

V1_3rd_after_Easter= The Shamelessness of Those Who Boast of their Sins
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Ave Maria!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, we love You, save souls
O God come to our assistance. Jesus, Mary, Joseph please make haste to help us!

+++ Jesus, Mary, Joseph +++
VOL. I = THE BAD CHRISTIAN

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Shamelessness of Those Who Boast of their Sins

“The world shall rejoice.”—John 16: 20.

The children of God dread nothing more than offending him by a mortal sin; the bare remembrance of their past sins makes them weep and lament. The children of the world have very little fear of sin; they commit it without the least scruple, for the sake of some miserable thing, and they rejoice about it afterwards, as the Holy Scripture says: “They are glad when they have done evil, and rejoice in the most wicked things” (Prov. 2: 14). Nay, there are some who go so far as to boast of their sins and exult in them. But

He who rejoices at and boasts of his sins, is the most shameless sinner of all.

A shameless, dishonorable man is the sinner who boasts of his sins, because he looks upon his disgrace as glorious and honorable. Do you know, oh, sinner! What a shameful, disgraceful thing you have done, if you have ever committed a mortal sin? You have broken the solemn engagement you publicly made with God in the Sacrament of Baptism, and you have wandered far away from your last end, as far, in fact, as the beautiful heaven above is from the terrible hell below. And do you boast of that sin? Like the author whose works were burned by the hangman, you have done a deed that is already condemned by God’s justice to eternal fire. Do you make a boast of it? Like the cowardly, runaway soldier, you have thrown down your arms at the first sight of the enemy; that is to say, at the first approach of temptation, that little children drive away with the sign of the Cross; you have yielded; you have deserted your God, and shamefully taken to flight and sold your soul to the devil! Can you make a boast of such cowardice? Like an adulteress and one who has lost her purity, you have allowed yourself to be dishonored and disgraced by the devil. For every soul is either a spouse of Christ, or an adulteress of the devil. By your spiritual adultery you have brought a monster into the world, as David says: “Behold, he hath been in labor with injustice; he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity” (Ps. 7: 15). Do you publicly boast of, and indulge in, such a shameful deed as that? Do you look on it as an honor and glory? Like a malefactor caught in the act, you have been, in presence of God and his Angels, publicly expelled from the society of the elect, and have been banished from your true country; that is, you have lost your right to your

heavenly inheritance; your soul has been branded as an accursed child of the devil; you are actually standing on the gallows with the rope around your neck, and if death suddenly overtook you in the state of sin, you would be hurled at once into the abyss of hell. Do you boast of that? Your precious soul, that was formerly in the state of grace, a child of God, a spouse of God, an heir to the kingdom of heaven, is now lying under the weight of mortal sin, like a slave, stripped and shorn of all its virtues, graces, and merits, loaded with chains and trodden under foot by the devil.

What are your feelings? Are you not overwhelmed with anguish? Must you not struggle fiercely against yourselves before you can make up your minds to declare your sins candidly to the priest? Your limbs tremble, a cold sweat breaks out over you, your tongue can hardly articulate, and it is only by dint of heroically overcoming yourselves that at length you manage to stammer out your sins. And why, in God's name, are you so afraid? It is only to one man that you declare your sins, and he is bound never to speak of them to any one; he is also inclined naturally to the same sins as yourselves, and perhaps he has committed even worse crimes of the same kind as those of which you have accused yourselves; very often he is an utter stranger, who knows nothing whatever about you; in any case, he has a heartfelt compassion for you, is delighted at your repentant confession, and thanks God for the occasion thus presented him of absolving and freeing a sinner and saving a soul from the slavery of the devil. Besides, you make your confession in order to get rid of the disgrace in which you were before God and his Saints. Why, then, are you so much ashamed? Alas, I am ashamed to disclose my own wickedness! Yes, and I know well that it is that very shame which makes many despair to such an extent that they spend ten, twenty, thirty, forty years in the greatest anguish of conscience, multiply unworthy confessions and Communions, and often die impenitent, so that they lose their souls rather than declare a single secret mortal sin, committed in their youth, to the priest who is sitting in the place of God in the tribunal of Penance.

But what do you think of those who are so little sensitive to their own disgrace that they freely and deliberately declare their secret crimes, not in the confessional, that they may be absolved and saved from hell, but to their companions and associates, and boast of and exult in their wickedness? Nay, what they are sometimes ashamed to tell in confession, they do not hesitate to talk and laugh about with their companions.

There are unfortunately only too many who glory in their sins, and take a delight in publishing them, either by their actions, or by their boasting words. Most wordlings publish their shame by their actions, since they look on it as a disgrace to allow others to surpass them in wickedness and wantonness. They are ashamed of Christian humility and modesty, of piety and devotion, as a mark of simplicity, unbecoming a man of the world. They are ashamed to say grace before and after meals, or to behave reverently in church, before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, in whose presence the Angels tremble. If they go to confession, no one must know of it; if they go to Communion, they do so early in the morning, so that no one may see them. If they perform other good works, they do them secretly, not through humility, like pious souls, who seek to hide their good works from the eyes of men that they may be known to God alone, but through pride, and because they are ashamed to be looked on as pious and devout. We read that our Lord complained of the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who boasted of their fasting by their emaciated countenances, of their alms-deeds by causing them to be trumpeted forth to the world, and of their apparent devotion by putting on an air of piety in the temple: "And all their works they do for to be seen of men" (Matt. 23: 5). But what will our Lord think, what will He say, on the last day, of the hypocrisy of our modern Christian Pharisees, who conceal their good works that they may not, according to their own perverse imaginations, be put to shame before the world; while by the unlawful customs they conform to, and by their dissipated lives, they give unmistakable proof that they know how to live as children of the world, and do not wish to lead Christian lives? What else do they do but boast by their actions of their wicked and vicious mode of life?

But many are not satisfied with this alone. They are so shameless that they glory before others of even their secret sins; they boast of getting drunk themselves, and of having made others drunk, or of acts of

injustice, saying thus: I made so much money out of that simpleton; if so and so has gained his lawsuit he may thank me for it; if I had not helped him he would not have had the least chance; one must know how to manage such matters. I led that person by the nose until I stripped him of everything. They boast of sacrilegious confessions: I fooled that priest nicely; I made very sure of not letting him into all my secrets. I am afraid of learned people, and do not like to trust myself in their hands. I have a capital confessor, who lets me do as I please; I may come back twenty times with the same old story, and he never refuses me absolution. They boast of abominable sins of impurity, and mention even the persons with whom they sinned. There are even old people who delight to talk before the young and innocent of the excesses of their youth. Nay, many a one boasts of those crimes, although he may not in reality have been guilty of them, simply to satisfy his desire of being looked upon as more ungodly than others.

We find in the Sacred Scripture many examples of people who sinned by vainglory; but how did they sin? The Philistine giant boasted of his bodily strength and stature; Absalom, of his beautiful hair; Sennacherib, of his mighty army; Aman, of his power at court; Antiochus, of the many victories he had gained over his enemies; Nabuchodonosor, of his magnificent palace; Ezechias, of his treasures; the Pharisee in the temple, of his fasting and alms-deeds; Lucifer, of his mighty intelligence and surpassing beauty. All these offended God by their vainglory; but we must acknowledge that they all had something to be proud of. But you, oh, sinners, boast of your sins!

You “are glad when you have done evil, and rejoice in most wicked things” (Prov. 2: 14); you glory in your dishonor:

“Your glory is your shame” (Phil. 3: 19). Therefore you are the most shameless of mortals, and you act more like unreasoning animals than thinking men; for brute beasts may be beaten, slain and burned, but they cannot be made to feel shame. In so far they who boast of their sins are like beasts; “they have committed abomination,” the prophet Jeremias might well say of them; “yea, rather they are not confounded with confusion, and they have not known how to blush” (Jer. 8: 12); they have done abominable things, and they make a boast of them!

“If there be a sin with thee, disclose it not” (Ecclus. 19: 8). If you have taken revenge on your neighbor; if you have been intoxicated, or have made others so; if you have given away to an impure passion; ah, do not disclose it! Keep your guilt to yourself. Why should others know anything about it? If you are not disgusted at the deformity of sin, keep your shame concealed at all events; do not exhibit it openly. Let it suffice for you to be a sinner and a slave of the devil, without proving yourself lost to all sense of shame. If you do not fear the almighty and all-seeing God, who alone knows your secret sins; if you do not fear the eternal fires of hell; if you are resolved on losing your soul; well, carry out your desperate resolution; God leaves you at liberty to do so; but have a little respect for your honor and good name while you are still on earth! How bitterly you complain sometimes of calumniators and detractors, who speak ill of you, either in your presence or in your absence! My honor, you say, is as precious as my life; I cannot allow the least stain to rest on it; I would give the last drop of my blood in defense of my good name. Why, then, should you yourself destroy your good name? Yet that is what you do when you boast of your sins.

If you wish to reveal your sins, go to the sacred tribunal of Penance, and there, putting aside all shame, disclose them with contrite hearts to the minister of God. If you follow that advice you will be cleansed from the filth of sin, rescued from the slavery of the devil, and be given the liberty, honor, and glory of the children of God, with the certain hope of enjoying honor and glory with the elect in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

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