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JMJ

U.I.O.G.D.

Ave Maria!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, we love Thee, save souls

O God come to our assistance. Jesus, Mary, Joseph please make haste to help us!

+ + + Jesus, Mary, Joseph + + +

VOL. 4 = THE CHRISTIAN'S STATE OF LIFE

EASTER SUNDAY

The Childlike Confidence with Which Every One Ought to Abandon Himself to Divine Providence

*“They come to the sepulcher.”*— St. Mark 16: 2

Who were they who went out so early in the morning? Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, all weak women. Where are they going to? “To the sepulcher,” in which Christ was buried, whose very Name was hated by the Jews, whom even courageous men, nay, even his own Apostles and disciples were afraid to defend, lest they should be seized by the Jews and put to death. They knew that there was a guard before the sepulcher to prevent any one from entering. Why were they going? “That coming they might anoint Jesus.” But how could they do that, because they could not drive away the guard, nor roll back the heavy stone that closed the entrance of the sepulcher? And they were well aware of that also: “Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulcher? For it was very great.” Considering all these things, might not their journey seem a fruitless one? And yet they went on with courage and confidence, knowing that he who, although dead, was the Almighty God, could remove all difficulties from their way, so that they might fulfill their intention. Nor were they disappointed, for when they came to the grave all the soldiers were gone, the stone was rolled back, and, what was still farther beyond their hopes, they were the first to hear of the Resurrection of Christ. See; what no man dared to do was done by those weak women, who, in spite of the difficulties that surrounded them, put their confidence in God, and went on boldly. Oh, how their example shames our pusillanimity, our want of faith and confidence in God! How it condemns our inordinate and excessive cares, anxieties, fears, and uneasiness, our useless troubles and apprehensions. Let us, therefore, consider that there is

*nothing more reasonable, or more conducive to true happiness, than to abandon ourselves with childlike confidence to divine providence.*

Where could I place all my hope and confidence, to whom could I more reasonably intrust myself and all belonging to me, if not to him who has a perfect knowledge of me and my condition, who knows exactly what my wants and necessities are, who has also the power of providing me with all I want, and guarding me from all harm, at all times, and what is still more, whose love and good-will I can always be certain of, knowing that he desires and seeks only to do me good, and to arrange everything for my greatest happiness, both of soul and body? Oh, if I find such a Guardian, I need have no further care! I can rest quietly and allow him to deal with me as he thinks fit, certain that no evil can happen to me, and that nothing I undertake can turn out badly.

But where can you find such a one? You may search the whole world through and you will not find any one who possesses those three qualities. Christ our Lord, when exhorting us to have no care for the morrow, nor for food, drink, or clothing, but to place all our confidence in our heavenly Father, intrusting ourselves and all we have to his providence, uses these brief but impressive words: “For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things” (St. Matthew 6: 32). God knows all your wants; you need not fear that he will forget them. Be assured, then, that he can provide for and help you in your misery. Your Father knows and can do all these things; you cannot doubt, therefore, on his goodness and love; you must believe that he arranges everything for your greater good.

God knows everything that concerns us—what we want. What could be hidden from him? St. Paul says: “All things are naked and open to his eyes” (Heb. 4: 13); all, without exception, great and small. He cares for me and for each one in particular, as if he were occupied with me alone. He cares for the whole world as he would for one individual. Go where you will, do as you please, let what may happen to you, whether you are in joy or in sorrow, the eye of God always follows you, in all places, in all circumstances. His wisdom “reacheth from end to end” (Wis. 8: 1). It knows and comprehends all things, not merely those that are present, but also those that are past, and what will happen and can happen for all eternity; everything is clear and manifest to the eye of God, and is arranged by his providence with the utmost wisdom. Be comforted, then; God sees all your wants; “his eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of Adam” (Jerem. 32: 19). He knows more of your wants than you do yourselves.

The same all-wise God is more careful of you than you can be of yourselves. When you are asleep at night the eye of God is watching over you for your greater good. Sometimes, when you sit down quietly, not suspecting any evil, the hand of God is engaged in averting some misfortune that was about to happen to you, of which you knew nothing. Do you know how many hairs you have on your head? No. Yet God knows it, and has counted them exactly, as Christ says: “The hairs of your head are all numbered” (St. Matthew 10: 30). “But a hair of your head shall not perish” (St. Luke 21: 18), without his knowledge. Not a flake of snow is blown about by the wind that God does not know of it, nay, he has even decreed that a particular flake should fall upon you, and not on any one else. In a word, even the meanest thing on earth is under the constant care of divine providence. Therefore, if God knows and cares for even the least thing, that to our mind is of no importance whatever, how much more careful will he not be of his reasoning creatures, whom he has made to know, love, and possess him for all eternity? How much less likely is he to leave them without what is necessary for the support of their

bodies, the comfort of their minds, and for the eternal salvation of their immortal souls? And what a consolation it is for me, and for all men, to think and say with David: "But I am a beggar and poor; the Lord is careful for me" (Ps. 39: 18). He knows and cares for everything that belongs to me. Certainly, that is reason enough to abandon myself to him with childlike confidence.

He who believes in the one true God must adore him as the Almighty Lord, whom nothing can withstand, to whose will all things must be subject. As long as I am under his care and protection, who can harm me, or what can be wanting to me? For he who made this earth out of nothing by a single word, can he not provide a dwelling for me in some corner of it? He who placed bounds for the raging sea that it dare not pass, He who restrains the winds and makes them blow, how, when, and where he wills, can he not protect me against the enemies of my soul and body? He who causes the mighty oak to grow from a small acorn, can he not find the means of providing for me in my poverty? He who protected the three youths in the fiery furnace, and Daniel in the lions' den, can he not save my life from dangers that are not near so great? He who fed thousands in the desert with a few loaves, can he not find bread enough for me, and for you and your children? He who has so richly adorned the earth, can he not provide me with clothing? Therefore, I think and say, with fresh courage and firm confidence in his providence: "The Lord is the protector of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. 26: 1.)

But, you say, we know all that. God knows and can do all things; he knows how to help us, nor does he want the power to do so; but he does not wish to do so, as we often find to be the case, when He leaves us in trials and troubles without consolation and help. Christians, where is your confidence? Where is your faith? He who knows your wants is your Father. "There is no one so good and so fatherly," no one who is more concerned for the wants and necessities of his children, no one who has a greater love for his own flesh and blood than God has for us, for whom he sacrificed his only Son. Nay, the name, father, is not sufficient to express the tenderness of his love for us; he takes the name of mother also. Hear what he says: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isai. 49). So great is the fatherly, nay, more than motherly care that the God of love takes of his children! Is it likely that this God has changed his heart toward us? Are we not rather his chosen children, whom He has specially commanded to call him Father?

But we must be good children; our chief care should be to lead a good and Christian life; to obey his law exactly; to use moderate, natural diligence according to our state, in temporal things; to have recourse to him always, and then to allow him to do with and for us as he pleases, with the firm assurance that nothing will be wanting to us. Oh, what a quiet and happy life we could have if we were not wanting in that childlike confidence! Hear how God himself complains, that we trust in him so little: "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns," and yet, "your heavenly Father feedeth them." See how unjustly you accuse your heavenly Father, oh, ye of little faith, with your childish fear and inordinate anxiety on account of your wants! He feeds the birds of the air, the young ravens and carrion birds even, for your use and benefit. "Are not you of much more value than they?" Are you afraid that such a Father will neglect you? No, be not anxious; no matter who you are, no matter what danger threatens, what enemy persecutes, what want oppresses you, abandon yourself to God, as children do to their loving father; throw yourself in his arms; he will not turn away from you nor abandon you, nor leave you without comfort in your distress, for he is your Father.

If the name of father, which takes away all fear and anxiety from children, is not enough to inspire you with confidence in God, then, at least, you must believe his own words, for he is a God of truth, whom as Christians you are bound to believe. No one can bind himself more solemnly to do or to give anything than God has bound himself to help in all dangers those who hope in him, and to give them what they desire. We find hundreds of such promises in the Holy Scripture, and they are repeated so impressively, that he who doubts them must necessarily accuse a most faithful God of treachery. To save time, I will quote only a few of them. “Ye that fear the Lord, hope in him, and mercy shall come to you for your delight. Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.” If there be any such let him come forward: “For who hath continued in his commandment, and hath been forsaken? or who hath called upon him, and he despised him?” No such person can be found in the whole world: “For God is compassionate and merciful . . . and he is a protector to all that seek him in truth” (Eccles. 2: 9-13). “Behold, the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear him, and on them that hope in his mercy to deliver their souls from death, and feed them in famine” (Ps. 32: 18). “Be not solicitous, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things” (St. Matthew 6: 31).

Ah, Christians, how is it that we are so wanting in confidence in God? We believe that there is one God, in whom there are three Persons; that Jesus Christ, God and man, is present under the appearances of bread and wine; and many other mysteries, too, that far surpass our understanding, we believe as firmly as if we saw them with our own eyes. Why? Because God has revealed them; that alone is enough for us, for we are certain that God cannot deceive us. But it is the same God who assures us that he keeps a watchful eye on all our wants, so as to provide for us; that every one who hopes in him will not be confounded; that there is no danger or necessity in which he is not willing to help those who have recourse to him with confidence in his goodness. Now, this is not less worthy of belief than the mystery of the Blessed Trinity; God can no more deceive us in this point than in the others; why, then, should we not believe it firmly? We trust even an honorable man, who pledges his word and makes us a promise; why should we not trust God, who cannot go back of his word like men; who can always fulfill it, which men are often unable to do; who would not be God if he deceived us and did not keep his promise? Why, I ask again, do we not trust him? Why have we so little confidence in him?

And, what is worst of all, we violate God’s commandments for fear that if we served him faithfully we should suffer some temporal loss. How many use unjust means, how many have recourse to underhand trickery to maintain themselves in their state, as if we were obliged to be at a loss by always doing what is right! How many use sinful means to gain even a just lawsuit, as if God could not gain it for them, or replace their loss otherwise if they are unsuccessful! How many shrink from fulfilling the law of Christian charity and mercy and giving generous alms, lest their children should be at a loss thereby; as if God could not provide for them, although he has promised that “he that giveth to the poor shall not want” (Prov. 28 : 27).

And this is the reason why God, wearied of his own goodness to you, sometimes leaves you without help in your wants, sickness, misfortunes, persecutions, or poverty, and allows you to moan and lament in vain, while He pretends not to hear you, either because you are not as pious and zealous in his service as you should be, or because you have not a childlike confidence in him, and place your hopes in creatures alone. For that very reason, I say, you get neither help nor consolation from him, and therefore things do not prosper with you, because he wishes to show you that without him all your labor and trouble are worthless. “Woe to you that are faint-hearted, who believe not God; and therefore you shall not be protected by him. Woe to you that have lost

patience, and that have forsaken the right ways, and have gone aside into crooked ways” (Ecclus 2: 16). As a just punishment of your want of confidence, all help will be denied you; your business will not prosper, you will not escape that danger, no matter what you do, you will not recover from that sickness; and that because you do not place your hopes in God, but elsewhere. Manage matters more prudently, and confidently commit yourselves and all your affairs to him who alone knows how to help you, who alone can and will help you, casting all your care upon him, for He hath care of you (I Peter 5: 7). What a consolation for him who can think and say to himself: I am certain that God knows what I want and what is good for me; I am certain that he can arrange everything for my greater good; I am certain, too, that he loves me more than a father loves his only child, and that he will arrange everything for my greater good! What need have I, then, to trouble myself? What can disturb my peace? No matter how things go with me, well or ill, in the judgment of the world, I know that my loving Father has so decreed for me, and, therefore, I am certain that it is all for the best. Confiding in him, I cannot be disturbed by any misfortune, danger, illness, or want. If temptations try to lead me into sin, “I will look toward the Lord.” If poverty and want oppress me, “I will look toward the Lord.” If I am tried by sickness, “I will look toward the Lord.” Whatever may be my circumstances: “In thee, oh, Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to confusion” (Ps. 70: 1).



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