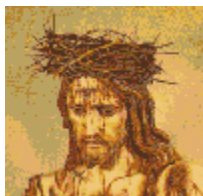


V2_2nd_after_Pentecost= How the Procrastinating Sinner Insults God

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JMJ

U.I.O.G.D.

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. 2 = The Penitent Christian

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

How the Procrastinating Sinner Insults God

“And they began all at once to make excuse.” St. Luke 14:18.

These must have been very ill bred and discourteous people who so rudely declined a friendly invitation to a magnificent banquet. Enraged at their conduct, the one who invited them (as the parable shows us), excluded them forever from his table: “But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.” Do not the majority of Catholics, act in the same way towards their Lord and God? He invites them to His first Supper, in which He gives us His own Flesh and Blood as our food and drink; and yet, how many there are who make excuses, and despise that precious Banquet, by going but seldom to holy Communion! He invites us to the heavenly Marriage-feast, that we may share with them forever in all imaginable and unimaginable delights; but how many excuse themselves and refuse to come, because they prefer to indulge in forbidden pleasures, and glut themselves with the husks of swine! Daily, He invites sinners, to His grace and friendship. He calls upon them to be converted and do penance, and promises that He will forgive them everything, so that they may not be excluded from His heavenly marriage-feast; but how many there are who make excuses, and reject the proffered grace by constantly deferring repentance and conversion to some indefinite time, saying always, by way of answer to their long-suffering Lord: I will come, but not now: later on; I will do penance and be converted, but not immediately; at some other time! In view of this insulting and injurious treatment of our best Friend, let us consider, to day

I. The majesty and mercy of Him who invites the sinner to repentance; and

II. The insult and insults offered to God by the procrastinating sinner.

I. If an equal, nay, if even an inferior which had offended and insulted you, were to come to you, and earnestly and humbly implore your pardon; would you refuse to listen to him? Would you turn your back on him, and shut the door in His face? If you did so, you would act in direct opposition to the Christian law. For Christ our Saviour most earnestly and emphatically commands us to return good for evil, not to seek revenge, but to treat our worst enemies with meekness, friendliness, and charity. He even declares

that we must prevent our enmity in efforts at reconciliation: “If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother.” You must at once make the advances in person: you must defer the offering of your gift to God, until you have reconciled yourself to your brother. How much more are you bound to lay aside your hatred and enmity against one whom you have grossly offended, and who now humbly begs to be restored to your friendship? But if a great lord or prince, who is not at all in need of you, who has little to gain from your friendship, and nothing to fear from your enmity, and on whose favor you depend for your very livelihood; if he, I say, after having been offended by you, should, through sheer goodness and piety, either in his own person, or by an authorized ambassador. Offer you full pardon and forgiveness, begging you at the same time to accept His offer at once; would you obstinately turn your back on him, and say that it does not suit you now to regain His friendship, that you do not want it yet, and that he must come some other time?

O sinner, look at this matter in a reasonable light! Who is He who comes to you, who calls and invites you, wishing to be reconciled to you, to be your friend again? Is He your prince and sovereign? Oh, if He were, how you would bow and scrape before him! You certainly would not remain seated in His presence if He came to you; you would not even wait His coming, but would run out to meet him, and, in every possible way, try to ingratiate yourself into His favor. Lo! The One who calls you is an infinitely greater Lord than any earthly prince; before him all the kings and emperors of the universe, as well as the poorest beggar and simplest peasant, must bend the knee, and humbly implore their daily bread. In a word, He is the infinitely great God Himself, before whose Majesty the Angels in heaven, the devils in hell, and all creatures on and under the earth tremble with reverence. This great Lord and God deigns to speak to you, O sinner, O miserable worm of the earth! He offers you His favor, grace, and friendship, which you have forfeited forever, and you still hesitated to accept His offer? Is it not yet convenient for you to hearken to His invitation? Do you still say to him: “Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give to thee” (Prov. 3: 28). I do not wish to be your friend today!

What harm has He done you? Harm! What good things do you possess that this generous God has not freely given you? Are you not, from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, a proof of His liberality and bounty? That you are, that you live, that you see, hear, feel, walk, stand, sit; for all that you have, you have every right to thank Him most humbly and gratefully. Why then should you remain angry with Him any longer? But what am I saying? Angry with Him! It is God who has first been offended by you! He it is whose commands you have neglected, whose Blood you have trampled under foot, whom you have time after time offended, insulted, despised, for such a miserable thing as your worthless vanity, for a breath of honor, for a wretched piece of money, for a brutal lust, for the sake of gratifying your anger and vindictiveness, or of indulging in gluttony and drunkenness, or for fear of displeasing, or for the sake of pleasing men through human respect: “He it is whom we have despised.” And He whom you have treated so insultingly, and who, therefore, has just cause to reject you, to cry out to you in a far different voice, to send down fire from heaven on you, to smite you with His thunderbolts, and to call upon the demons of hell and all the creatures on earth to take vengeance on you at this very moment, He it is who calls you to repentance! He, the great God, who was first offended by you; who has been so often offended by you, —calls you! He is the first to make the advances, to invite you to return to Him! And why? If you saw approaching you at a distance a man whom you have treated as shamefully as you have treated your God you would tremble with fear, and try to avoid him, and with reason, too, for you would have just cause to fear His vengeance. But do not fear, O sinner! Do not run away and hide yourself!

Your God, whom you have so often and so grievously offended, comes to you in mercy and in love; He comes, to you, not to punish and condemn you as you deserve, but to invite you to return to His grace and friendship. This He does sweetly, humbly, even suppliantly, as if He were in need of your favor. He seeks you out in His own person; He begs of you to return to Him by His servants, whom He has commissioned for that purpose, as St. Paul says: “For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting

by us. For Christ we beseech you, be reconciled to God,” (2 Cor. 5: 20) What else is meant by all those good inspirations, those salutary thoughts? Why, O sinner do you fear death and judgment? Why envy the calm conscience of the just, and long to enjoy peace of soul?

II. There is another thing, which is still more to be wondered at. To me, indeed, it would seem incredible, nay, impossible, if experience did not prove it to be true, that the man whom God seeks, invites, and implores to return to Him, will not come at once, disdains the loving invitation, turns his back on God, and shuts the door in His face. Come some other time, he says to God, (as if he were speaking to a beggar): I have nothing for Thee now! I well know, O God, what Thou wishest me to do. Thou desirest me to abstain from sin; but it does not suit me to obey Thee now. Some other time, perhaps, I may do so, — after I have sinned a while longer. Thou wishest me to do penance and repent of my sins; but I will not do it now. Later on, I will see what I can do in that way. Thou offerest me pardon, grace and favor, fatherly love, and Thy eternal kingdom of heaven; but I do not desire Thy favors now; come some other time. O insolence! What words can I find to express thy malice! O patience of my God, who bears to be thus ill treated by a lump of earth, and bears it in silence, thy goodness surpasses my understanding! O sinner, how can you so rudely turn away from your God? Do you not (and if you have a spark of decency left, you ought to consider this attentively) act with the greatest discourtesy towards your sovereign Lord? Do you not treat Him as you would some worthless man, who has neither power nor authority, and who is dependent on your favor for the very means of livelihood? And yet it is for your own interest, and not for His, that you should at once be freed from the miserable state of sin, from the imminent danger of eternal damnation. Have you any reason for continuing to offend your Lord and your God? Is it right and just for you to do so? Will you still sing the same old tune: I will do penance, but not now, some other time. I will be converted, but not at once. I will abandon sin and amend my life, but not immediately? Do you, I ask again, do you intend to give no other answer to your merciful God when He calls you?

Then, if so, listen to what I am now going to say; and learn from it, how grossly unjust your conduct is. If you are determined to go on sinning, you either believe that God will forgive you later on, or you do not believe it. If you do not believe it, what madness it is for you, if you have now any prospect of escaping hell and going to heaven, not to be converted at once, since God now so generously offers to forgive you! What folly, to defer your repentance to a time when (as you have every reason to fear), the grace of conversion will be denied to you! If, however, you believe, as you pretend, and I know not on what grounds, that, in spite of your having offended Him for such a long time, God will yet pardon you, what an injustice it is, what unpardonable insolence, what diabolical malice on your part, to make the divine love and longanimity an occasion for further sin! Will you then continue to offend Him who has borne with you so long and so patiently, who is so mercifully willing to receive you again into His friendship, and to make you eternally happy with Himself in heaven?

Besides, is it not most unjust for you to rob God of the present, which alone you are certain of, and which you are bound by countless titles to devote to His service; only to put Him off with the promise of a doubtful future? You say that you will serve God hereafter; but who has told you that you will be alive tomorrow? If you are not sure even of tomorrow, why do you mock God (to whom you are bound to devote every moment of your life)? Are you not simply trying to deceive the Almighty by the deceitful promise of those uncertain days, weeks, months, years to come which you may never be spared to see? Does not your conduct show that you have not an earnest desire of heaven? In fact, you are paying with ready money the devil, who should not have the least claim on you, while you put off to an indefinite period the payment of the debt you owe to God, to whom everything you have belongs.

Even if you were certain of the future, you still act most unjustly to God by intending to give Him only the remnant of a vicious life. You will do penance, be converted, amend your life, and serve God; but not until you have satisfied to the full, your evil inclinations and sensual appetites. Your soul was consecrated in holy Baptism as the temple and dwelling-place of God, and you will allow Him to enter it only after the devil has occupied it for many years, and defiled it with all sorts of abominations? Your whole life should

be spent in praising and blessing God, and you give the best part of it to the devil, while God must be satisfied with the miserable remnant of your wretched, declining days, when you have neither desire, nor power, nor opportunity to sin any more? In that way you do not so much quit sin, as sin quits you. Your sins have left you; not you, your sins. Two people are sitting gambling at night by the light of a candle. Suddenly, the candle goes out and they are obliged to give up their game. Do they give it up because they do not care to play any longer? Not at all; but because they have no light. If they had another candle, they would play until morning. O sinner, amend your life; cease offending God, you have insulted Him long enough! What is your answer? Oh, I will amend by and by, when my appetites are sated, when my youth is passed, when old age comes on, when that person is dead or gone away from me, when the occasion is removed, when sickness comes on and death is at hand then I will give up sinning, and will be converted and serve God. That is to say you will allow the torch of your life to be burnt out, and not amend your ways until you are on your death bed, when you will have neither power nor desire to sin any more. You will not begin to serve God until you are wearied and worn out in the service of the devil.

If Cain was cursed because he selected the worst of His fruits to offer as a sacrifice to God, what sort of a curse will you then deserve, O man, since you offer to God the worst part of your life? What would you think of a man who, at his table, would offer a prince nothing but mouldy bread, rotten meat and decayed vegetables, which he would not give to his dog? Ah, there are many men who treat God also (if I dare say it), worse than a dog! They eat the kernel themselves and give to God the shell. The young and tender flesh they keep to satisfy their own greed, while the old worthless bones are thrown to Him! The sweet wine of youth is poured out as a libation to the devil, whilst God must be satisfied with the sour dregs! There was not a moment in which God did not think of us and love us! The whole life of Jesus was spent for our salvation. All His thoughts, words, and actions, His Passion and death, were for our welfare; and He has already prepared an eternal banquet of joys in heaven, as a reward for the small service we can render Him here! And we? O, if life here below, were eternal, in strict justice, we should spend every moment of it in loving God, nor could we even then make a sufficient return for the love He has shown us! And yet, though life is so short, and so uncertain that we are not sure of even a quarter of an hour, we are unwilling to spend any part of it in His service!

O sinners, do you not yet see how unjustly you act when you postpone your conversion and refuse to hearken to the pleading voice of God, inviting you to repentance? Fear and tremble, lest the divine goodness and mercy may soon be turned into stern vengeance! God has fixed a certain limit to all our works, as well as to His own inspirations and graces. Perhaps, He calls you today for the last time. Perhaps, He has determined (if you still continue to despise Him after this exhortation), to deal with you as you deal with Him. Hear the threat He utters by the Psalmist David: "They shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs." You have treated me like a dog, (He will have reason to say): you have given me the very worst part of your lives, and have turned me away from your doors like a poor beggar. But the time will come when I too shall treat you like dogs when the evening of life approaches, you shall be chained up like dogs; I shall hear your moans and howls and shrieks when the dread of death shall be upon you; and what can you expect from me then? My special grace and assistance to free you from the chains of sin? No, they are not for such as you! I will give you the same answer that you so often gave me: Go away (I will say), I do not wish to give you My grace now! I will behold you suffering the pangs of hunger in hell, like dogs, and I will rejoice thereat. "Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded; I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock" (Prov. I: 24-26). Frequently, I offered you my grace, but you refused it; I offered you pardon of your sins, but you did not accept it; I proffered you my eternal kingdom, but you had no desire for it. Now I, whom you have so despised and ill-treated; I, who have before now wept over your miseries; I, who have shed my Blood for you; I, who have given my life for you; I, who have so often fruitlessly entreated and exhorted you, "I will also laugh in your destruction, and will mock," when the demons, to whom you are now giving your lives, will carry you, body and soul, into hell! I will laugh, when you are howling in exterior darkness; I

will laugh, when you are burning in the lake of fire; I will laugh, when you are tortured with an insupportable stench; I will laugh, when you are calling upon death, that will not come to you for all eternity; I will laugh and mock.

Let us defer penance no longer. Let us seek God now: “As much as the Lord is patient, let us be penitent for this same thing, and with many tears let us beg His pardon.” (Judith 8: 14).

Taken from:

SHORT SERMONS FOR ALL THE SUNDAYS OF THE YEAR

By: Rev. Father Francis Hunolt, S.J.

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