

Birkenhead, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

The liturgy which is offered to our meditation this morning invites us to the constant practice of charity between us. Since the original sin, this unfortunate wound made us weak to resist these assaults of the antique enemy, and several time we are offending this sacred virtue.

Today, the Lord urges us, and even stronger, make us a command to firstly clear out our conscience if we had anything against our brother, before coming to Him.

During the solemn celebration of the Holy Mass, a beautiful gesture, inherited from the antique celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, reminds us about this divine command: the sign of peace. More than just a modern shake hands, the liturgical sign of peace looks like a delicate and fraternal hug one to another. This sign of peace is always coming from the altar where the Sacrifice of Jesus has just been renewed: the priest kisses the altar and pass this blessing to the Deacon. Then the Subdeacon brings it to all the clergy members in choir, while the *Agnus Dei* is sung.

We still have a reduction of this beautiful custom during the low mass, as the common texts remains. Two prayers are reminding us every day about this peace and charity we ought to practice and live: firstly, the last verse of the *Agnus Dei*, who kindly ask for the peace of God to be given to us, and secondly the first of the three prayers which are said silently by the priest, as a very last preparation to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord.

How this sign of peace could be true, if we keep behind our mind our resentment and anger against our neighbour, against our brother?

If by a very unfortunate chance, this was happening to us, let's learn from the liturgy itself what we should do: everything is coming down from the altar to us, to heal our wounds and show us the right behaviour and constant practice of Charity.

A community life could be at certain stage quite challenging, as it could be difficult to avoid someone we less get along. But the source of unity is not only in human relationship, but in the common friend we all have together: Christ. Because He is our friend, we have Him in common, and therefore, we are all friends together. With the grace of baptism, this friendship is even transformed into a brotherhood, bonding all souls together into one same family, God's family.

The root of this unity will be found in the common life and prayer, united with the same desire to serve God. The source of all unity is there: common or private prayer, which will give a strong foundation to real charity, all made up of forgetfulness of self, and for that very reason, the bringer of Divine Grace. Let's listen on that very point Blessed Columba Marmion, in one of his numerous letters:

It is above all during the Divine Office that we consecrate our whole being to God and to souls, and I am more and more convinced that God's

greatest graces are given to those who are most generous-at those moments. It is written of Jesus, *Vere languores nostros ipse tulit et dolores nostros ipse portavit.*<sup>1</sup>

When we are closely united to Him during the Divine Office and Holy Mass, in His relations with His Father, with the Blessed in Heaven and with faithful souls upon earth, we realise those sublime words of His Sacred Heart, *Rogo, Pater, ut omnes unum sint, sicut Tu in Me et Ego in Te, ut sint consummati in unum.*<sup>2</sup>

We become so to speak one with Him, when we take upon us, with Him, all the sorrows, the sighings, the sufferings of Holy Church and intercede in the name of all, full of confidence in His Infinite merits. When we act thus habitually, we go out of ourselves, we forget our own little sorrows and annoyances and we think much more about God and souls. In return, God thinks of us and fills us with His grace: *Date et dabitur vobis; mensuram bonam et coagitatam et super-effluentem dabunt in sinum vestrum.*<sup>3</sup>

My dear child, I am speaking to you in this way because the more I see of religious, both men and women, the more I am convinced that the great cause of their troubles is that most of them think too much of themselves, and too little of Jesus and souls. If they could once and for all go out of themselves and consecrate their whole life to Jesus and souls, their hearts would become wide as the ocean; they themselves would fly upon the path of perfection: *Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri cum dilatasti cor meum.*<sup>45</sup>

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> "Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows." Isaias, LIII, 4.

<sup>2</sup> "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee· that they also may be one in Us." John, XVII, 21.

<sup>3</sup> "Give and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom." Luke, VI, 38.

<sup>4</sup> "I have run the way of Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart." Ps. CXCIII, 32.

<sup>5</sup> Dom Marmion, Union with God, part IV, chp. 4, Charity towards our Neighbour, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1904.