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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. 5 = THE CHRISTIAN'S LAST END

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Another Reason for the General Judgment

“He hath done all things well.” St. Mark 7: 37.

This praise shall be given to Almighty God by all the Angels and men on the day of general judgment, when He, in the sight of the whole world, shall avenge His injured honor and justify the ordinances of His Providence, which now appear to us in many cases incomprehensible, nay, often inconsistent and unjust. Since we cannot understand these decrees, and shall not understand them till the last day, we should not pry into them curiously, and much less blame or find fault with them, but rather, as we know that they proceed from a God of infinite goodness, justice and holiness, look on them as right, just and holy. Hence in all cases we should be completely and quietly resigned to the divine will. There we have the first reason on the part of God that renders a general judgment necessary. There is still another reason that regards us men, and especially the elect, which I now intend to explain.

There must be a day of general judgment, that God may publicly, before heaven and earth, justify and defend His chosen servants.

That pious and virtuous servants of God are, during their lives, not appreciated nor honored, but, generally speaking, despised and persecuted unjustly, comes from three causes. The first is their own humility, which impels them to hide their virtue from the world; the second is the wickedness of sinful men, who, by rash judgments, uncharitable talk and persecution, try to vilify their good works; the third is the false maxims and judgments of vain worldlings, who ridicule and laugh at true virtue and piety as folly. It is then just that there should be a day of general judgment, on which God shall defend His servants against these two latter classes of people, and justify their virtue, and make known to heaven and earth the holiness that their humility kept hidden.

I. True piety and virtue have this property and inclination, which they are always anxious to remain hidden from the eyes of men, and to creep out of the light into the darkness. To wish to be looked on as pious, and therefore to make one's good works public, and to speak and act in a boastful manner, is hypocrisy and affected piety, of which true goodness, which is founded on humility and self-contempt, knows nothing. Hence Saints chose to live in solitude, and made their dwellings in deserts and in caves in the wilderness; and they were wont to go from one country to another, that they might remain unknown and hidden from the eyes of men; for the same reason many of them concealed their noble descent under mean clothing, their great natural gifts under continual silence, the supernatural favors conferred on them by God under the appearance of a childish simplicity, nay, sometimes they actually pretended to be mad and out of their senses.

How many there are of both sexes whose holiness is buried from the light! How many chosen souls there are in religious houses, nay, even in the world, whose great virtue is utterly unknown, because they

conceal it so effectually! How many decent poor suffer the privations of their state with the utmost patience for God's sake! How many a workman offers up his daily toil to God with a pure intention!

How many a lowly servant maid spends her life in the meanest occupations, and her holiness, patience, and resignation to the divine will are known only to the all-seeing eye of God! How many tears of repentance and divine charity are shed in private houses in the secrecy of the bedchamber! How much is given and taken in charity without the generous donor's name ever coming to light! It seems to me quite true that there are souls in heaven greater in holiness and higher in glory than many others who have been canonized by the Church and whose relics are honored by the world; and it seems equally certain to me that there are actually many souls on earth who imitate or even surpass the example of the Saints, and yet are not looked on as holy.

And must this always remain hidden, and that too from the world out of which the greater number of men shall be condemned to hell? No! It must not and cannot be so. The Lord himself says to all His servants: "Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him; and He will do it." What will He do? "He will bring forth thy justice as the light: and thy judgment as the noonday" (Ps. 36: 5, 6). For this purpose is fixed the day of general judgment on which all in heaven, on earth, and under the earth shall be summoned to the same place by the sound of the trumpet, and there, as it were, on a large public stage shall be exhibited with the utmost pomp and splendor the hitherto hidden virtues and good works of the elect. How the Angels will then wonder, as well as men and demons, at the sight of so many unknown souls! Oh, they will exclaim with one voice, "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?" (Cant. 6: 9.) "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" (Cant. 8:5) by whom she is led, as it were, in triumph? Who is that soul of whom no one ever heard anything extraordinary during life?

2. Now, if justice requires this, is it not still more imperatively demanded by justice that misinterpreted, persecuted, and calumniated virtue should be defended and publicly vindicated? What is more foolhardy, and at the same time more common in the world, than the vice of calumny and detraction? To sneer at, criticize, find fault with, and misinterpret the actions of others, and to spread false tales about one's neighbor is nowadays a privileged and public trade. Amongst all the holy servants of God there is hardly one who has not had to suffer in honor and reputation, and whose good name has not been made the butt of malice. Jesus Christ himself has not even yet redeemed His good name from the calumnies and aspersions that were cast on it by wicked Jews and envious Pharisees and Scribes during His lifetime; for at the present day He is looked on by the Jews as a seditious and treacherous man. The holy martyrs were condemned to painful deaths as disturbers of the public peace, as sorcerers and dealers in the black art; and as such they are still looked on by all heathens.

If God himself had not revealed to Daniel the wickedness of the two elders who falsely accused Susanna, that chaste matron would have been stoned by the people as a guilty adulteress. Joseph languished in prison under the charge of having attempted the chastity of his master's wife, although his only crime was that he resisted her wicked solicitations; if God had not saved him, he would have perhaps died in prison as a criminal. But, alas how many there are who are publicly decried by a whole city, although they are as innocent as Joseph and Susanna were of the crime of which they are accused, and they never have an opportunity of regaining their good name! And how many are not deprived of their employment, their property, their honor, through ill-founded suspicion, or envious and false accusations, that they never have a chance of refuting? There are few who have not to suffer from the evil tongues of those who envy and hate them and try to blacken their good name behind their backs in all sorts of ways. Nearly every one measures others by his own passions and imagination; the words that are spoken are misinterpreted and taken in an evil sense.

Here again we see how necessary it is that there should be a time in which all these calumnies and falsehoods shall be refuted, and that too publicly, so that all those innocent and injured servants of God may recover their lost honor before the world, and the frightful perversion of truth resulting from wicked

tongues be put to rights. The great day is to come when a complete change shall be made. The time shall come when Christ shall assemble before Him all nations, and divide them, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And that is the last day of the world, when the trumpet shall summon the dead from their graves to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ in the valley of Josaphat. And how great shall then be the glory of the elect, when they see themselves justified from the calumnies they suffered so patiently on earth, while their persecutors are put to shame in the sight of the whole world! What joy there will then be on that day for the pious, when their holiness and virtue are made manifest to all, and when they see what treasures of merit they gained by their patient silence, and how their good name and honor are amply restored to them!

3. Finally, there must and shall be a day of general judgment in order to defend and uphold the lives of the just and pious against the erroneous opinions and judgments of vain worldlings. If we contrast the laws and maxims of the Gospel of Christ with the lives and conduct of most Christians, what a discord we shall find between them! It will seem as if our Lord had preached mere fables to us, or at least as if His truths are not necessary to be practiced by Christians who wish to go to heaven. The Gospel blesses the poor in spirit, but threatens woe to the rich who seek their pleasure and consolation in earthly goods; it says that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man, whose heart and desires are attached to temporal things, to enter heaven; it blesses the meek and the peaceful, who give way in silence to their opponents, and repay injuries with prayers and benefits, according to the law which says you must love your enemies and do good to those that hate and persecute and calumniate you; you must refrain from taking revenge under pain of eternal damnation; he who does not pardon his enemy cannot expect pardon from God. It blesses those who weep and mourn here, and are tried by all kinds of crosses and tribulations, provided they bear them with patience and resignation to the divine will, while it threatens woe and eternal gnashing of teeth to those who laugh here and lead a voluptuous life. It blesses those who hunger and thirst after justice, while it threatens the tepid and slothful in the service of God, and warns them that God will vomit them out of His mouth. It blesses those who suffer persecution for justice's sake, and are despised and looked down on by others, while it menaces eternal curses to those who are addicted here to cursing. It raises up to heaven the humble, who seek the lowest places here, while it says to the proud that unless they change and become as little children they shall never enter the kingdom of heaven, but it holds out no hope of heaven to the voluptuous, to gluttons, and drunkards.

It condemns the friends of the world as enemies of God. It points out the rugged way and the narrow gate that lead to heaven; it tells us that we must use violence in order to get there, and warns us against the broad road that leads to eternal damnation. It gives laws and rules to parents, showing them how carefully they should bring up their children for heaven; to children, telling them how to obey and honor their parents; to wives, warning them that they should seek to please their husbands alone with humility and obedience; to husbands, telling them to love their wives.

4. Now, we are all Catholic Christians; we cannot deny the Gospel of Christ; we cannot convict the word of God of falsehood or deceit; but how many are there who are fully persuaded that they are bound to live according to those laws and truths, and to regulate their actions most exactly in conformity with them? Pious servants of God, desirous of salvation, show a ready obedience to those laws and try their best to observe them. But what do the vain children of the world say to them? Oh, they have a far different idea of things! "The sensual man," says St. Paul with reason, "perceived not these things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand" (I Cor. 2: 14). The proud ridicule those laws and truths; dissolute and sensual men disregard them, and try to fashion a Gospel to suit themselves; they who live according to the corrupt world look on the pious who follow Christ and His law, and despise the world and its customs, as fanatics; they have a secret pity for what they imagine to be simplicity, for humility and modesty: "The simplicity of the just man is laughed to scorn" (Job 12: 4), says holy Job to his false friends. St. Gregory, commenting on this text, uses the following beautiful words: "The wisdom of this world is to hide by deceit the sentiments of the heart; to speak otherwise than

one thinks; to prove true what is false, and false what is true; to turn the mantle with the wind; to agree with every one; to seek one's own interests always; to strive for honors and high places; to tolerate no injury; to return evil for evil, and if one cannot be revenged on one's adversary, to conceal one's hatred. And anger by an appearance of politeness; to gratify one's sensuality and love of comfort; to conform to the usages of other men, and to take the world as a guide in all things. This wisdom is imbibed by the young with their mother's milk; they are trained in it during their youth; they who are skilled therein despise others; they who are ignorant of it look up to those who know it with the most profound and reverent admiration.”

When shall these clouds of darkness be blown away? When shall the truth be disclosed to show which side is right? Jesus Christ himself, accompanied by all His Angels, shall descend on that day from heaven, and in the presence of all the nations of the world shall erect the standard of the cross and then pronounce sentence according to the laws of the Gospel on all those who have rejected those laws. The whole world will then have to confess and acknowledge that God revealed to the simple-minded and lowly, as they were imagined to be, what He kept concealed from the wise and powerful. Then the foolish children of the world shall see, when too late, the grievous error into which they fell, and humbled and filled with shame and confusion, disgraced and outcast, they will stand there crying out in rage and despair those words of the Book of Wisdom: “Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us” (Wisd. 5 : 6). So in spite of all our cleverness, we are now found wanting; we have not known the very fundamental truths of the Christian doctrinal “We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor” (Wisd. 5 : 4). Now we foolish ones see in the glory of the chosen children of God those whom we looked on as simple and stupid, while we have to go with the demons into eternal darkness! Amen.

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