

Father Goffine's instructions for the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost.

From the *Explanation of the Epistles and Gospels* by Father Leonard Goffine. Imprimatur: Rt. Rev. Joseph F. Mooney, V.G. September 28, 1918. (Copyright 1880):



REMARK. *If from Pentecost until Advent there be only twenty-three Sundays, the following one is omitted, and the Mass of the twenty-fourth is said.*

The Introit of the Mass consoles and incites us to confidence in God who is so benevolent towards us, and will not let us pine away in tribulation. The Lord saith: I think thoughts of peace, and not of affliction: you shall call upon me, and I will hear you: and I will bring back your captivity from all places. (Jer. XXIX. 11. 12. 14.) Lord, thou hast blessed thy land: thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob. (Ps. LXXXIV.) Glory &c.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH. Absolve, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy people from their offences: that through Thy bountiful goodness we may be freed from the bonds of those sins which through our frailty we have contracted. Thro',

EPISTLE. (Philipp. III 17-21.: IV, 1-3.) Brethren, Be followers of me, and observe them who walk so as you have our model. For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown: so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beg of Evodia, and I beseech Syntyche, to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women who have labored with me in the gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

EXPLANATION. There are unhappily many Christians, who, as St. Paul complains, are, declared enemies of Christ's cross, who do not wish to mortify their senses, who only think of gratifying their lusts, and, as it were, find their only pleasure, even seek their honor, in despising the followers of Jesus and His saints on the narrow path of the cross, of mortification and humiliation. What will be the end of these people? Eternal perdition! For he who does not crucify the flesh, does not belong to Christ. (Gal. V. 24.) He who does not bear the-marks of the mortification of Jesus in his body, in him the life of Christ shall not be manifested. (II Cor. IV. 10.) He who does not walk in heaven during his, life-time, that is, who does not direct his thoughts and desires heavenward, and despise the world and its vanities, will not find admission there after his death.

ASPIRATION. Would to God, I could say with St. Paul: The world is crucified to me, and I to the world. (Gal. VI. 14.)

GOSPEL. (Matt. IX. 18-26.) At that time, As Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, behold, a certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead: but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with his disciples. And behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a tumult, he said: Give place: for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

INSTRUCTIONS. I. Filial was the faith, unbounded the confidence, profound the humility of this woman, and therefore, she received health also. Learn from this, how pleasing to the Lord is faith, confidence and humility; let your prayer always be penetrated by these three virtues, and you will receive whatever you ask.

II. The devout Louis de Ponte compares the conduct of this woman to our conduct at holy Communion, and says: Christ wished to remain with us in the most holy Eucharist, clothed with the garment of the sacramental species of bread, that he who receives His sacred flesh and blood, may be freed from evil concupiscence. If you wish to obtain the health of your soul, as did this woman the health of the body, imitate her. Receive the flesh and blood of Jesus with the most profound humility, with the firmest confidence in His power and goodness, and like this woman you too will be made whole.

III. Jesus called three dead persons to life, the twelve year old daughter of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, of whom there is mention made in this gospel, the young man at Naim, (Luke VII. 14.) and Lazarus. (John. XI- 43.) By these three dead persons three classes of sinners may be understood: the maiden signifies those who sin in their youth through weakness and frailty, but touched by the grace of God, perceive their fall and easily rise again through penance; by the young man at Naim those are to be understood who sin repeatedly and in public, these require greater grace, more labor and severer penance; by Lazarus, the public and obdurate habitual sinners are to be understood who can be raised to spiritual life only by extraordinary graces and severe public penance.

IV. Christ did not raise the maiden, until the minstrels and noisy multitude were removed, by which He wished to teach us that the conversion of a soul cannot be accomplished in the midst of the noise and turmoil of temporal cares, idle pleasures and associations.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING RIDICULE AND DERISION

And they laughed him to scorn. (Matt IX. 24.)

When Jesus told the minstrels and the crowd that the girl was not dead, but sleeping, they laughed at Him, because they understood not the meaning of His words. Sensual-minded men generally act in the same manner towards the priests and ministers of God, who by their word and example admonish them to despise honors, riches and pleasures, and to embrace the love of poverty, humility and mortification. This is, an unintelligible and hateful language to them which they ridicule and mock just as they do when they hear that death is a sleep, from which we shall one day awake and be obliged to appear before the judgment-seat of God. Woe to such scoffers by whose ridicule so many souls are led from the path of virtue! What the devil formerly, accomplished by tyrants in estranging men from God and a lively faith in Him and His Church, he seems to wish to accomplish in our days by the mockery, scoffs, and blasphemies of wicked men; for at no period have piety and virtue, holy simplicity and childlike faith,

adherence to the holy Roman Church and her laws, reverence for her head, her ministers and priests, been more mocked, derided and blasphemed. Unhappily many permit themselves to be induced by mockery to abandon piety, to omit the public practice of their faith, to conceal their Catholic conviction, and to lead a lukewarm, careless, indeed, sinful life. Woe to the scoffers! they are an abomination to the Lord (Prov. III. 32.) who will one day require from their hands all the souls perverted by them. Do not permit yourself to be led astray by those who ridicule your faith and zeal for virtue; remember the words of Jesus: He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven. (Matt. X. 33.) Let Jesus be your consolation, He was scoffed and blasphemed for your sake, and often say within yourself:

I know, my most amiable Jesus, that the servant cannot be more than his master. Since Thou wert so often sneered at, mocked and blasphemed, why should I wonder if I am derided for my faith in Thee and Thy Church, and for the practice of virtue!

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