, by Divine Grace when it floods his soul, is he His image.

The soul proceeds from God, and has a beginning, but will have no end. It did not exist before its creation, but afterwards will have no end. Everything dies, everything ends, but not the soul. Thousands and thousands of years pass by, and your soul lives on. Millions of beings disappear and your soul lives on.

It is holy reality that in every human soul God's image is latent and asleep. In the harp sleeps the melody; it only awaits the artist's fingers. In the bell the festive chimes sleep; it only awaits the bell ringer. In my soul too the image of God sleeps; it only awaits the work of my collaboration. To take great pains to model the image of God in the soul; to bind my understanding, my inclinations, my desires to His Holy Will, to be a consort of the Divine Nature: that is my life's ideal. Sublime ideal!

What is the soul worth without God? "The Son of God came down from Heaven for us and for our salvation." For our soul! All the graces of the Lord, the first heartbeat and last sigh of His Sacred Heart!... Why? For our soul: "Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst," said Saint Paul, and you, young reader, are also the worst, and we are all "the worst"; because Our Lord Jesus Christ came down to earth for each one of us.

What am I worth without a soul? Chemists have calculated the value of a human body exactly. From the fats it contains seven small bars of soap can be made. From its iron content a little key can be made. Its sugar content would only be enough for a cup of tea. Its phosphorus content would be enough to make 2,200 match heads, and enough magnesium to make one photo. Including everything, its whole value scarcely reaches a few coins. This is what it is worth, nothing more, the human body... without the soul! Man without soul is not even worth a few coins!



And with the soul? And with the soul... it is worth more than the entire world. The beggar in rags is worth more than the entire world. "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and then lose his soul?" What horizons open up before my eyes on hearing these words of the Lord! Is it true, Lord? Have you given me as well such a great treasure? Did you entrust something so very precious as is the soul called to eternal life to this weak and frail son of Yours as well?

Meditate well on the Lord's words. He does not say that a property of a thousand acres or a magnificent palace, or a ton of gold, does not reach the price of a soul. No. He says the most that can be said: "if he gain the whole world", everything there is in the world: land, palaces, gold, and whatever has been created by labour, art and science from the beginning of the world. All this together does not reach the price of your own soul! Of what use are all the treasures, the deepest science, if the soul suffers harm?

Imagine that you go up to the Lord and ask Him: "Lord, why did You humble Yourself even to becoming a tiny, dependent child in the Bethlehem grotto? Why were You a dutiful, hardworking son, in the Nazareth home? Why did You want to suffer pain, scourges, the crown of thorns, death on the Cross?" And the Lord gazes at you and says: "For you. For your soul. For your immortal soul."

"It follows from this, then, that I can't concern myself with earthly life?" You ask; "Will it be licit for me to care for my health? May I not have ambitions, force myself at work? Can I not have plans to conquer the

world?" You have not understood. It means that you go through your earthly life and all its duties in such a way that your soul does not undergo harm. Hence, may you not have ambitions? Should you not work seriously? Have you not to study eagerly? Certainly you have to! But without forgetting the moral offered us in the following Latin phrase: "Whoever goes ahead in science but falls back in morals, falls back more than he goes ahead."

Whoever has a good ear for music cannot bear a single note out of tune; whoever has a soul to receive Christ cannot consent to the least defect in his own person.

Take care! Men of our times insure everything: house insurance against fire, against theft, life insurance for the head of the family in case of death, wheat insurance against hail, ship insurance against shipwreck, accident insurance for workers... And your soul? Have you yet signed insurance for your soul? against what? Against eternal damnation...

A prince once asked Pope Saint Benedict XII for something the Pope could not grant. The Pontiff replied: "If I had two souls, I would grant it. But as I have just one, I cannot grant it." If he had two souls, he could expose one of them to the danger of damnation... Take care that your soul in its ascent does not fall prey to the clutches of your passions and in the inextricable labyrinth of the unruly forces of instinct!

Naturally, as in other fields, so too here the hardest part is the beginning. We become accustomed to good the same as to evil, and the reward for the persevering struggle will be that later our will feel impelled towards good with the same ease as the cart follows the beaten track and the fingers of the skilled artist flash over the keyboard. Amid all our struggles it acts as a spur to think that a will well directed and trained by continuous exercise and constant perseverance, not only forms the best sportsmen, artists and orators, but also serves as a means for man to rise to the heights of moral perfection. The way of education for a happy life consists in the strengthening of character, love of sacrifice, practice of mortification, making us able to bear manfully with the difficulties of life, laden with misfortunes and privations or times of great sorrow.

The most efficacious, sure and meritorious way of being able to bear with all the contradictions in life, is the love of Jesus and Mary in the faithful fulfilment of the Law of God and of all the obligations of our state in life; for if we bear in mind the examples of patience which Jesus and Mary gave us, if we remember how we should thank Them for Their benefits, if we want to unite our crosses each day to His Sacrosanct Passion so as to make reparation to Them for the offences They receive and win the eternal salvation of countless souls, then it is easy and agreeable to embrace all those sufferings which Divine Providence places on our way, for by so doing we have the opportunity to show Them that we truly love Them.

Unfortunately, at present, there is education for everything, except for a strong will. The majority of young people, on passing from the basic atmosphere of family upbringing to school, already have an ailing will, from



so much materialism, useless video games and absence of the life of faith. The concepts of self-discipline, self-denial, spirit of sacrifice, are unknown to them. And without them, how can we take a single step in a serious spiritual life?

This weakness of the will is the cause of continual setbacks in the spiritual lives of young Palmarians. Many youngsters are full of goodwill, want 'to be good', but go no further than intending to be so, because it would need an effort using all their energies.

For as much: Learn to want! Learn to want what is good! The young person's motto should be: "Consecrated to a virtuous and holy life, in Christ's and Mary's footsteps."

The sublime ideal of character: nowhere do we find such a safe and lofty objective, and such a powerful stimulus for self-education as in considering the end for which man has been created: "We have been created to know, love and serve God in this life and afterwards to gaze upon Him and enjoy Him in the other."

The more you imitate Our Lord Jesus Christ the more you will advance towards an ideal character. You will already have noted that in the course of two thousand years, hundreds and thousands of painters have sought to give life to their portraits of the Divine Countenance of the Redeemer in the most varied ways. Each artist contributed his best efforts and talents to the work; and withal no painter in the world has been able to reproduce the Lord's Countenance with the fidelity that you can, if you have the lively longing to model the Saviour's figure in your malleable soul. Why is the majestic figure of Jesus such a magnificent example for us? Because He is not only God, infinitely superior to us, but also Man.

If you look, day by day, at the Child Jesus' eyes, you will overcome the inclination to sin; if you listen to the words of the Master, Christ, sin will lose its incentive and temptation its strength; and if you contemplate Christ's patient Face, pain will lose its bitterness, and the disillusionments that life prepares for you as well will have their crushing inflexibility broken.

The Lord's command: Be perfect! Not a poetic expression. The highest honour for the Christian soul is to be another Christ by way of faithful imitation. The Christian is another Christ!

What wide spreading horizons of noble and comforting thoughts does this sentence open up for me! If I am a copy of Christ, if I am another Christ, then how pure my heart should be, how noble my way of thinking, how disciplined my language, how I should watch over my every glance, how I should root out all my defects!

In a church there was an interesting funeral monument. On the deceased's shield this magnificent motto was to be read: "You are capable of more." Yes; this is a magnificent motto, worth taking as a lifelong maxim by a resolute youth, nobly ambitious, able to feel enthusiasm for great ideals.

However good my work may have been, I do not rest: "You can do more..." More of what? more money, a better reputation, greater popularity? But at the hour of death, what does it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world? What matters then is to have loved God deeply and to have done His divine Will, and saying yes, "you are capable of more", persisting in it. You are capable of being more virtuous and of loving God more.

But will this not lead me into pride, to arrogance?, you might ask. No. It is far easier for someone who is easily pleased with himself to become proud. But to be dissatisfied with one's own actions, though good, and continually urge oneself on further, is an excellent means of self education.

What ambition should a young Palmarian have? First and foremost a great determination to reach Heaven safely. And to achieve this, we have first to fulfil our mission on earth. In Palmar, the Most Holy Virgin Mary said: "The Heavenly Father wants this Place to be the Light and the Beacon to prepare the children of the New Church: the Church of the Triumph of Christ over the nations. This Place is called to prepare the nations to receive Christ Glorious in the manifestation of His Power and His Justice. In a word: to receive Christ the King." This means that all the members of Holy Palmarian Church are called to take part in this preparation, and to struggle and suffer for this triumph.

Man has to educate his will so that it interpenetrates with God's Will. The loftiest school of sanctity and character, the most sublime there can be, is that which makes us exclaim with sincere feeling: "Lord, not my will, but Yours be done." We will have achieved that most valuable self-education if, following our actions, words and thoughts, we pose the question: "Lord, what I have done, what I have said, has that really been Your Will? Did You too want things that way?"

And this education of character has to begin, child, right now. At a mature age it would be too late. A good character is not formed in the ups and downs of life. On the contrary, whoever enters the bustle of this world without a firm character loses even the little he may have.

The exercise of the will is to lend help to the spirit in the war it must wage against the tyrannical domination of the body. Whoever inclines without a thought towards whatever instinctive desire appears, will lose the

serenity of his soul and his interior will become prey to the forces met. You will then understand the Lord's words: "The Kingdom of God is attained by greater efforts... and those who strive hard will attain it."

During the First World War there was an oft repeated saying: "The best form of defence is attack". Effectively, whoever begins an offensive already has a great advantage. Likewise in the soul's great combats you will conserve Grace all the better the more you attack. You have to attack day after day, though it be no more than in small-scale battles against the enemy army, who has his tents pitched in your interior, and whose names are laziness, love of comfort, indifference, caprice, gluttony, curiosity...

The Christian life is one of continuous mortification, a struggle without quarter, the war of the soul's liberation, which lasts up to the grave. Where is the battle fought? In our interior. Who fights? And against whom? Good and evil, the Angel and the beast, face to face. Who does not feel these two antagonistic forces within?

It was not so at the beginning. The body was the faithful servant of the soul and the soul was God's obedient daughter. Life was like a day in May full of bright sunlight, without a cloud. But very soon misfortune struck, at the moment when the first man committed his sin... And then? It was as though something in the universe had snapped. From then on, the body struggles against the soul.

The soul is an eagle, which dreams of pure air, with woods, with mountaintops, and would willingly soar up to the life-giving heights; but finds itself caught up in the cage of sinful instincts, and she twists and turns in her prison. From the moment when man rebelled against God, his heart became a nest of snakes. But as this expression is somewhat strong, perhaps it would be better to say it this way: it became a sterile waste. A wasteland, with due care, can become farming land, giving wheat, flowers, life; but if neglected will grow

thorns, thistles and weeds. Any land will give thorns and weeds if not duly farmed; any soul will go bad if not tended with great pains.

The will is like a seed sown in your soul; if you tend it with great pains and make it develop, it will grow and become an oak tree able to resist hurricanes; but if neglected, even the ants of little faults can nibble at it. Freedom of spirit can only be the reward of little efforts, constant and resolute, a slow labour of continuous self-correction. Hence there are so many men around us who drag the chains of sin about: many are those who fear to accept the hard work of daily efforts.

“I could, if I wanted to”. Well want to then. Try it. Whoever desires to be a serious person, has to desire it seriously. From the “I would like to” to truly want, is the same difference as from little pet dogs to the hounds who guard the house. Those little toy dogs unable to bite or bark, do nothing useful; they only eat, whine and cost a fortune. The hound that guards the house does not whine, but barks fiercely and when necessary snaps at the inopportune guest; so too the youth with a will does not whine, but barks at the temptations of idleness and sin, snaps at them to scare them and drive them off, and holds on to the recognized target until he succeeds.

And how is this done? Ask yourself for example: Do you want to get the best marks? “I do!” So good; give yourself orders: Half-turn right! That is: young man, do tomorrow’s homework at once, but at once and not “I will begin next week”; and one-two, one-two, ahead with the homework. Your worktable is the anvil on which you will forge your future.

Do you want to be punctual at prayer? “I do!” Then begin to pray this very night. “But I have a lot of homework.” It doesn’t matter. You will always have five minutes. “And in the morning I need to hurry to arrive on time.” Good, where then is the difficulty in getting up five minutes earlier?

Do you want to be virtuous? “I do!” Then practise the Christian virtues: humility, generosity, purity, patience, temperance, and above all charity, in God’s love.

Firm character, moral integrity, is the result of an arduous struggle of self-education, self-denial, of manfully keeping up the spiritual battle.

Young man, however spirited your temperament, however fierce you feel the tyrannical demands of instinctive desires to be, and though they assault you with the force of a bison, they will not overcome you..., if you do not want to be their slave. If those currents are vehement in your life, oppose your willpower. You well know that you can row against the current, even though very strong.

You have to be constantly on the alert, since at those moments you gamble with your future, and above all your eternal happiness. And those rude combats offer you the possibility of assuring the great treasure which is your objective in your formative years. Today’s schools too readily forget the formation of the youth’s character, his willpower, and his spiritual life. Hence the sad reality that, among men already formed, abound as well more well instructed minds than steely temperaments, more science than religion. And yet the basis of the State, its foundation stone, is not science, but moral integrity; not wealth, but honour and spirituality; not villainy but virtue.



What a sad spectacle, that of a youth without willpower! Whatever it is that he has to do, it costs him tremendously to be able to say “yes” or “no”. And let us not even comment on the way he undertakes the task once he has decided. He neither finds his principles, nor an independent way of thinking, not even when he passes on to higher classes, or when he becomes a grown man. Ever on the watch to see what the other is doing so as to do the same. A youth of this breed is a boneless puppet, a baby with long trousers.

Fear God alone and your conscience. If you can say a round “no” when necessary, what good fortune! No! you have to tell your companions when they prompt you to do what is forbidden. No! you have to cry out to your instincts when they blindly urge you on. No! you have to cry out to all temptations which by flattery try to involve you in their squalor.

In these times the world’s corruption has reached such a pitch that to conserve the Grace of God in your soul you need to isolate yourself from the asphyxiating atmosphere. Obviously, the best thing is to take refuge in the religious life, which is the antechamber of Heaven, where you don’t have to see or know anything of the world’s wickedness, but dedicate yourself to saving souls and making reparation to God. But as long as you don’t enjoy that happiness, you have to clutch on firmly to the rock of the Church, steadfast in Faith and Morals, so as never to fall like so many Palmarian apostates who by their own fault are on the way to Hell. In these times dangers for the soul abound, and young people, so as not to be influenced or stained by evil, have to turn to prayer, to frequenting the Sacraments and to spiritual reading, in order to gain the strength to reject the

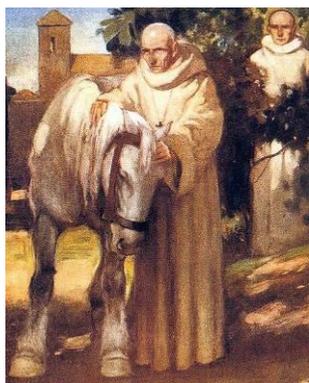
temptations of the world and to persevere in the Faith. Be vigilant, for the devil begins with little things that seem insignificant, but which lead us on to perdition. Flee from the vanities of the world and conversations with worldly people who take pleasure in obscene jokes and sensual music with scandalous lyrics. All this is terrible in God's eyes, and has to be paid for in this life or in the other.

Whoever constantly asks, 'what will people say?' does not yet have an independent character, but is a slave to human respect. And don't be so afraid of outspoken men! If you raise your voice valorously in defence of your principles, you will see not once but many times just how the enemy retreats. He is no fighting bull on the attack with his horns, rather a giant snail which, at the least sign of strong resistance, hides, with horns and head, in his own lair.

Fear no one; fear only to lose the Grace of God. To abandon anything prescribed or approved by your conscience out of human respect, or for fear of gossip or scorn, does not tally with a manly character. Whoever is a prisoner of his conscience is a prisoner of God, and to be a prisoner of God is the greatest freedom.

Passion in itself is neither good nor bad; it is a dynamic inclination of the spirit. Its value depends on whether placed at the service of virtue or of sin. Without great passions there would never have been great men or great saints. However greater the energies our will can dispose of the better, the chief thing is to have strength in our arm to manage them.

To combat disorderly instincts is a continuous training which you too, son, have to practise day by day. The youth who is concerned with his character will never excuse his faults saying: "Its no use, that's what I am like; I was born with this character," but will work without respite to perfect his soul, as did Saint Francis de Sales. Repeat within, therefore, often: though wild animals dwell within me, I will end up by taming them. I do not resign myself to being as I would be according to my temperament, rather I must be as I want to be, as God wants me.



There is an interesting legend in relation to Saint Columban, the Re-evangelizer of Switzerland. His whole fortune consisted of a little tame donkey. On his apostolic journeys, the creature went behind the Saint, bearing his modest baggage. One day, on passing by a thick wood, a bear suddenly lunged out of the undergrowth and tore the donkey to pieces. And what did the Saint do? He went straight up to the bear and loaded him with his baggage. "Ah, brother, you have killed my little donkey! Well then, now you will have to take my baggage." And behold, the beast, still bathed in the blood of the victim, bowed its neck, and from then on served his master like a tame lamb. Do not ever complain, then, that you are very passionate, spirited, ambitious, vivacious, and so on. Tame the bear and yoke it to your carriage. Passion in itself is no plague, solely unbridled passion.

Passion well employed is that which gives temper to the will. Only the one who passionately pursues a noble cause can overcome all the obstacles. Passions are fiery steeds for the carriage of your life; if you leave them unbridled, they will draw you to the precipice; if you take firm hold of the reins, they will lead you flying wonderfully to your purpose.

If you have a fiery temperament, that is not yet sin. If endless temptations assault you, that is not yet sin. If you have to struggle against your evil inclinations, that is not yet sin. However many faults you find in yourself, you do not cease to combat them.

"But my temperament is so impassioned!" No matter. Passion is a great danger if you let the reins go slack; but it has great value if you bridle it with a firm hand. If the will fights back, the temptation overcome earns us great merit.

Many youths and students have had to keep up an arduous battle against evil inclinations. One has to battle terribly against a thousand concupiscent temptations; another against outbursts of anger, a third against pride.

You need prayer to infuse into you the spirit to keep up the battle. However many times you relapse, don't despair and don't lose heart. "But when I know beforehand that I can't overcome...", you object. Wait a moment. They place a glass full of the strongest poison on the table and tell you: "If you want you can drink this; if you don't, you can leave it." You answer them laughingly: "Though I were to stay here a hundred years, I won't drink it."

See that you did not say: "I don't want to drink it." No? What did you say then? "I won't drink it," no and a thousand times no! How sure you are! And how natural it seems to you! You have just discovered that in spite of everything there is a triumphant will in you, firm as a rock. And this discovery will save the life of your soul, as long as you make use of your will in the combat against your own sinful inclinations.

The inclination to evil exists in all men; we all have to struggle nobly against the sinful desires of our nature. If you battle now with manly vigour against evil and are able to say a firm “no” to temptation, you battle not only for yourself, but for your children and grandchildren, whose struggle for good will be much easier than yours; your heroic combat will have made their task easier. I can! I will! Press on!

An interesting principle of physics is the law of gravity. According to this a body dropped from a height does not keep up the same speed in falling, but the speed goes on increasing. This law also applies to the moral order. Alas for whoever winks at sin and begins to dialogue with it! Whoever starts out on the downward slope slips ever further, and falls with greater force the further he is down the slope. It appears that mysterious arms emerge from the earth, the mire, the marsh, and draw away the unfortunate who was not strong enough to keep back from taking the first faulty step.

When a garment begins to tear, it has to be sewn up immediately; otherwise it tears further. If there is a crack in the dike, it has to be closed up immediately, for otherwise the waters will break through and wash everything away. In some youths, the little crack can be the start of avarice; in others sensuality makes its appearance, or vanity, ambition for power, indolence, pleasure-seeking. Perdition is almost always owed to failing to take things seriously, whether parents, teachers, or the person himself.

Many men today do not feel the desire for spiritual cleansing to the same degree as the pagans of Rome did. In ancient Rome there were places for religious purification on every corner, where the pagan, conscious of his sin, fervently sought the liberation of his soul.

The worst of modern man is that despite having at least as many sins as the pagan, he does not feel conscious of his guilt, and is dead even to the desire of purification. We are all sinners; are we aware of it? Whoever makes a judgement full of disdain, whoever is guilty of a lie, of envy, of sensuality, does he hear the voice of his conscience accusing him in quiet moments? It is the ruin of our times: the loss of the notion of sin, in a materialized world without faith, without hope, without love for God; a world with its back to its God and Creator and which refuses to serve Him.

Dear youth: do you detest sin? Do you feel uneasy, anxious, after your falls? Do you long for purification? You are quite thorough in cleaning your fingernails. You use a lot of soap; you can't bear to have your hands dirty, or a single spot on your clothing, mud in your room...; but there, within, in your soul, do you look with horror at the dust, the mud, the stains? Oh! Every time we wash our hands or brush our clothing we should ask ourselves: Am I as clean within?



We read the cultural history of ancient Rome and cannot believe our eyes on seeing the endless number of expiatory sacrifices offered there and the lively conscience of sin those pagans had.

If only men were to keep the Ten Commandments! When a compass is installed in a warship, it is isolated as far as possible from the magnetic currents produced in the ship's metallic hull. In life, man's conscience is the compass; the currents originate in the body: the inclination to evil can easily deflect us from the right direction and force our moral life down the wrong road if the compass is not fixed on a firm, isolated base, over and above all the agitated tides and waves, above all the rebellious and deceitful incentives to our instincts. If it is not God who marks out our moral criteria, but men, then morals suffer great deformation, for what seems sin to one, to another can seem virtue.

In the same way as the laws of nature serve as the basis for the material world, so do God's Commandments serve as the basis for human life. God has not given us the Ten Commandments to annoy us, to worry us or to spoil our having a good time, but for our own good: on them depends your eternal happiness or perdition.

The Decalogue constitutes the basis for upright human society, to the point that if God had not promulgated it, men would have been obliged to invent it. It should not be seen as a brake to human freedom, but as a rampart to a decent human life.

Love God above all things! says the First Commandment.

Hence to serve God means to be children and friends of God; the Decalogue, then, is wealth, profit, and blessing to man's lineage, something very sublime.

What would become of this poor and miserable earthly life if all men were scrupulously conscientious about keeping these Commandments! We would no longer need prisons, nor police. There would be neither lunatic asylums nor broken homes. There would be no need for locks on doors, nor ticket inspectors on buses. There would be no happiness betrayed... or trampled innocence... or elderly parents abandoned to misery... or

defamatory articles in newspapers... And there would be no more wars... Oh my God! How many things would change if men were truly to serve You, our Father... if they faithfully kept the Ten Commandments!

We are not on earth for a life of pleasure: Jesus Christ would have preferred to spend the whole day absorbed in meditation, adoring His Heavenly Father. And He did so whenever He could. But when it was time to work He did not delay for a single moment to do whatever He was ordered, as He knew that whether praying, or whether working, in every case He would be fulfilling His duty: the fulfilment of duty is to serve God.

Duty! The fulfilment of duty dignifies individuals and peoples, while negligence at work leads to bankruptcy. People who fulfil their duties in conscience resist attacks triumphantly, while idlers race to their doom.

The fulfilment of duty never depends on moods. Duty deferred from hour to hour takes on an ever more daunting aspect, and its threatening presence eventually poisons all your joys. Whoever has a debt, pay it as soon as can be. Never ever forget this simple rule: "first, duty; then pleasure"; or "first duty, then devotion." Many youths complain that they "have no luck", that nothing "goes right for them"; and, yet in the majority of cases the failing is one and the same: for them, all amusements come first; followed by a large parenthesis, and then, way back, duty comes tiredly trotting out.

Son, perhaps military service does not await you; but the great duties of life await you. You have duties to God, to your neighbour, to the Church, to your homeland. Perhaps the following phrase may seem hard to you; yet it is the one decorous principle for a man of honour: 'We are not on earth to enjoy life, but to fulfil our duty and do whatever God expects from us.' "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His Work," we should all repeat; it is what the Redeemer of the world said of Himself. Let our nourishment be to do the Will of the Heavenly Father.

The penance of Original Sin is that all men are to work by the sweat of their brow; and so that this penance be more tolerable Jesus Christ gave us the most brilliant example, spending the thirty-three years of His life working, yet original sin had never brushed up against Him.

Work, in the mind of pagans, was something degrading, unworthy of free men. It was only Christianity that paid due honour to work, teaching that it is precisely work that ennobles a man. Christianity showed mankind the great latent force in work for uniting us to God's Will and developing interior life. Work strengthens the will wonderfully, as it demands self-control, self-denial, perseverance. Whoever possesses a will sufficiently strong to work perseveringly, with conscientious punctuality, will not have much difficulty in showing firmness at having to restrain passions, something quite hard for an idler who performs his work negligently and carelessly. Man has to work; it does not matter if his work is corporal or spiritual; but, one way or another we all have to share in the work by which mankind fulfils the Creator's command. "Whoever does not want to work, neither let him eat," Saint Paul said. Not only those who have to work in order to earn their living are obliged to work. However rich you may be, though you have all the treasures you may please, you are obliged to work. From inactivity is born spiritual sluggishness, and its consequence is moral ruin.

Our Lord and God did not divide mankind into two groups: the group of those who do as they please and the group of those who suffer want, the group of idlers and the group of workers.

Now perhaps, while you are out hunting adventure, a man who fights exhausts himself in the fulfilment of duty...? Tell us, then: Do you believe before God that you have the same value? Can you be at ease thinking of the account you will have to render if you have not worked in your life? Do you remember Jesus' words to the owner of the barren fig-tree? "Look, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and have found none. Cut it down then; why should it encumber the ground?"

It is very difficult to keep to the just mean in everything; and that goes for work too. And so we see beside the group of the "idlers", that of the "machine-men", slaves of the machine and of technology; those who have no aim other than money and, while they gradually wear themselves out, coldly, glacially calculating, among them every ideal is meanwhile eaten away, piety dies, hearts harden, spirits go dead. Poor machine-men! They work, and how they work!, but not according to the Lord's plan and example. There is work which is the work of slaves: it is that of galley slaves of the generation unaware of God; and there is work like the Mass: the work of the Christian. If I work according to God's will, then my desk transforms into an altar, the kitchen stove into an altar, the washing tub into an altar, the typewriter into an altar, and hard, heavy work that tires and beads the forehead with sweat into an act of worship.

It is something alarming to see how many youths, who in their tender years gave the most promising hopes, later turn aside and follow the path of sin, beginning with negligence in little things and too many liberties. Seeing the work table or room of some students, all in disorder, spread out everywhere, leads one to suspect the

same disorder in the youth's soul. Put your table, your cupboard, your room in order. In the first place, outward order is not just a display of inward order, but an auxiliary support; whoever keeps his things in order will keep his thoughts in better order. Besides, you must have order, for only an orderly man can be punctual, while the disorderly man loses much time looking for his things and will always arrive late everywhere, for having been disorderly and negligent.

Be punctual. How simple the words? And yet they indicate a very important means of education for a strong character. To perform our duty every day, and whenever our obligations require; to be conscientious down to little details, to work in earnest even when no one sees. Valour is needed, heroic constancy, overcoming obstacles and never excusing oneself from or dodging the sacred call of duty. We can only entrust the great duties of life to someone who can be punctual, always, in everything. Someone unable to be punctual does not inspire much confidence when he gives his word; and the unpunctual and one who fails to keep his word do much harm. Take care, son, that the filaments of bad habits, of slight negligences and inattentions do not finally tie down your interior life.

Man possesses the right to speak, so that it is his duty to speak in accord with the truth, use words in their right sense. Man's words have their content, and wound or praise, offend or please, correct or deprave. Hence, words spoken are a tremendous responsibility. We cannot say that someone who does not weigh up his words before speaking is trustworthy.

Truth is one of the basic qualities of character. It is a natural adornment, almost consubstantial we might say, of youth; so that it is very dangerous to become used to lying, for in many cases it can be a symptom of spiritual problems, degeneracy. Saint Gregory XVII used to say: "Whoever tells lies is capable of committing every sin."

Sacred Scripture says quite clearly: "The liar is even worse than the thief." The thief harms material things only, but the liar harms the person; the thief steals inanimate things, but the liar poisons the air, for he undermines mutual confidence between men. "On the lips of the liar, truths become doubtful."



Our Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal Truth, spoke gently of all kinds of sinners; but His words flashed when He branded the lying pharisees with the name of hypocrites and discharged His ominous 'woes' upon their heads. Owing to infiltrators in the Church, lies began to spread in society until Saint Paul's prophecy was fulfilled: "Times will come when men will be unable to bear sound doctrine, rather, eager for novelties will have recourse to a horde of false teachers in order to satisfy their inordinate desires, shutting their ears to the Truth and turning them to fables" spread by the communications media. There, then, are the fruits of the lie.

How useless lies are! The Latin proverb warns the liar to have a good memory, for one day or another he will contradict himself; he has to back up one lie with another, if he wants to maintain them; and to maintain the second lie he has to lie a third, a fourth, or a tenth time. Once having turned aside from the way of truth, he treads a marshy terrain in which the feet sink ever deeper. Shame and loss of honour await the liar. "They catch up with the liar sooner than with the cripple." What does the lie do for man? He can deceive his neighbour, but God never, as He is omniscient and His gaze pierces and penetrates everything. God's eye pierces us better than the sun does glass, and penetrates us deeper than the sun's rays into the water's depths.

Someone asks: "Why does a lie which harms no one have to be a sin?" Because such a lie does not exist, for there is no innocent lie that harms no one. Such a lie does not exist since, if it harms no one else, it surely harms oneself. As Our Saviour commanded, we all have to tend to imitate the Heavenly Father by the perfection of our soul; hence we must also imitate Him in love for the truth, in veracity, in honesty. And I must be like unto God, the God of truth. The truth bears a divine emblem on her forehead, and whoever sins deliberately against truth also sins against God, even in the case of doing no harm to neighbour.

It seems that the concept of respect for authority is utterly lacking in the ideology of many youths. How they criticize and belittle everything there is: school, teachers, home, parents, catechism, catechist! Everything in the world prior to them is all "nothing". Every demand made on them is nothing but "a useless stupidity". What they learn at catechism is "stale thinking". The warnings given them by parents are "old folks' scruples". Many modern young people almost demand that their parents obey them. They consider freedom to be their greatest treasure and see a drain on that treasure in every instruction they are given.

Watch out, my son! You have to obey because our Creator laid this down. There are young people who think that disobedience gives them true freedom. Yet no. Rather dissipation. You have ever to be obedient, not

because it is necessary but because you so want, because you know that it will be for your good. What you have to do, you have to want to do as well, and you will benefit twice over. Often recite the sublime words of Saint Augustine: “Lord, grant me to do as You will, and then command me to do as You will.”

Beloved son: you have to apply all your strength to achieve this one purpose: I must make the sublime flower of the Christian virtues and a pious character blossom in me. I am a growing tree. I am a bud opening. I am a sown field that promises. I will work without cease during my youth; in my soul I will prune away the wild shoots; I will muster all my strength to become a man of character of whom the Angels of Heaven can feel proud. The soul has to be redeemed, and the price of its ransom is battle.

Though the human race today aspires solely to material progress and has turned its back on its Creator, it can still be converted and attain eternal salvation; and the characteristic of the Palmarian youth of noble sentiments is for sure the rooted and enthusiastic conviction that Divine Providence has reserved for him as well, for his efforts, a particle of this great work, and that he, with a life entrusted to the Divine Will, and with humble and loving supplications, shall contribute to this triumph of the true Church, still to come.

Our sacrosanct religion urges and obliges us to the punctual performance of the smallest duties in our daily life. What does it want us to do in earthly life? Cross our arms and dream, sigh, and paint endless heavenly pictures? By no means. Whoever lives thus would be mistakenly interpreting the Creator’s aim and command. God created the world; but, after sin, commanded man to work and cultivate the earth, making use of his reason and diligence. Hence when man, with all his toil and joy, with all his troubles and consolations, goes out into the working world, he fulfils a divine mandate, for he acts thus impelled by the Lord. The Lord also takes care that man, despite all difficulties, may never leave off that work, and as incentive, together with the sweat of his work, places its joys.

God created man to His image and likeness. When does that divine likeness shine out in us more than at work and prayer for the sanctification of souls, when we suffer to make reparation to the Eternal Father, and act thus according to the example of our God and Saviour?

Have you heard of the dispute between the eagle and the little goldcrest? “Let us take a bet”, said the goldcrest to the eagle, “and see who can rise to the greatest height.” The eagle spread its powerful wings; and like an arrow pierced the skies, gilded by the sun’s rays. The goldcrest furtively hid on the back of the eagle; and when up in the dizzy heights the eagle sought to rest with triumphal satisfaction, the goldcrest, astute, with a few flaps rose a little further and cried out victorious: “I have beaten you, I am higher up.” And yet, he would never have arrived at that height without the eagle.

Today’s civilization has reached the heights of stupendous progress; yet, however, seeks to forget that all modern culture has its origin in religious culture, has fed on it, has based itself on it to reach those heights and, unless it wills to perish, cannot renounce the mother who gave it life. Who were those who laid down the foundations of civilization among the pagan peoples? Who taught them the basics of agriculture? Who conquered the virgin forests? Who took civilization out everywhere? Here is history’s reply: the Missionaries, the Priests, the sons of the Catholic Church.



Let us continue asking: Who expanded the domain of culture? Who ran schools for centuries? Only the Catholic Church; there was no one else, not even the State itself, to worry about science, the founding of hospitals, orphanages, asylums and every kind of work of charity? Christianity has been the most abundant fount of the positive force of work and of the conquering and evangelizing activity of the world.

In our days, man is turning himself into a god by his bold inventions, and seeks to supersede God’s power in this planet by way of impious science. Life allows itself to be drawn along ever more in the wake of technology, and on the younger generation imposes an exaggerated technological mentality, leaving the soul empty. Children in today’s great cities have no idea of the thrush’s song, the swallow’s trill, the dove’s cooing; they are unaware of God and his works, but those same children are capable of saying at fifty paces distance, blindfolded, just by the sound of the motor, the make of the motorbike passing by. They have no idea of the difference between wheat, rye, oats and barley; but know all the tricks for video games. Is that normal, logical?

What a strange and perplexing spectacle we witness in today’s life! The world overflows with embittered, grouchy, desperate, broken men..., when we all ought to be thankful to God for living precisely in this present epoch, in which human science, with its countless unsuspected technical creations can make life more beautiful, easier, and richer. We ought to rejoice at living precisely today. And yet we do not rejoice. Because we cannot rejoice. What is the cause? To have been overcome in the greatest revolution ever seen on earth.

Man saw in the machine the possibility of sudden wealth, and this feverish rush for wealth turned aims and values upside down, in a fatal way; man forgot that the machine is for the purpose of serving mankind; instead of which he is placed at the service of the machine. What has been the consequence? – the painful and tragic fact that technology began to develop with gigantic steps, while our culture became bogged down, and religion was left abandoned in the face of the materialism imposed. The machine has risen up to become an instrument of cruel, dictatorial power in the hands of the technocrats who rule the world, because mankind has rebelled against God and shaken off His holy yoke.

There is a great difference between the creative work of the man of yore and of the man of today. Previously, the creative energy of man was directed chiefly at the service of spiritual culture. Hence the masterpieces of architecture and painting; the gothic cathedrals, so delicate; castles and palaces, sacred vestments and vessels, tapestries and industrial art pieces, such as we are unable to create any more.

Why can we not reach such heights? Because we do not work the way they did before. To what does modern man dedicate all his time, his every drop of blood, all the fibres of his being? To machines, and always to machines. But the penance is in the sin.

It seems that mankind wants to use machines to mock God for the chastisement He imposed on us all: “By the sweat of your brow will you eat your bread.” New technologies do little to lead us to sanctity, rather serve as instruments for the ancient serpent and his stooges to corrupt and control the world.

Do the work incumbent on you: Our life is destined for God’s glory, our eternal salvation, and the good of our neighbour. Hence we have the duty to cultivate in ourselves all those aptitudes which can help us to achieve those objectives. The youth, whose actions, thoughts, words and doings in life are guided by those noble aims, is a youth with a lofty spirit.

And this is the essential: to act in accord with holy and noble principles; do everything for love of God and to carry out His Divine Will, imitating the holiest lives of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and acting in union with Them. For as much, it is not enough to have good thoughts, but besides that they produce their corresponding sentiments, and from those sentiments spring forth resolutions and actions.

The principal characteristic of the spirit the youth does well to have is not to show such appreciation for material progress, machines, motors and electronic devices, but above all these things, heartily to believe in the reality of invisible ideals: his own sanctification, honour, the conscientious performance of duty, the love of God and Mary Most Holy, and love for neighbour.



While the worldly dedicate their efforts to material progress, it behoves you, as member of the true Church, to be conscious of the duty to contribute to God’s greater love, glory, reparation and service, mankind’s conversion and souls’ eternal salvation. The noble soul does not therefore ask: “What must I do to be happy in this world?”, but says: “I will do my duty and know that I will then be happy.” This is the way to acquire true happiness here and in eternity. We all have to work, without exception. Youth as well, then. If you are a student, you should do the work incumbent on you, namely, study.

If you have a room to yourself, arrange it with good taste and keep it always tidy. Place a small crucifix, the Holy Face and an image of the Virgin where you do your studying, and often raise your thoughts to the Crucified Saviour and to Mary Most Holy; you will see the strength and energy that spring from these short meditations.

Try to improve the course of the world, and make your love of God lead you to resolve the great spiritual problems which afflict the world, just as Saint Thérèse did at that age: “One Sunday, looking at a holy picture of Our Lord on the Cross, I felt profoundly impressed by the Blood falling from His divine hands. I felt deep sorrow thinking about that Blood falling to the ground without anyone being concerned to gather it up. I made a resolution always to be present in spirit at the foot of the Cross to gather up the divine dew trickling down, and I understood that I would then have to pour it out over souls. Jesus’ cry on the Cross “I thirst” likewise echoed at every moment in my heart. These words kindled an unknown and most lively desire within me. I wanted to give my Beloved to drink, and I myself felt consumed by thirst for souls. They were not yet the souls of Priests that drew me, but those of great sinners; I burned with the desire to draw them out of eternal fire. And to intensify my zeal, God showed me that my desires were to His pleasing.”

The danger of pride: We often come across proud youths who look down on everyone else. What is it that leads to such pride in those youths? For one, it is having a wealthy father, fashionable clothing, the latest model of motorbike. For another, a well-proportioned, delicate, girl-like face. For a third, a mind wide-awake, sparkling replies and ability to study. None of this is merit of theirs. They have no true value, but are passing.

And besides, without beauty of soul, they are merely outward, something like a garment turned inside out: without seeing outwardly how worn it is inside. On the table of those conceited lads should be written the phrase whispered into the ear of a triumphant Roman by the slave seated behind him: "Beware of falling!"

An interesting fact was published on a count. He was from a modest family; but thanks to his diligence and steadfastness, he made progress in life and scaled the highest State offices, so that the King named him a Count for his merits. What did this new Count do to avoid falling into deep pride? He frequently called himself "Count Nothing-Mine", and in this way continually instilled in himself the virtue of humility. We are all barons, counts and princes "Nothing-Mine". What do you possess that you have not received from God? "And if you have received it from Him, since nothing is yours, rather everything is God's, what do you glory in as if you had not received it from Him?" writes Saint Paul in one of his epistles.

Have you seen a sculptor at work? Before making the model, he prepares the clay: he breaks it up, kneads it, works it, so that afterwards, when forming the definitive sculpture, the clay be more malleable and soft in the artist's hands.

The chief objective of secondary teaching courses is to train your mind so that you can think with discipline, judge well and study usefully. Youths are needed able to penetrate swiftly into the crux of a question, youths who can order their thoughts, link them up together, deduce others from them, find their right expression, follow the reasonings of the rest, see at once the possible defects of one's own reasonings or, in other words: think in an orderly way. All the subjects assigned in secondary school courses should develop the ability to think without mental anarchy. You will thus learn to carry out true mental work.

The tortoise and the hare challenged each other to a race one day. The goal was to reach the edge of a nearby wood. The tortoise started out with great fervour, sweated, forced itself on. The hare, with limitless confidence, lay down on the ground under the splendourous rays of the sun, and thought: "Idiot! Why such fatigue, so much sweat in vain. In two leaps I will leave you so far behind that you will not even see the tip of my tail." The tortoise went on its way, dragging itself along, sweating, slaving away, and before the hare realized, it needed just one pace to reach the wood. 'Goodness! I'll have to run. Get going!', exclaimed the hare. He leapt ahead, took another leap. But before the third, the tortoise was already in the wood... Perseverance and diligence overcome talent.



In spiritual work as well, constancy is a condition of the first importance. You cannot say that the French saying, 'genius is patience' corresponds exactly to the truth, but it enshrines a great part of it. There is a long line of highly talented youths who ran to their ruin due to their flippant way of thinking. Though not taking it very seriously, they did their secondary schooling with the best marks, but in life gave no fruits, precisely because they were not accustomed to working systematically. They got nowhere. On the other hand, many famous celebrities had no more than an average talent, but were able to compensate for this by iron discipline and constant, systematic work.

To "learn with ease" is doubtless a dangerous gift for many youths. "I don't have to study. I have talent!" many youths say to themselves. For now let us grant them so; but talent in itself is not science; only the means to achieve it. And many talented youths failed in secondary classes or at the University just because they did not make their talent, granted to them by God, bear fruit. "Persevering labour overcomes all obstacles," wrote Virgil. The tortoise can overcome the hare!

Sadly there are individuals who are not very given to this persevering labour. During the First World War, the hussars, with their characteristic impulse and irresistible heroism, charged into the very nests of enemy artillery, and died! for they did not like weeks and weeks of inaction in the trenches. In the end it was the method of trenches which won the day. In the same way, in life success is not won by heroic charges, by momentary impulses, but by diligent constancy during years and lustrums. Though at the start it may cost, you have to learn.

This active patience raised up the ancient architectural works at the cost of enormous labours; it instigated the medieval monks to write copies, their whole life long, by the weak light of an oil lamp, the works they left to us: the Sacred Scriptures, the works of the Fathers of the Church; this same patience learnt the laws of force in nature after fruitless experiments during many decades and centuries, and subjugated them, one after another, so that they might serve man. A Hungarian proverb says that patience gives roses. It also gives science, instruction, method, culture.

“Hurry, hurry, get the work over and done with!” is the watchword of many students. Ah so! Do you know how long Dante took to write his world famous work the Divine Comedy? Just thirty years. And Dickens, the great English writer, says that each of his books cost him an enormous labour. Prescott, a famous American historian, was almost blind; and yet when it became necessary for him to learn other languages, in his maturity he spent ten years in the study of languages in order to write his great work on Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

When Titian, the world famous painter, sent his celebrated Last Supper to Saint Charles I of Spain, he wrote the following: “I am sending to Your Majesty a painting on which I have worked daily, and often until night, for seven years.” Virgil wrote the Aeneid during twenty years; and nonetheless wanted to destroy it before his death, not considering it good enough. Fénelon copied out nineteen times his celebrated educational work, Telemachus, and even in the last copy erased and amended much. Edison was still a boy when he spent half his nights reading, not novels, but technical manuals on mechanics, chemistry and electricity.

Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, was highly critical of his own works, and said the gold comes to the light of the sun after passing it through the sieve and washing it over and over again. He did not correct only the rough drafts, but also the copies, so that the definitive text was sometimes the third transcription, but there were passages which he still corrected many more times. Watt meditated for thirty years on his steam engine. The astronomer Herschel wanted to fabricate a concave lens for one of his telescopes. He made one, but it was inadequate. He made a second, neither did this turn out well. A third, neither did this serve. He made more than two hundred concave mirrors before fabricating the one truly needed. But in the end, he did. See here that diligence and perseverance lend efficacious help to the talent of genius.

An eloquent example of the magnificent results which the exercise and discipline practised in youth later produce is that of Robert Peel, one of the most outstanding orators of the English Parliament, who refuted with his admirable memory, one after another, all the arguments of his political opponents. Where did he get that excellent memory from? When a boy, on returning from church, his father made him stand on a table and recite the sermon. At the beginning, as is natural, it cost him; but the exercise led him to such keenness of understanding that he recited the sermons almost word for word. And he owed his success in mature years to this arduous exercise as a child.

Stephenson’s parents, poor as they were, lacked the means to send their son, the future inventor of the steam locomotive, to school. He had to work twelve hours a day; but he robbed time at night to be able to learn to read and write. He was nineteen years of age when he succeeded in writing his own name, and what joy it gave him to be able to cultivate his mind in the short moments he was free! During the rest allowed for meals, he kept himself busy by solving mathematical problems, which he wrote on the sides of a coal truck. Stephenson later worked for fifteen years perfecting his steam locomotive, to achieve success.

After considering the admirable diligence of the inventors of so much material progress, we can verify that “the children of this world or lovers of this world, regarding their worldly business, are more shrewd and concerned than the children of Light or Gospel followers regarding the business of their eternal salvation.” What do so many efforts serve that do not lead man to his supernatural end? “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity: if man does not employ his life in the service of God, what lasting benefit does he gain from all the work he labours at on Earth?... Fear God and keep His Commandments, because this alone avails man.” (Ecclesiastes). All is vanity, save to love and serve God alone; this is supreme wisdom, by contempt for the world to rise to the heavenly kingdom.

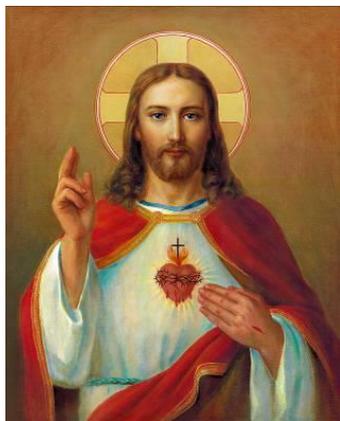
Worldly inventions are miserable in comparison to the divine ‘lift’ which Saint Thérèse invented: “We are in the century of inventions. Now we don't have to take the trouble to walk upstairs: in the houses of the rich, a lift replaces the stairs to advantage. I too would like to find a lift to raise me up to Jesus, for I am too little to climb the hard stairway of perfection... I want to find the way to get to Heaven by a little way that is very straight and very short, by a little way, completely new... The lift which has to raise me up to Heaven is Your arms, Jesus! And for that I do not need to grow; on the contrary, I have to continue being little, I have to become ever littler.”

Let us not lose time seeking that worldly wisdom to be found in mobile telephones, computers and videogames. Seek the wisdom of God, as the Lord said in Palmar: “The Holy Ghost, as you know, breathes when He wills, on whom He wills, and how He wills. Naturally, he will breathe more impetuously on those of you who are more consecrated to Me. That is the crown of wisdom: to be totally consecrated to Me, consecrated in Body and Soul. The crown of wisdom!”

Heavenly wisdom is found in the Gospel Law which Christ promulgated in the Sermon on the Mount: “Do not worry then, saying, ‘what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear?’ Because that is what

pagans do, who worry about those things; and your Father well knows you have need of them all. Seek first, then, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all those things shall be given to you in addition.”

Seek with ardent zeal the Kingdom of God and His justice, so that the face of the earth be soon renewed. “How deeply are men engrossed in the pursuit of worldly goods for the sustenance of bodily life, and how little they are concerned for the salvation of their souls! They selfishly place spiritual interests after material ones, when the latter come to us as consequence of the former; for the Gospel words are trustworthy testimony that the Heavenly Father will give things necessary to sustain the body in addition, to those who seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice. And if God, Provider and Conservator of all things, causes the rain to fall and



make the fields grow for the bodily nourishment of the wicked, with greater reason will He make the work of those who serve Him uprightly be exceedingly fruitful. Let your first concern, then, beloved Palmarians, be to attain your own sanctification, for all the rest you will receive in addition, and thus you will carry on weaving your imperishable crown of glory promised by God to those who serve Him uprightly and unselfishly”, wrote Pope Saint Peter II.

Where to seek this Kingdom? Christ Himself gives us the answer: “The Kingdom of God is within those who are in Grace”; that is, this Kingdom in souls is the state of Grace. The opposite of the Kingdom of God is the kingdom of darkness, those who are in mortal sin. And His Justice? Justice requires that we obey the Law of God, and justice demands as well that we render God adoration and offer Him reparation for disobedience to His commands.

What worldly loss can counterbalance the gain of Grace? Poverty, pain and affronts, which are the afflictions which men feel most, are nothing in comparison to the happiness of enjoying God’s Grace.

Outstanding among the inventions of the present century are telecommunications, by which people can interconnect with each other or stay in their homes and live a life of illusions in a ‘virtual’, unreal world, connected up to the computer’s artificial intelligence, which separates from the reality of the eternal truths. In this too, the children of the True Church have advances which surpass the world’s inventions, because we are now better connected to our Best Friends, for besides being able to receive Holy Communion with such frequency, we have the doctrine, unknown in past centuries, of the real presence of Jesus and Mary in our hearts, where we can communicate with Them at any moment in sweet loving colloquies. The reality is best found within the soul in the state of Grace of God; there will we find happiness. Let us aspire including to an intimacy and union with the Lord such as that which Saint Thérèse noted when God spoke to her through the lips of Mother Genevieve: “So my admiration increased as I realized to what an eminent degree Jesus was living within her and caused her to speak and act. Yes, that sanctity seems to me the most genuine, the most holy and it is that which I desire for myself, for there is no room for illusion.”

On a splendid July morning, two students set out to scale the peak of a high mountain. Both had been born in the great Hungarian plain and had never seen such magnificent and gigantic mountains. To the sound of a cheerful song they went hurrying along, and laughing, left behind them an ancient who, it seemed, was also heading for the peak, but with such calm, such measured steps, that “even the snail creeps along more rapidly”, observed one of the students. When they turned to look back at the ancient after ten minutes, he seemed to them a little ant in the distance at their feet. But the boys’ lungs began to heave ever more. At the start they took five minutes rest every half-hour; later, they had to stop to rest for a quarter of an hour. And near midday, when they lay down completely exhausted beside a cataract, suddenly along the path appeared the snail-man, and with the same calm, measured steps as in the morning, went on ahead of them, and climbed..., climbed..., every higher..., the ancient went up...; he again appeared a little ant... The two youths, on the other hand, stretched out on the rock, were overcome by a weariness which paralysed them. Because to reach the heights and conquer the chosen summit, a youthful urge and a sudden tinder blaze is not enough, rather calm perseverance, constancy, ever the same.

Reading is one of the best means for self-instruction. The understanding of the child is like a great empty room, and that room has to be furnished and filled, taking great pains by way of study and worthwhile reading. You can learn excellent things from good books, and quench your thirst for knowledge.

From Sacred History and Ecclesiastical History we can draw a great store of practical wisdom: “History is the schoolmaster of life.” Take an interest in religious matters, read all you can about them in Church publications; don’t be satisfied with just the Catechism. How many interesting things you can read on the life and teachings of Christ, and the exemplary Lives of the Saints. And the more you know about your religion, the more you will feel drawn by her.

The prime cause of the religious indifference into which mature and intelligent men fall is their failure to know their religion intimately, so that, as Sacred Scripture categorically says, “they blaspheme holy things pretending disdainfully to be unaware of them.” Whereas, what a steadfast spirit that youth reveals who finds a way of learning about the beauty of his religion by way of lengthy study and meditated reading, in preference to novels and scientific books!

The natural sciences, well understood, do not attack the truths of religion; quite the contrary, they help to prove them. Youths still lack the capacity to make a balanced judgement, and general instruction by which to exercise a rigorous review of reading matter. Nothing more natural, then, for them than to accept as current coinage the theories of writers hostile to religion; theories which are certainly incompatible with religion, but incompatible with serious science as well.

We cannot demand of a fifteen or sixteen year old that he discover the fallacies in certain reasonings, nor the partiality existing in certain affirmations in some books. Chiefly, at this age they should not forget the words of the Apostle: “And now that you have received Our Lord Jesus Christ into your hearts, follow His footsteps united to Him, rooted and built up in Him; and therefore strengthened in the Faith, as you learnt from us, the Lord’s Apostles, growing more and more in Him and incessantly giving Him thanks. Be alert so that no one seduce you by means of a useless and fallacious philosophy, nor other vain arguments, based on human traditions according to the things of the world, and not according to the doctrine of Christ.”

Holy Church has always been attacked by the worldly with books, but all the objections and difficulties they invented have already been resolved hundreds of times in a satisfactory way. You have an excellent apologetic book by which you can be on your guard against the insidious objections of the opposite camp, without thereby jeopardizing the great treasure of your faith in any way, and it is the *Palmarian Ecclesiastical History* in which you can read the chief errors of the different heretics followed by their refutation.

In the first days of January 1902, the newspapers ran this sad news item: It was headed by the title: “She was burnt while reading.” An Austrian girl, fourteen years of age, received as a Christmas present an interesting book. The reading captivated her to the point that she could not lay the book down even at night, so she sat beside the chimneypiece and continued her reading by the firelight. Suddenly she cried out. Her plastic comb had caught fire, and spread to the girl’s hair, and in no time the unfortunate was transformed into a living torch. How sad!

She was burnt while reading! How many adolescent souls could apply that same phrase to themselves! Reading can be very profitable, but also very harmful. There are parents who fear for their child when the March winds blow, they take care that their suits are spotless, but are not worried about whether their son is gulping down the filth of immorality, undermining his whole life with items of worldly literature. The communications media, even more so than reading, place loads of rubbish in children’s minds, always in conformity with their lower instincts, above all laziness, impurity and self-love, so that they turn out to be indifferent youths, lacking in ideals, wanting everything to be to their taste, with loads of time to fritter away.

The most grievous danger is in reading novels. It has been clearly shown that even the reading of good novels entails certain dangers which should be borne in mind. The reading of novels, done to excess, gives free reign to a world of sentiments in a youth, promotes his fantasy, twists his will, and cases are not rare of neurosis or at least weakened nerves. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that good novels can exercise a benevolent influence on the reader (excellent description of certain historical eras, noble ideals for which the heroes in those novels struggle hard, etc.) It is not a question of strict prohibition, but of prudent selection.

The youth whose eternal salvation matters to him will not launch into a book without a thought. Whoever eats everything within reach spoils his digestion, and whoever likewise reads everything at hand spoils... his soul. And this evil is a thousand times worse than the other.

A famous French writer, Paul Bourget, says: “There is no one who after a sincere examination of conscience would not be obliged to confess that at his age he would be very different had he not read this or that other book.” We cannot cross a puddle without staining our clothing.

Zola did not allow his children to read his own immoral novels. Nietzsche was asked by his mother: ‘Son, which of your books should I read?’ ‘Mother’, he answered, ‘none. They are not written for you.’ If they did not dare to place their books in the hands of their children or mother, neither should you have them in yours. It is possible that superficial, frivolous people smile when they hear you say that you do not read vulgar books because they do not agree with your principles or your religion. But their ironic smile will disappear on Judgement Day.

No one can reasonably brand you as backward or uncouth for the simple fact of not wanting the destructive poison of such books to enter your soul, your one soul; as neither is anyone branded as backward in science if he is happy to know the poisons there are in the chemist's shop, without trying them out, one after another.

Sometimes the influence of bad books is not clearly and deliberately manifest, but the thoughts acquired stay hidden in the subconscious, and later, perhaps in two years, for example in a temptation, the youth will be unable to resist because he previously read an immoral or impious book. He doesn't even remember the title, the content is lost to memory, and despite all..., its subconscious influence caused his fall in the heat of temptation.

"Watch and pray so that you do not fall in temptation..." "Beware of false guides or prophets..." Thus did the Lord warn His Apostles. And yet you think you can read everything. That is to presume! "Such things do me no harm." Are you then the only one? Others perhaps can fall, but not you? Are you stronger than other mortals? Do you not have to protect your soul from false prophets?

When a hurricane is unleashed and the sea rises up, set out in a frail barque and tell it: "Don't sink." When an avalanche thunders by, drawing along trees and houses, step out in front and tell it: "Don't touch me." That would be simply ridiculous, no? Well, as long as you cannot do that, do not say that bad books do you no harm.

Youths admit without protest that reading immoral books is a bad thing. Or books which attack religion. But they rack their brains asking themselves: "Why do they tell me off because I read Nick Carter or Nick Winter..., when there is nothing in them against religion or against morals, only enthralling detective stories and sporting life events?" It is certain that there are cheap booklets of that kind that do not openly attack religion or morals; despite this, it is not good that they be seen in the hands of conscientious youths, since by their countless variety they twist a boy's upright way of thinking, by their cheap language they spoil the feel for good literature, with their descriptions of continuous crimes and countless murders they inflame their nerves and harden their hearts. Reasons enough for you not to waste your precious time in pernicious folly.



Hostility between science and religion? All this magnificent progress, these manifold inventions, this continuous advance of science, why consider them at enmity with the Faith, with religion? Is our life less wonderful ever since the microscope showed us that an infinite series of living and sensitive beings exist besides those known up till now? We continually find greater motives of admiration, and see nothing which can explain the origin of these things.

However much more we learn, so much the better do we see the great mass of species we have to accept on the basis of simple belief. A German poet says it with grace: "Though you go on studying without a moment's respite, your wisdom will not lead you far. The end of philosophy is this: to know that we have to believe." The phrase of Bacon of St. Albans more or less explains the same sentiment: "Whoever examines science alone may perhaps turn into an atheist; but wide knowledge leads to religion." There is no science that can present one single proven argument against the Faith.

Saint Pius X, for example, sought to foment investigation and science in the Catholic world. He himself ordered the observatory in his palace to be restored. What an eloquent symbol of the harmony existing between faith and science! Our religion does not teach a faith which condemns science. Oh, that not one single scientist might condemn the faith! Quite the contrary, all should have to agree with the German poet: "Science is the star of the faith; piety the heart of all science."

The believer should know, but the wise should believe. If, nonetheless, there are men who have lost the Faith, it is not science that despoiled them of their treasure, rather their pride and impiety.

After final examinations, comes the great question. What career shall I take up? To choose a career is a difficult matter. It is one of life's most grievous responsibilities. You will not find happiness in life, nor work with success, nor assure the salvation of your soul, unless you choose your career wisely. In a badly chosen career, work is done without interest, life is a heavy burden, and peace of soul... is something unknown.

The moment for choosing a career is vital for your whole life. Yet further, on it depends your peace of mind, and often the eternal destiny of your soul. The post you fill, the office in which you work are not so important, rather the wisdom in choosing the post which corresponds to you and how you think regarding your vocation.

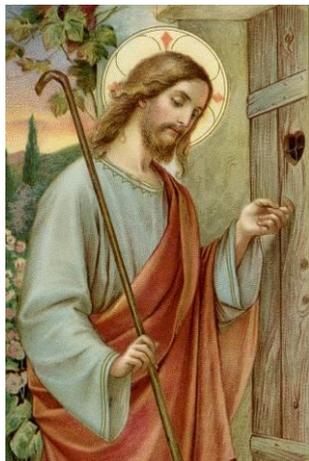
Hence, on choosing a career, never lose sight of God's will. Before all, your life should have an ideal, and it will thus be easier for you to choose a career which will guide you to it. Life's ideal and man's career cannot go against his sovereign end. We come from God and live by Him. The word 'vocation' means 'calling', since it is God who calls, with His inspirations, to some state, profession or career, especially religious life.

Perhaps you too, beloved youth, feel a vocation which will cause grief to your parents, or run into their categorical opposition. Happy the youth who can follow his destiny in life with the blessing of his parents!... But sadly the case often occurs that parents will categorically oppose their child's vocation. This deplorable cross-purposing, collision of minds, most often takes place in the case of sons from a distinguished family, clearly talented, elegant, amiable, gifted, who feel the Lord inviting them to knock at the 'Father's House', and take up the Priestly career.

There are parents whose religious life is very lukewarm, not to say cold, on the other hand quite intelligent who, when one of their children presents them with the great demand: "I want to consecrate my life to the holy concerns of Our Lord Jesus Christ", they oppose and forbid the plan. "Anything you like, but Priest... never."

Son! At the moment of the great trial don't succumb. If Our Lord Jesus Christ really kissed you on the forehead, your plan will be crowned with success, on condition that you stay firmly beside Our Lord, tenaciously safeguarding the treasure of your vocation, and foster it with great pains and constancy while a student. Later, when in the eyes of the world and, as the diploma says, you are mature enough, go up to your father and tell him: "Father, I have to go, the Lord is calling me."

First meditate it well. The Priestly career is a career in the same sense as the rest; it is not hiring yourself out, it is not assuring yourself of your keep, it is not a job, not a way of earning your daily bread, but living fire, aroma of burning incense, the sacrifice of your own person, work, and work of the highest calibre, intense work for love of Christ and of immortal souls. You have to meditate on all this before choosing. But if you truly feel so minded, willing and enthused, then with soul moved at so lofty a distinction, answer as Saint Peter did by the shores of Lake Tiberias: "Lord, You know all things: You know that I love You.' Let me be the shepherd to



save the sheep caught up in the brambles; the fisherman who, at Your command, even after fruitless work over long nights, again casts out his nets with confidence. May I be the magnet able to draw in whoever approaches my circle of action. May I be the worker who brings in the harvest, of which You said: 'The harvest is truly great, but the labourers few.' May I be the spark of fire able to propagate the blaze You brought into the world, and set it afire in the soul of everyone who crosses my path."

On choosing your career, do not be like those who, instead of seeking their true vocation, God's will and His greater honour and glory, seek only something to their own liking. Youths who define their vocation according to their liking and wellbeing and not according to the will and glory of the Most High, are of no use for the Priesthood, or for the religious life, or for marriage either. For a youth of this kind will not have the courage, the commitment, the generosity or the will patiently to take up each day's cross.

Should we be patriots? See how the Lord loved His nation, wept at its apostasy and still awaits its conversion. Now that freemasonry reigns in all nations and imposes wicked laws which offend God, the true patriot will not be the one who cries out wildly at some national festivity, but one who saves his nation from its enemies, as Saint Joan of Arc did. The greatness of a country does not lie chiefly in its natural resources, in the glory of its ancient history, in the wisdom of its kings, but in the honesty and piety of its citizens, and in its fidelity in observing divine law. Whoever feels identified with his country, rejoices at her triumphs, grieves at her prostration in sin, blushes at her shameful apostasy is one who truly loves his country.

In these apocalyptic times, the torment of Divine Justice will surely strike, sooner or later, upon the impious nations; for nations, not possessing immortality, should be chastened here below visibly. Nonetheless, the members of the Church can do much to save them, because in Palmar, the Most Holy Virgin Mary said: "I promise to spread My Protective Mantle out over the nations which have Friars and Nuns in the Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face, and the greater the number, the greater will be that protection and favour and refuge." And the Lord said: "Each Nation which has a good number of Friars in the Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face will be great and will be united to the Great Caudillo of the Tajo in Spain for the re-establishment of My Reign in the world." Thus it is clear that sins are the cause of the ruin of the impious nations and that leading a life of sanctity and commitment to God is the only way we can really benefit the nations and draw God's blessing down upon them.

Our true country is the Heavenly Homeland, the eternal and glorious country called Church Triumphant, which is the continuation of the Church Militant. All the members of the Holy Palmarian Church form a single spiritual nation, for we bear the same divine Blood in our hearts. We are one and the same lineage, the People of God, as Saint Peter said: "You are a chosen lineage, a royal priesthood, a holy flock and a ransomed nation, so that you may publish the grandeurs of the One who called you from out of darkness to His marvellous light."

To publish, or help everyone to know the immensity of Christ's Charity, we must needs imitate Him: "If charity reigns among you, by this all shall know that you are My disciples", said the Lord. Charity is shown by bearing with the defects of our neighbour, helping him in his needs, treating him with respect..., so that all youths must possess a holy and noble soul, a decided character and besides be educated, courteous, attentive and discreet.

There are definite rules which govern our form of address, conversation, mutual behaviour. These norms of good behaviour have been formed over the centuries, and it is not right to do without them. Signs and indicators of your culture will be: your way of walking and sitting, your conversation and gestures, your way of looking and laughing, your manners at table, in town and in society, your personal cleanliness, clothing, hands... But the observance of all these rules is not yet perfect behaviour. All these things can be merely outward, without any value, if the corresponding spirit does not give them life.

True courtesy stems from a pure character and a good heart; and is not acquired by mere formulas. If courtesy is not joined to Christian charity, mere outward correctness will be false courtesy. Today this outward courtesy abounds, the visible smile is used to deceive, since it does not stem from charity.

Man is notably selfish and very benevolent towards himself by nature; and youths far more so. What is selfishness? An inordinate, unhinged love for oneself. Upright love for oneself is a Commandment of God and at the same time an instinct placed within us. It is the source which maintains the person and moves us to avoid all that can harm us. Selfishness, however, is a caricature of upright love of self. The selfish boy believes himself the centre of the universe, that the whole world was made for him, and that all men have as their one purpose on earth to do what is convenient for him. He even judges great world events according to the advantages they bring him.



Youths easily become selfish, precisely in the years they feel most pride at their presence of mind and knowledge. The youth who becomes insupportable at home, is easily annoyed, who does not leave his parents and siblings in peace, who slams the door shut, who frowns harshly, who is always dissatisfied, who never practises restraint with anyone, is said to be "a nervous boy." Nothing of the kind! He is simply selfish. The worst of the case is when these selfish boys, who become furious at any humiliation or contrariety, boast of having a 'strong character', because the reality is quite the opposite: what they have is a weak, sickly character, unable to control their vile instincts, incapable of dominating that despicable selfishness which they try to disguise as virtue by calling it 'strong character'.

Courtesy is like a spark of the great blaze of love for neighbour. It is also like the oil in the machine of society, thanks to which it can function without friction, and for as much without creaking. With the oil of courtesy, social life likewise moves without friction or fuss. Courtesy produces great benefits. It costs nothing and yet captivates souls at once, because courtesy is a universal language understood by all. A youth should become used to having good manners.

Character and courtesy have a certain cause and effect relationship. Someone who out of love for others makes the effort to control his bad temper, who practises understanding when dealing with the defects of others, who helps his companions out of tight spots, can well be said not only to have performed the duty of courtesy, but at the same time to have practised charity and strengthened his own character.

Whoever is truly educated and courteous, will not only be so before others when in society, but also when nobody sees, when he lives alone, because his good manners are the fruit of charity, and stem from character and are not simply outward appearances, but something achieved at the cost of great efforts.

It is told of Stanley, the great explorer of Africa, right into the heart of virgin forests, where he spent whole weeks without seeing any civilized man, that he did not fail to shave one single day. With far greater reason should someone who lives in the presence of God and bears Jesus and Mary enthroned in his heart at every moment take great pains with his behaviour.

Do not choose your friends on the basis of their dress. An ancient Greek philosopher wrote that "man is a social being". Loneliness terrifies him; he seeks companions and friends. The student too wants to have friends. The good friend is a priceless treasure, we can tell him about all our affairs; we can open our soul to him with absolute confidence, share with him our joys and regrets. The worst is that history not only speaks of the good friend, but of the bad one too. Friendships can have fatal lifelong consequences. It would be unjust to make a distinction between men based on their brand-new suit or on their outward appearance, and often misleading. If you choose your friends for their money, for their distinguished bearing and on the basis of their dress, you will have to pay for it with bitter disappointments.

There are youths who can govern their unbridled instinctive whims with a strong hand; but then betray their principles and deny their ideals when feeling the mockery of frivolous, scoffing companions, and the silent attacks of friends who live on the moral borderline.

Son, be on the alert, do everything possible to avoid the ‘wolves’: those who speak coarsely, doubt everything, despise all authority. But if you cannot avoid them completely (for at school, at play and in the street we often inevitably meet up with them), take special care. The first requisite you should look for in a friend is that he profess and practise the true Faith.

How can you know if a person is worthy of your friendship? Note whether you are better or not in his company. We read on the pavement of an ancient Roman house: “Enter good; leave better.” This should also be an indication of a worthwhile friendship: does it make you better or worse? Keep from giving anyone the title of ‘friend’ too easily.

There are youths who, after chatting for the first time with an unknown lad, already take him to be a ‘friend’, when, as fundamental norm, before receiving anyone as a true friend, you should know his soul, his way of thinking. “Trust, but first see whom.”

Do not judge youths by their attractive faces, by their elegant dress or by the wealth of their parents. The distinguished youth is not the one who always wears new outfits and has a beguiling smile, but the one who has noble ideals, faultless morals and a sincere love for Jesus and Mary.

Under a modest appearance an excellent heart can beat, and an attractive face and elegant dress can mask a vulgar spirit and a vile soul. True nobility is in goodness of the heart, an unstained character, in living in the state of Grace.

Sadly, a well laundered suit not seldom masks a rotten soul; under the honey the poison lies; the beautiful apple hides the worm. And if a sensible man has to choose between sitting at table to eat with a swindler with perfect manners or with a man clean of soul who uses his knife as a fork or a spoon, he would rather the latter. The French saying is right: “Beauty without virtue is a flower without scent.”

In the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Christianity exalted woman and raised her up on a pedestal which previously had not even been imagined. And in the measure that Marian devotion increased, a completely new concept of woman arose. Whoever became a Christian and honoured Mary looked with deep respect on all women. Because Marian devotion, if on the one hand it impressed on woman her own dignity and appreciation for her truly worthy qualities, on the other it awoke in men a new form of respect, gently refined, pure, that gentlemanly charm of the Christian, of which the most developed peoples before Christ were unaware and which today, sadly, has again become practically unknown to the present generation, so estranged from Christ. Though you see around you devastating examples of flashy ‘modern’ youths, do not yield one jot and keep up your noble respect for the Christian woman. A well-educated man always feels and shows the same respect for women as if they were his own mother or sister.

The well educated youth not only appears master of himself before others; nor is he courteous only towards strangers, rather in the first place at home, with his parents, with his siblings and with workers. The true gentleman is a gentleman to all. It is not too much to stress this point. Some youths believe that courtesy and restraint are for meetings with strangers. At the same time as they go out of their way in attentions to their companions’ sisters, they are unbearably capricious towards their own; they are pleasant with visitors but rude towards relatives. Furthermore, there are no few youths who, led by the craving to show they are already men, are stubborn, bad-tempered and unruly with their parents and even dare to argue with them. They can dress in the latest fashion, but their behaviour shows their lack of education. Precisely in the reduced family circle is where true courtesy is best shown.



It is well known that in the family the duty of courtesy is difficult, where its laws are unfortunately not seldom broken, even in distinguished circles in which, on the other hand, the rules of good education are observed as faithfully as possible regarding strangers. This does not make sense. God did not give you younger brothers for you to tyrannize and get your own back on them for the bad name you have earned. It is reasonable to expect the tender spectacle of brothers and sisters who not only bear with each other lovingly, but are also positively charitable and courteous towards each other. And your parents? Meditate seriously: How many spiritual and material worries have you caused them from the cradle, and how many from now on!

A cheerful boy, pleasant, always obedient, courteous, how much joy, how much sunshine can he radiate in his family! Be yourself a brilliant sun of joy for your family, its songbird. Be the soul of light for them in the night of the struggles of life.

Struggle against your bad moods! We must be masters of our moods, not only at work, but even in social relationships and in our way of acting. Imitate Saint John Bosco and Saint Francis de Sales, so notable for their constant joyfulness, for whoever loves the cross finds sweetness amid the bitter. Though you be in a bad mood, you don't have to let others around you know, and don't show it to them by becoming annoyed, by a long face, by dissatisfaction. How very often men have to blush at their offensive words and precipitated actions, unpremeditated, when in a bad mood! How often we let fly unconsidered phrases and only later realize the offence we gave to others! "But I didn't want that. I didn't think of what might follow." Okay. But your regret comes too late.

Whoever loves God recognizes that life's difficulties come to us from divine providence, and that we must bear our cross and follow Christ every day along the way up to Heaven. We thus unite to Jesus and Mary in atoning to God, in saving souls, and in our own sanctification, for which we should give Him thanks and rejoice. Man's true spiritual greatness becomes evident in trials, in danger, in misfortune. Not to lose confidence amid troubles, to hold your head high and face up to evil, not to give way to discouragement, are virtues of the great soul. The same happens in the struggle against bad moods. A bad mood is just a symptom of a cross rejected, a cross which divine providence imposes upon each of us daily, and the remedy is simply to love Jesus intensely, and you will thus find sweetness amid bitterness on seeing the loving hand of providence in every cross and trouble in life.

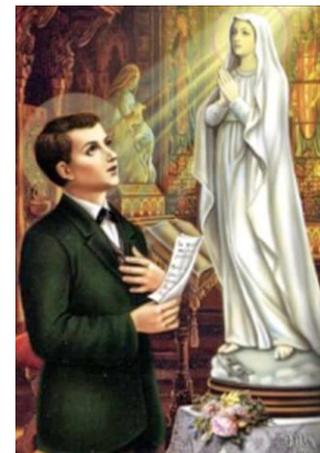
If there is order in your soul, if you love the cross, you need never be in a bad mood, sullen, downcast. Be cheerful, expansive, capable of starting a conversation with the sparrows, and so overcome your bad mood.

A youth's appearance, his way of dress, his personal hygiene, should be the expression of inward order, of a disciplined spirit, of a pure soul, of spiritual cleanliness, as is proper for those who live ever in God's presence. Strive to keep up an agreeable presence, an orderly look. Obviously, that you be no slave to worldly fashions, with its immodesty and superfluous cosmetics, makeup and perfumes. We are dealing with personal hygiene of body and clothing. The student with dirty hands, unbrushed teeth, tangled hair, does not give a good impression. Cleanliness is important, not only for health and avoiding offence to neighbour, but above all because our body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. A washed body in clean clothing is the best fashion.

Self-control is also necessary at table. And precisely the orderly satisfaction of our simple daily needs is the best way to convince the body that it is the spirit which is in command. By just keeping the rules of politeness at meals, to some degree we can spiritualize this act, merely animal, and raise it to a higher level. Make use of meals to form the habit of overcoming sensuality and to avoid giving free rein to caprices, which we do by mortifying our tastes at meals; and thus, strengthened by good habits, we find it easier to overcome concupiscence and submit to the demands of God's Law in everything.

The chief rule at meals is discipline and moderation. Take great pains not to let your life be guided by your stomach or consider this organ as your most precious treasure, against which, according to the parable of Menenius Agrippa, all the others rose up. You are never to eat without moderation, however much you like chicken or some other dish; still less when you are invited. Guests are not lacking who prepare with a two-day fast to be able to pack their stomachs at a celebration. You, however, follow the advice of that ancient Persian monarch who counselled his son not to go to a banquet feeling hungry so as not to fall in temptation and eat to excess.

How many unedifying scenes have been witnessed in this respect! Observe the free buffet at celebrations where people can fill their stomachs without paying. What excesses! How many guests fall into unrestrained voracity and gluttony! And yet this voracity in eating and drinking, this insatiability for things given out free, are signs of a very base individual and an empty soul.



Dominate your tongue: are your words true? Do you give your opinion too hastily? And if the other person differs from you, do you calmly listen until he finishes? Not in vain did the Creator's admirable wisdom enclose the tongue with a double padlock, a double wall: first, the lips, and then, the teeth, as an indication that we should weigh our words well before speaking them. Ah! How much it costs many youths to put a padlock on their mouths! Words flow from their lips like the stream running breakneck down the mountain, naturally with very little content. The heart of the fool is on his lips, while the tongue of the wise is in his heart.

"Show me your tongue", the doctor says; he looks at it and says if the youth is sick or not. "Speak to me", I would rather say, "and I will tell you if your soul is sick or not." Whoever speaks much, regularly speaks out of vanity, since the chief topic of his discourses is usually himself. A simple and serene opinion suits a youth better

than a discourse brimful of pride, proper to youths who express their opinions with amazing confidence and crushing superiority. A gentle and friendly tone is sign of a delicate soul and virile self-control. It is not as you might think a sign of weakness. You can express your viewpoint, show your difference of opinion, but you can and should do so with good grace.

An interesting example of being able to say the hardest truths as long as you do so in a serene tone, is the case of Harún al Raschid, a Baghdad caliph. One night he dreamt that all his teeth had fallen out. ‘What can this strange dream mean?’ he asked a man able to explain dreams. ‘It means that, while you are still alive, all your relatives will perish.’ Harún al Raschid felt a wave of anger rise up, and had the soothsayer scourged. ‘Fool, how dare you tell me such a thing? If my relatives die before I do, what joy can I have in this world?’ He then had another soothsayer called, who told him, ‘the honourable chief’s dream means that the caliph will live far longer than his relatives and that his life will be far longer than theirs.’ This explanation pleased the caliph, who gave the soothsayer a hundred gold coins. And yet the content of the explanation was the same, only the tone had changed. “It is the tone which makes the music.” So too, the charitable person always finds a way to explain the hardest and most disagreeable realities without wounding or offending.

Dealings with others according to Christian charity are resumed in these words of Christ: “Do to the rest of men all that you would have them do to you.”

After death, Saint Dominic Savio appeared to Saint John Bosco and told him that youths were divided into three groups: the ‘unharméd’, those whom the devil had been unable to wound, and still conserved their innocence intact; they pressed on steadfast along the same path, despite being the target of arrows, and sword and lance thrusts coming from all sides. The second group were the ‘wounded’, those who had fallen from God’s Grace, but had then recovered, healed their wounds, repented and confessed; they were far more than the first, and many made their way downcast and disheartened. And there was a third group, those ‘abandoned to the way of wickedness’ who were those fallen from God’s Grace, many of whom were taken as good, even outstanding, among their companions, but unhappily were not so.

Perhaps among Palmarians too there are faithful of these three groups, but we consider above all those many who, with their wounds now healed by the general indult, still live ‘downcast and disheartened’, for it is urgent that they rise up from their abasement before the arrival of the terrible moments to come. Let us mistrust ourselves, and seek the help of prayer, so as not to be found wanting.

On some occasions, Christ only calms the tempest when there is no human remedy. See how the Apostles lost heart during the days of the Lord’s Passion, just when they were on the eve of Jesus’ Glorious Resurrection, for the triumph comes after the battle.

Our constant struggle is against the three enemies of the soul and other adversaries, and also consists in facing up to the problems, sufferings and difficulties of this life.

Holy Church has always had to struggle against the enemies of the Faith: jews, muslims, heretics and secret societies. In the twentieth century, the majority of Catholics gave up the struggle; they dialogued with heretics and submitted to freemasonry’s standards of liberty, equality and fraternity, forgetting that many Popes had warned that the true purpose of freemasonry is to destroy the Religion of Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, and to impose freethinking and an independent morality everywhere, and a new world order without God.

These same enemies of Christ have already begun their final assault against the remnant still left of Christianity, with the blasphemous intention of overthrowing the immovable Rock of the Church, and challenging her Divine Founder’s promise: “The gates of Hell shall not prevail against Her.” But they will end up the same as all previous persecutors of the Church, with their own destruction, and the blood of martyrs will again be the seed for producing new Christians.

Each nation has its army to defend and guarantee order and peace. Holy Church, to defend her spiritual interests, also has a powerful army, composed of the Angelic Legions, the Saints of Heaven, and the militant members on earth. The Militias of the Lord God of Hosts are immensely more powerful than all the armed forces of this world. The Heavenly Powers are always at our service, if we invoke them with faith and constancy in our continuous battle against the enemies of our soul and other adversaries. Down through history, these powerful legions of the Lord God of Hosts won great victories for the Church against her enemies, with the consequent fruits of peace, order and evil wiped out. For example, the conquest of the Promised Land, the glorious battles of the Holy Machabee Caudillos, as likewise many other military feats in defence of religion and peace. As you can see, we children of Christ’s Holy Church are true soldiers, so that we have to be ever

ready, by the help of God, to defend His Laws and His Rights, obliged as we are by our state as Christians. “Battle on as good soldiers of Christ, for you still campaign in the ranks of the Church, and all campaigning presupposes continuous vigilance and readiness to fight,” wrote Saint James the Less. The Holy Sacrament of Confirmation further strengthens the soul and makes us witnesses and soldiers of Christ, and further empowers us to battle unto martyrdom. “The very virtue of being Soldier of Christ clamours out loud for the use of the sword in defence of the King of Heaven and earth Whom we serve,” said Saint Gregory XVII in his Twenty-Sixth Pontifical Document.

Be prepared! Make continuous acts of love of God. “Give me but Thy love and grace and that suffices me, without my asking anything more,” said Saint Ignatius. Only those who have a deep love for Jesus can win victory. The times prophesied are approaching. Let us recall some of the Messages of Palmar which encourage us to persevere. The Most Holy Virgin Mary said: “Beloved children, following the great tempest approaching the Church, there will come a time of glory and splendour, for My triumph is close, triumph which will be accompanied by great glories for the Church; for it will be sealed by the blood of the Marian Apostles and martyrs of the Last Times. Soon, very soon, the world will be rapt up in the contemplation of the era of the great heavenly wonders. Rejoice, dear children, as the day called Mary’s is now close.”

“I ask you all for courage, vigour, holy vigour. Cowardice is not for Christians. If necessary, ready to give your lives, lives which can save many others. The blood of martyrs sanctifies the Church. My little children: Courage, courage! My Mantle covers you all. Beneath My Mantle you will be secure and protected, free from assaults by wolves. My little children, do not forget that I am the Divine Shepherdess and that you are My little sheep. And that I care for all My sheep. Follow Me; Jesus will come out to meet you.” “Give thanks to Jesus for this gift which He has given you, whereby you have a Mother to tend and guide you, especially in times of persecution and trial.”

Saint Dominic said: “What do you children of the Church want? Do you perhaps think that the Church can go ahead without martyrs? For the Church to be fruitful, the blood of Martyrs is required. Yet not all are called to this heavenly gift. But there are many called who do not respond to the calling, and many who want to be called and are not called.” One of them was Saint Thérèse, who wrote: “I feel the vocation of warrior, of Priest, of apostle, of doctor and of martyr. In a word, I feel the need, the desire to carry out for You, Jesus, the most heroic of feats. I feel in my soul the strength of a crusader, of a pontifical soldier. I would like to die on a battlefield in defence of the Church.”

The Lord infuses spirit into those who suffer: “My children, rejoice and be glad when you are persecuted and calumniated! Bless those who curse you, because the more persecuted you are, the greater will be the glory you enjoy. What is a Christian? A disciple of Mine who takes up his cross and follows after Me. A Christian without a Cross is not a Christian. If the Master died on the Cross, do you expect to be glorified in life? No, My children, first Golgotha! See how the martyrs went out to martyrdom singing, and by that seed the Primitive Church was strengthened. Today as well a new outpouring of martyrs’ blood is needed. Once again there will be great martyrs in the Church; do not worry, do not be troubled, saying: ‘Jesus, I can’t, I haven’t the strength, I haven’t the courage, I’m no use’! That’s what you think! When I take you by the hand, let the world laugh, for they will tremble at the way you bear it all for love of Me.”



Now is the time to decide: Either with Christ or against Christ. If with Christ, then “Press on, Apostles of Christ, press on, ever onwards, on to death or on to triumph.” And so, be firmly determined to fulfil God’s Holiest Will with decision and integrity, and above all when deciding to take up the religious state, for in the religious life are the most valiant and beloved soldiers of Christ and Mary. We shall overcome with the ardour of Christ, who exclaimed: “I came to put fire on earth. And what do I wish, but that it blaze up? For I have come to set the earth ablaze with the Fire of Charity, to destroy the false peace the world gives.”

This year 2021, we will not have the usual International Pilgrimage to Palmar for Holy Week, for the times are difficult for pilgrims and travellers. Let everyone and every family do what is in their power to honour the Mysteries of Holy Week, and pray that the Will of God be done. Let us accept with love all that Divine Providence disposes, and thus, even amid the greatest difficulties, we shall all be able to unite to the Sacred Passion of Christ and Mary.

Given in El Palmar de Troya, Apostolic See, on the 2nd of February, Principal Feast of the Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ MMXXI and fifth of Our Pontificate.



With Our Apostolic Blessing
Petrus III, P.P.
Póntifex Máximus

Petrus III P.P.