

Rev. Fr. Leonard Goffine's - The Church's Year
INSTRUCTION ON THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



At the Introit of the Mass the Church calls upon all to invoke our Lord:

INTROIT Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am alone and poor. See my abjection and my labor, and forgive me all my sins, O my God. (Ps. XXIV.) To Thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In Thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed. Glory etc.

COLLECT O God, the protector of them that hope in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: multiply Thy mercy upon us, that, guided and directed by Thee, we may so pass amid temporal goods as not to lose the eternal. Through etc.

EPISTLE (I Pet: V. 6-11.) Dearly beloved, Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you. Be sober and watch: because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you and confirm you and establish you. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.

EXPLANATION In this lesson St. Peter teaches that if we would be exalted we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. This necessary humility shows itself in us by giving ourselves and all our cares up to the providence of God who, as St. Augustine says, provides for one as for all. We should not fail, however, to be sober and circumspect, and not think ourselves secure from the lusts of the world. The devil like a lion seeking prey, desires the ruin of our souls, tormenting us by temptations and afflictions. By confidence in God's help we can and should resist him, especially when we consider that after the trials of this life the crown of glory will be our portion for all eternity.

ON DRUNKENNESS

Be sober and watch. (I Peter, V. 8.)

Sobriety is the mother of vigilance; intemperance is the mother of sloth and of numberless other vices which cast many souls into the jaws of the devil who, like a hungry lion, goes about day and night seeking for prey. Woe, therefore, to those who because of their drunkenness live, as it were, in constant night and in the perpetual sleep of sin! How will they feel when, suddenly awakened by death, they find themselves before the judgment-seat of God burdened with innumerable sins of which they were unconscious, or of which they wished not to know they were guilty! Who can number the sins committed in a state of intoxication, sins for which the drunkard cares nothing, for which he has no contrition, and has not confessed, because the light of reason is extinguished, his life is a senseless stupor, and he is therefore unconscious of his thoughts, words and actions.

But will the divine Judge find no sin in such persons? Will He permit the shameful deeds committed while intoxicated, the curses, blasphemies, sneers, detractions, outrages, and scandals to remain unpunished? He who demands an account of every idle word, will He demand no account of the time 'so badly spent, of the money so uselessly squandered, families neglected, church service unattended, education of children omitted, and the other great sins committed? They will indeed excuse themselves, pleading that these sins were committed involuntarily, or as a joke, when they were intoxicated; that their intoxication was excusable, as they were not able to stand muck; but will God be content with such excuses? Will they not add to their damnation? That they took more than they could bear of the intoxicating drink, deprived themselves of the use of reason, and thus voluntarily caused all the sins they committed while in that state, is what will be punished.

What then can they expect? Nothing less than the fate of the rich man spoken of in the gospel, who on account of his debaucheries was buried in hell; where during all eternity his parched tongue was not cooled by one drop

of water. (Luke XVI. 22.) Yes, this will be the place of those unconverted drunkards of whom St. Paul says that they will not possess the kingdom of God. (I Cor. VI. 10.) How rare and how difficult is the conversion of a drunkard, because with him as with the unchaste this habit becomes a second nature, and because he generally abuses the remedies: the holy Sacraments of Penance and the. Altar.

This should certainly deter any one from the vice of drunkenness; but those who are not thus withheld, may consider the indecency, the disgrace, and the injury of this vice, for it ruins the body as well as the soul.

Is it not disgraceful that man endowed with reason, and created for heaven, should drown that reason in excessive drink, degrading his mind, his intellectual spirit, the image of God, rendering it like the brute animals, and even lower than the beasts. "Are not the drunkards far worse than the animals?" says St. Chrysostom. Yes, not only on account of their drunkenness, but far more so because of the shameful position of their body, their manners, their speech, their behavior. How disgracefully naked lay Noah, although he was intoxicated not through his own fault, exposed in his tent to the ridicule of the impudent Cain! (Gen. IX. 21.) Even the heathen Spartans considered the vice of drunkenness so disgraceful that they were in the habit of intoxicating a slave, and bringing him before their children that they might be disgusted with such a state.

Finally, that which should deter everybody from this vice is its injuriousness. It ruins the body as well as the soul. By surfeiting many have perished, (Ecclus. XXXVII. 34.) and it has ruined the health of many more. Who hath woe? whose father hath woe? who hath contentions? who fall into pits, who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups? (Prov. XXIII. 29. 30.) Daily observation confirms this truth of Scripture, and the miserable old age, accompanied by innumerable weaknesses and frailties of one addicted to drink is a sufficient testimony of the injuriousness of this vice.

GOSPEL (Luke XV. 1-10.) At that time, The publicans and sinners drew nigh unto Jesus to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man of you that hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, Both he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? Arid when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing: and coming home, call, together his friends and neighbors, saying to them:

Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she bath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat, which I had lost? So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

What moved the sinners to approach Jesus?

The goodness and benevolence with which He met the penitent sinners. Do you also humbly and trustingly approach Him, and you may rest assured that, even if you are the greatest of sinners, you will receive grace and forgiveness.

What is Christ's meaning in the parable of the lost sheep and groat?

He expresses by this His desire for the salvation of the sinner, His joy and that of all heaven when a sinner is converted. Moreover, He shows the Pharisees, who in vain self-righteousness avoided all intercourse with acknowledged sinners, and who murmured at the goodness of Jesus, that the sinner, being truly unhappy, deserves our compassion rather than our anger.

Why do the angels rejoice more over one sinner who does penance than over ninety-nine just?

Because the places of the fallen angels are thus refilled; because the angels see how the good God rejoices; because they find their prayers for the conversion of sinners granted, as St. Bernard says: "The tears of the penitents are wine for the angels;" because, as St. Gregory says, "the true penitents are usually more zealous than the innocent."

ASPIRATION I have erred like a sheep that has lost its way; but I thank Thee, O Jesus, my good Shepherd, that Thou hast so carefully sought me by Thy inspirations, admonitions and warnings, and dost now bring me back to true penance, that I may be a joy to the angels. Amen.

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