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The Nativity



THE
MONTH OF THE NATIVITY

OF OUR
Lord Jesus Christ;

OR,
A SERIES OF DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES WHEREBY
TO HONOUR AND PREPARE FOR
THE BIRTH OF THE HOLY INFANT SAVIOUR.

WITH PIOUS EXERCISES FOR THE
OCTAVES OF THE EPIPHANY AND PURIFICATION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, AND DEDICATED TO
THE HOLY INFANT.

"Presently the Lord whom you seek, and the Angel of the
testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple."

MALACHY iii. 1.

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Preface.

"*We have a Paradise much better, and far more agreeable than that of our first parents,*" says St. Bernard, "*and this Paradise is our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Serm. Nativity.) He is our beatitude in body and soul; His Divinity is the bliss of the latter, his Humanity that of the former. He is, then, our true Paradise. And He is all ours; all for our use, all for our wants: "*Light to our eyes, hearing to our ears, perfume to our smell, bread to our mouth,*" says Origen. (Hom. 2 in Cant.) How lamentable, then, that faith and hope in, and knowledge and love of, this divine Saviour are so much on the decrease, and become daily more diminished! To remedy this evil, in some degree, is the object of the following pages, having for title, "*The Month of the Nativity of our Lord,*" in which are retraced the mysteries of the Incarnation and Nativity of this divine Saviour.

The daily entertainment for each day, which, besides *a point of doctrine*, includes *reflections*, &c., is preceded by a

practice and aspiration, both to render it more conformable to the devotions appointed for other months, as well as to gratify more fervent souls, who never think they can do enough to please their divine Saviour. In order to include all the feasts of Christmas without exceeding the period of a month, this devotion does not commence until *the sixth of December*. It will by this means terminate on the feast of the Epiphany, and those who have faithfully and fervently practised it, may hope to receive, in presenting it, with the offerings of the holy *Magi*, to their Infant God in His manger, a share in His choicest graces here, and because they have known and loved, "*and confessed Him before men,*" to be acknowledged by Him *before His Father* who is in heaven, to whom, in unity of the Holy Ghost, be all honour, might, glory, power, for endless ages.



THE MONTH
OF THE
Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER VI.

A DAY OF CONFIDENCE.

COMMENCE this holy devotion, which, by enabling you to sanctify the Advent, will dispose you for celebrating the birth of your Redeemer, by producing at your awaking an act of confidence in God. Repeat it often during the day, without losing diffidence in your own weakness, filial confidence in the Almighty, or neglecting good works; without these your confidence would be vain.

Say frequently by way of aspiration, "In thee, Lord, do I hope, let me never be confounded."

FIRST ENTERTAINMENT.

On the promise to Adam of a Redeemer.

POINT OF DOCTRINE.

No sooner did man sin, than God, in his infinite mercy, promised him a Re-

deemer. Addressing the devil, who, to seduce Eve, had assumed the serpent's form, He said, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed, and she shall crush thy head.*" (Genesis, iii. 13.) "Thus it is," says St. Leo, "that the Creator saved man after his fall, announcing by anticipation how he should be saved, that the pride of Satan, the author of our ruin, might be crushed by the omnipotence of the Son of God, who would come to fight with him in our flesh, with which flesh He was to be clothed." (Serm. 2. on the Nativity.)

REFLECTION.

Here we have the proof of what the Holy Spirit says: "*To him that is little, mercy is granted; but the mighty shall be mightily tormented.*" (Wisd. vi. 7.) For God gave man means of repentance, granting him a Redeemer, by whose merits he is pardoned; whereas the rebel angels, far superior to men, have not been spared, but punished immediately on their sin. (Pet. ii. 4.) "*Satan did nothing,*" says St. Bernard; "*he merely consented to a thought of pride, and at the same moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he has been precipitated.*" Jesus Christ, who, inas-

much as He is God, saw him fall from heaven pursued by the avenging hand of the Almighty, says of him, "*I saw Satan, like lightning, fall from heaven.*" (Luke, x. 18.)

THANKSGIVING.

The Church thanks God for His mercy in our regard, and in her gratitude exclaims, "*O happy fault of Adam, which has merited for us such a Redeemer!*" because, but for this fault, His blessed Son would never have become incarnate, and consequently our merits would be limited and human; whereas by His union with our nature, thus uniting His merits to ours, He has given them a character of infinity, and "*made us partakers of the divine nature.*" Making Himself man, He has, as the Psalmist says, "*Made us Gods.*" Let us, then, unite with our holy mother the Church, and in our gratitude cease not to bless God for having given us *such and so great a Redeemer.*

V. Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the *just one.*

R. *Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour.*

PRAYER.

O Lord, who from the beginning wert promised to be our Redeemer and our Saviour, moved by your clemency, and touched by our evils, exert your power and come to save us, that, by your assistance, and our faith in you, we may escape the evils without number which menace us, who livest and reignest with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

To be considered, if convenient, before the Holy Sacrament.

A God offended became a Saviour.

Every sin, whatever be its nature, attacks God; offends His infinite Majesty and illimitable perfections; outrages His goodness by presuming on His mercy; defies His justice by slighting His punishments; insults His authority by contemning His laws; and insults His immensity by disrespecting His adorable presence. But He cannot be offended with impunity; sin absolutely demands reparation. And from whom? for man is weak and sinful,

and an atonement of infinite merit is necessary to repair an infinite offence. God alone can effect it, and He undertakes it; for, descending from heaven by a prodigy of love, He takes flesh, and lays upon Him the burthen of man's iniquities; He makes a bath of His blood wherein to efface them, and dying on the cross for offended man, opens for him the path to peace and reconciliation. Ah, divine Jesus! I was then an exile from my heavenly country, and you have recalled me; I was blind, and you enlightened me; I was an object of your indignation, and you have restored to me your friendship, your heart, your kingdom; I outraged you, and you atoned to yourself for me, and all that at the price of your blood. Could you push love to greater excess? O offended Lord, truly have you become, through excessive love, "a defender to *save!*"

DECEMBER VII.

A DAY OF SUFFERINGS.

As the spirit of Christ become incarnate is that of sufferings, put on to-day the spirit of the cross, and dispose yourself to suffer, and to suffer *well*, all that God may permit or will, however

afflicting. Crave pardon for the abuse of sufferings hitherto, and supply for it to-day by voluntary privations, &c.

Asp. "Lord, show us thy mercy, and give us thy salvation."

SECOND ENTERTAINMENT.

Repeated promise of a Messiah.

All concurs to render the coming of the Messiah more remarkable, in proportion as the time appointed for it draws nigh.

"I will move all people, *and the Desired of all nations shall come.*" (Aggeus, ii. 8.) Thus spoke the Lord by his prophet; let us see how the oracle has been developed. Noah received the sacred deposit from his fathers, and Abraham, his descendant, the parent of believers, leaves it in the hands of Isaac, who transmitted it to his favourite Jacob. In his mouth it receives a great increase, for on his dying bed he thus prophesied, addressing his son Juda: "*The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations.*" Continuing his prophecy, the holy patriarch says, "*I will look for Thy salvation,*" O Lord. (Ibid. 19.)

The prophets resume the strain in the

written law, diffusing as they did the faith of the promise among the children of Israel, and the Holy Ghost, who inspired them, accredited their mission by miracles.

The nations of the earth, individually and collectively, have sometimes conspired to destroy the people, depositories of these promises, but in vain; the oracle received even more celebrity and more splendour, in proportion to the strength and vigour of their attacks. The Almighty Author of this promise, who can draw good from evil, derives glory from His greatest enemies. Against their knowledge and intention, the Medes and Persians, Greeks and Romans, have concurred in preparing the way for the Redeemer, and in rendering His triumph more brilliant and illustrious.

After all that passes under our eyes, would we not be led to imagine that an epoch similar to that spoken of by the prophet had arrived, for are not "*all the nations*" once more "*moved?*" Can it be that the Desired of nations! the eternal Truth! the Word made flesh! whom sectarians have wished to banish from the earth, is on the point of making His second and more glorious appearance? This is a mystery known only to Himself;

let us be cautious of desiring to penetrate it, but hope, since He alone is omnipotent.

THANKSGIVING.

Whatever may happen to us, we shall not cease to bless and thank you, O God of our hearts; our conviction is, that if we love you, "all things," as the apostle says, "*shall co-operate for our good.*" Even for this mark of your bounty, are we not bound to thank you, O God of all consolation? In vain would hell exert itself to extend its empire; *the Desired of all nations* will most certainly come into the hearts of those who sigh for Him.

V. Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one.

R. Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour. *Prayer as yesterday, page 8.*

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Bliss in Tears.

God is essentially happy because He is infinitely perfect. He is happy of Himself. He alone constitutes his own happiness. He enjoys in Himself infinite delights. All creatures together cannot

increase his essential glory; before he drew them from nothing, He sufficed to Himself, and as Tertullian says, He Himself, in His eternal and divine solitude, was His temple, His worshippers, His every thing. In fine, He makes the bliss of the saints; and, as St. Augustine writes, by Him, in Him, from Him, all that which is happy derives His beatitude. But this blessed Lord has become man, and lying in a manger, shed tears of sorrow and love, which renders Him to me an incomprehensible mystery. But faith unfolds it, revealing, as it does, to me, that love has reduced Him to this condition. Yes! source of all bliss as He is, He surrenders the rights of His essential beatitude. He suspends, by a miracle of love, that interchange of joy and pleasure, which should subsist between His humanity and divinity. He restrains the glory which would otherwise have shone on His body. He delivers Himself to grief. He bedews His manger with His tears. Why this sorrow! this bitter anguish! to disgust me with worldly pleasures, and to procure me eternal joys. Ah! let me weep with Him before His holy tabernacle. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (St. Matt.)

DECEMBER VIII.

*Feast of the Immaculate Conception of our
Blessed Mother.*

A DAY OF PURITY.

BE among the first to-day to render your homage to your divine mother, just conceived without sin, after having previously offered your heart to her blessed Son. Say to Him, upon your awaking, as Jacob did to the angel, "*Leave me, for the morning dawns,*" because Mary is the aurora, as Jesus is the sun.

Asp. "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to you."

THIRD ENTERTAINMENT.

Mary is the living tabernacle, the ark of the new covenant, in which the Messiah should repose before his appearance in the world.

Before sending His Son, the promised Messiah, "*the Most High,*" as the Psalmist has it, "*sanctified His tabernacle.*" (Ps. vi.) No doubt in thus expressing himself David had in view the ancient tabernacle, where God conversed with Moses, as it were, face to face; but these

words also refer to Mary, whom the ark of the covenant prefigured. This august virgin, this divine tabernacle, was sanctified by the Most High from the moment of her conception. Such is the opinion of the Fathers, and of the Church herself. Origen thus expresses himself on the words "*full of grace*" spoken to Mary by the archangel: "I do not remember to have found such a salutation in any part of the Holy Scriptures. It has not been addressed to any other creature; to Mary alone has it been reserved." In the liturgy of St. Chrysostom, more ancient than himself, the holy Virgin is styled immaculate in every respect, *ex omni parte inculcata*. St. Ambrose writing on the 118th Psalm, says, that she has been exempt from every stain of sin. St. Jerome says, that she has never been in darkness but always in light. St. John Damascene styles her a Paradise, which the serpent has not been able to enter; and St. Augustine says, that for the honour of the Son, he cannot think that Mary was for a single moment in sin. In the seventh century, George of Nicomedia considered the immaculate conception as having given occasion to an old festival; since this epoch, it is at least certain that the Greeks have styled Mary *Panachrante*,

which signifies, *all pure and without stain*. The Council of Trent declares, that in its decree concerning original sin, it is not its intention to include the blessed and immaculate mother of God. The Sorbonne in France admitted no one as a member, until he had sworn to teach that Mary has been conceived without sin. The great Bossuet thus expresses himself on this grand privilege of the mother of God: "The belief that Mary has been immaculately conceived, has an indescribable strength most persuasive to the pious. After articles of faith, I see few things more certain; hence I am not surprised that the seminary of theologians in Paris (the Sorbonne) obliges all its children to defend this doctrine. For my part, I am delighted to follow its intentions. After having been fed with its milk, I willingly submit to its ordinances, and so much the more readily as they are, it seems to me, the will of the Church. She has a very honourable sentiment of Mary's conception, and gives us to understand that this belief is agreeable to her."

Mary is the tabernacle sanctified by God as His first habitation upon earth; she is the ark of the new covenant. How lovely is not this figure! What lights does it not offer to us! It seems to me that

the miraculous cloud which covered the ancient ark, was a figure of the Holy Ghost enveloping with His creative shadow the august mother of God. Yes, under this mysterious shadow it seems to me that I see Him forming in her chaste womb, and of her pure substance, a body for my divine Redeemer, which was to be one day immolated on Calvary. In the skins of various dye which covered the ark I see figured the humility of the august Virgin, who holds, veiled from human eye, the glory which she incloses in her womb. The candlestick with the seven branches, which stood in the sanctuary, reminds me of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, with which she was abundantly filled. The altar on which burned the perpetual fire, speaks to me of the ardent charity which night and day consumed her most holy heart. In the altar of holocausts I see that perpetual immolation which she made of herself at each instant to God. In the altar of perfumes I inhale the odour of her heroic virtues, which, ascending before the throne of God, induced Him to descend on earth. The ark of the covenant, hidden in the holy of holies, contains the tables of the law, and Mary conceals in her virginal womb the God who made

the law. In this venerable ark was also to be found *the manna* which fed the Israelites in the desert; and in Mary's august womb lay hidden for nine months, "*the living Bread which descended from heaven for the life of the world.*" Again, the ark contained the rod, which, in testimony of his priesthood, blossomed in the hands of Aaron; and in the heart of Mary the lily of virginity bloomed in all its dazzling whiteness. What wonders are not these *hidden from the wise*, according to the world, and revealed to *little ones*, the children of faith!

THANKSGIVING.

We thank you, O Lord, for having thus prepared for us the ark of the new covenant, through whom you are to descend to us. A wonderful ark it is, which is to be our rampart against our enemies, and in whose bosom you will speak to us face to face, as formerly to Moses, the language of love and clemency. Let the Jews glory in crossing the Jordan dry footed, under the shadow of *their* ark; we glory in Mary, the real ark, protected by whom we shall not only pass securely through the stormy sea of this life, see crumble the walls of our passions, and Satan fleeing before our face, but ultimate-

ly arrive at our heavenly country, of which the promised land was only a shadow.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as after First Entertainment, page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

A Virgin Mother.

A VIRGIN to become a mother is a singular and inconceivable wonder ; a mother to conceive and bring forth without losing her virginity, is the most extraordinary prodigy ever wrought by God. He whose mother she becomes, must be God. The virginity of Mary infinitely surpasses that of all the virgins upon earth. By her virginity she pleased the Most High. It is a miraculous, because a fruitful virginity. Integrity has ever conferred honour on virginity, but it is sterile, and was therefore despised in the old law ; fecundity does honour to maternity, but it is sullied, and in some manner entails confusion. In the ever-glorious Mary are combined the integrity of the one blessed condition, with the fruitfulness of the other, far less

pleasing to God, and what a source of glory and honour this.

“By the august quality of her divine maternity, Mary is elevated,” says St. Thomas, “to a term of infinite perfection, it is the just measure of her greatness.” “By that she approaches nearest to God, and to the hypostatic union, so that she is,” as says St. Ildephonsus, “the likest image of the divine paternity, and that she furnishes us with a more just expression of the incomprehensible generation of the Word.” What incomparable honour, is therefore due to this divine Virgin Mother! Let us, then offer it to her faithfully and unceasingly.

DECEMBER IX.

A DAY OF FEAR.

“THE fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Ps. cx.) You will exercise it to-day, that you may be securely guided to Jesus, the incarnate Wisdom. Let it not be a mercenary, but rather a filial fear; and so regulate all your thoughts, words, and actions, as if you were at once to appear before the eternal Judge.

Asp. “Lord, enter not into judgment

with thy servant, for no one living shall be justified in thy sight." (Ps. xiv.)

FOURTH ENTERTAINMENT.

How all nature, subordinate to the almighty will of the Messiah, concurs in preparing the way for Him.

"Behold He comes," (Jud. xiv.) and at His approach "*the heavens and the earth are moved.*" (Joel, iii. 16.) He need but speak, a single manifestation of His will suffices, and all is submissive to him. "*All things were made by Him,*" says St. John, "*and without Him was made nothing that was made.*" (i. 3.) All the great events that preceded His coming are then His work. The deluge in the time of Noah, the miracles wrought by Moses to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, their sustainment in the desert, when the Lord rained down manna for their food, and caused water to flow from the hard rock, are the effects of His omnipotence. He gave the law on Sinai, thunder and lightning manifesting His presence; and He conversed with Moses for forty days, and delivered to him the tables of the law. He destroyed Nadab and Abiud, and caused the earth to swallow Core and His impious adherents. In

the time of Josue He arrested the sun in his mid-day course, and dried up the waters of the Jordan that His people might pass to the promised land. In her beautiful canticle pronounced at the dictate of the Holy Spirit, Deborah says, "*Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, and didst pass by the regions of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped water. The mountains melted before the face of the Lord, and Sinai before the face of the Lord the God of Israel.*" (Judges, v. 4, 5.) Habacuc thus expresses himself: "*He beheld, and measured the nations, and the ancient mountains were crushed to pieces. The hills of the world were bowed down by the journeys of His eternity. Death shall go before His face, the devil shall go forth before His feet.*" (iii. 5, 6.

How delightful thus to follow the traces of my divine Redeemer as God, while awaiting that it be given me to see and contemplate Him as man! How pleasing to see the elements bending under His almighty power, and *all*, even death and hell, eager to execute His divine will. He is not yet come, and already heaven, earth, and hell bend the knee, as they shall do on a future day by the command

of the eternal Father, at the mention of His most holy name. How I love this Saviour! What tenderness and admiration does not His power and goodness inspire! for it is for me He has done all this. Anxious to *come* and deliver us, I see Him with the spouse "*leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills.*" (Cant. ii. 8.) so that with her I feel inspired to say, "*I adjure ye, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved to tell Him that I languish with love.*" (Cant. v. 8.)

THANKSGIVING.

What am I doing, should I forget the canticle of praise? Does not the ardent desire of our divine Redeemer to come and save us, only restrained by the will of His heavenly Father, command me to praise and thank Him? O my soul, bless the Lord, and all that is within me, praise His holy name, for if already He *fills thee with good things*, the hope of salvation, what will it be when He really appears? O my soul, bless the Lord once more, for *He will pardon all thy sins, and thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle.* How good is not this Lord! *How patient and of much mercy and compassion!* (Ps. cii. 8.)

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION

The Judge a Mediator.

God is the sovereign Judge of angels and of men; it is an appendage inseparable from the supreme greatness of His being and His quality of Creator. He has judged the rebel angels, precipitating them into hell, created for them in His wrath, these so perfect intelligences not being granted a Mediator or Redeemer. We are much more favoured by God than they, and having both, in a God made man for our love, and should be far more grateful.

Jesus Christ being God, did not lose His quality of sovereign Judge of the living and the dead by becoming man, but He seems to have in some manner renounced it in the manger in order to become our Mediator with God His Father. Rather should we say, He has united by a miracle of love the two qualities of Judge and Mediator otherwise incompatible

Let us then approach this mediating Judge inclosed in the holy Tabernacle, as shut up in His Blessed Mother's womb. Little Babe though He be, He can succour us because He is omnipotent, and He *will* succour us because He loves us. He is God like His Father, with whom He treats of our reconciliation ; He is man with man for whom He mediates. His infancy, His weakness, His tears, His pains, His poverty, and, more than all, *His loving Heart*, efficaciously plead with God His Father. Let us ask with Him, and let us ask Himself to speak for us as our Mediator, and to spare us as our Judge.

DECEMBER X.

A DAY OF ZEAL.

BEGIN this day by thanking the Lord for the zeal that he has hitherto manifested for your salvation, and which has its source in His infinite charity. Ask Him for a continuance of it, and pardon for having so little profited by it hitherto, while you lay before him your just apprehension that it may cease in your regard, a judgment with which He threatens sinners who refuse to yield to His grace. Correspond to this *holy jealousy of God*

for your soul, by your zeal for His glory, your own salvation, and that of your neighbour, giving Him as many proofs of it as you can by good advice, example, &c.

Asp. *O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and descend !*

Earth, do thou open and bud forth the Saviour !

ENTERTAINMENT.

How the holy angels laboured with incredible zeal to prepare the way of the Messiah.

“I saw His throne,” says the prophet, “like flames of fire, the wheels of it like a burning fire. A swift stream of fire issued forth from before Him ; thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him.” (Dan. vii. 9, 10.) Hidden, though it is like the action of God Himself which works in secret and in silence, and only appears by its effects, the operation of the blessed angels sometimes manifests itself externally. They appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob under human form, protected the Israelites under the appearance of a pillar of fire, and frequently destroyed their enemies. One single angel killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men of the

army of Sennacherib, and another under a visible form punished the sacrilegious Heliodorus. These celestial spirits have frequently appeared to the prophets, revealing to them future things, and always with reference to the Messiah, and to prepare His ways among men.

All is submission to the Son of the Most High God, the Heir of His glory, the Messiah who is to come. Every knee bends before Him ; it will one day be said, "*Let all the angels of God adore Him.*" But already, before He becomes incarnate, the faithful angels adore Him in the promise. The devils refuse Him homage, but they must render it, they *must* bow, if not before His love, at least under the severe arrows of His justice. In the silent progression of time, He compels them to execute His decrees, as ministers of His vengeance, and when time shall be no more, He will judge, and with a breath of His mouth pursue them in the very bowels of the infernal abyss. Stop here, my soul, penetrate this frightful truth, and anticipate its consequences. Which side will you take ? will you join the rebel or the good angels ? With the former you will inherit "*devouring flames,*" with the latter eternal felicity. Reflect now while you have time, whether you

will live as a bad Christian, and thereby merit the frightful sentence, "*Depart from me, ye accursed,*" &c., or as a good Christian, and deserve to hear, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father,*" &c. Choose. What portion have you chosen? You wish to be saved, cost what it may? If so, believe in Jesus Christ, and love and serve Him like the good angels.

HANKSGIVING.

I thank you, my God, for my faith in Jesus Christ, I bless you for this new means of knowing Him, in order that I more perfectly love Him. O Mary, bright Aurora, who must precede in hearts the dawn of the Sun of Justice, as the morning star precedes the luminary of day, I humbly beseech you to obtain for me from our Lord, a faith as lively as that of the prophets, and as strong as that of the martyrs, that I may labour zealously for my salvation to the last moment of my life. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer, page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Sanctity *charged* with sin! "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Armies!" such is the unceasing song of the Heavenly choirs. Ages have elapsed since Isaiah heard them chaunt the celestial strain, and its harmony, which in sweetness surpasses all human imagination, still resounds in the presence of the only Holy. God is holy because He is immutable in the sovereign Good, that is Himself, for if He could sin, He would no longer be God. He is the Holy of holies, holiness itself, and the source of all sanctity; His infinite love for Himself, and proportionate hatred of sin are incontestable proofs of this.

How then associate this infinite hatred of sin with infinite love for the sinner? By a miracle of love. If the Holy of holies has charged Himself with our iniquities, it is because He loves us. Let us not offend Him more in ever so slight a degree. Let us acknowledge His charity, and adore and imitate His sanctity, trying to "*be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect,*" endeavouring to be truly, really, solidly holy, for "*nothing defiled shall enter heaven.*"

DECEMBER XI.

A DAY OF FERVOUR.

IN giving, at your awaking, your heart to God, which is no more than that act of love which every Christian ought to make daily, animate all the powers of your soul, that this act may be as fervent as possible. Pray that you may be "*ever fervent in spirit.*" Renew this desire often to-day, and let all your thoughts, words, and actions, prove and evince your fervour.

Asp. Come, Lord, show us Thy face, and we shall be saved.

SIXTH ENTERTAINMENT.

Virtuous women have concurred in hastening the coming of the Messiah.

As a woman had destroyed the world by listening to the infernal tempter, it was fitting that others of her sex that believed in Him Who was to re-establish the world, should contribute to prepare His ways. Sarah, Rebecca, Deborah, Judith, Esther, have concurred in this great work, but it was left to Mary the "*Blessed among*" all "*women*" to concur in it most effectually by her sublime and heroic virtues.

By the ascendant which God has given woman over man, she is invested with great power to lead him to good or to evil, to heaven or to hell. Numerous are the proofs furnished us of this truth in the holy scriptures. Adam, Sampson, David, Solomon, and many others in the old law, have owed their lamentable errors *to the sex*, and certainly we do not want several examples in the New. Many who were proof against violent assaults, have yielded to the evil influence of women. On the other hand, some have owed their salvation to women. A virtuous female can work wonders in the human family; she can now well as formerly hasten the advent of the Messiah in hearts, or close this entry against Him. When is it that a family will be converted? When the mistress becomes a good Christian. When will society be reformed? When women set the example. But in order to this, all in them must breathe that amiable modesty of which St. Ambrose says with reference to the Most Holy Virgin, “*The grace of purity reigned so sovereignly in Mary, that she not only possessed it for herself, but she conferred it upon all who approached her.*”

THANKSGIVING.

I thank you, O Lord my God, for having inspired so many virtuous women to do what they have done to prepare the way for the Messiah in the world and in hearts, as well as for the zeal with which females in our own times have laboured to keep alive the sacred fire of the sanctuary, whilst all conspired to extinguish it. May their example be ever imitated, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

The Creator become a Creature.

God is the Creator of this vast universe, and of all things visible and invisible which it contains. He has created it by a single word. "*Playing in the world,*" is the forcible expression of the Holy Spirit, in describing this stupendous work.

There is this vast difference between a workman and a creator, that whereas the former labours upon pre-existent matter, the Creator operates upon *nothing*; for creation is but a transition from non-entity to being. This movement can only be effected by God; it is something so grand, so sublime, so necessarily divine, that the combined labours of men and angels cannot make the slightest approach even to the formation of a fly. And yet, infinite condescension of thine, creating God; sufficing alone to yourself, delighting in the possession and enjoyment of your own greatness, you drew us from nothing to converse with us, to pour upon us your bounty, to associate us to your glory, and by a new prodigy of your excessive love, you have even become a creature with us, to form us anew to immortality. You take upon you a body and soul newly drawn from nothing; you become a Man-God. O prodigious mystery, which renders you the subject, adorer, victim, creature of God your Father, while you still remain His equal as to the Divinity! O Jesus! make us love you! make us love you! create in us clean hearts according to your own spirit.

DECEMBER XII.

A DAY OF LIGHTS.

WHEN the darkness of night has passed away, and given place to the bright dawn, after giving your heart to God, beg of Him to dissipate the mists which envelope your soul, and to illumine you with His divine brightness. Say often, "*Lord, enlighten my darkness,*" and do nothing, undertake nothing, without having previously invoked the Father of Lights.

Asp. "Lord, send the Lamb, the ruler of the earth, from the rock of the desert to the mountain of the daughter of Sion." (Isaiah xvi.)

SEVENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

How the promise of a Messiah is diffused more universally and more clearly as the time of His coming draws nigh.

As a father proportions his instruction to the age of his child, so God, says St. Augustine, acted towards the world, dividing it into several ages, from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to David, from David to the Captivity of Babylon, and from this latter epoch to the coming of the Redeemer, proportion-

ing His instruction and increasing His lights as it progressed in age and capability. If it be asked why has He done so, and not communicated to us all His lights from the beginning, the same holy Doctor answers, that it was by an effect of His divine providence, which is truly admirable.

The conduct of God is indeed, as St Augustine says, truly admirable. The light of revelation scarcely dawns on the world when the Lord seeks in some manner to draw men to Himself by the prospect of temporal recompences. During the patriarchal age in which the world is governed by the natural law, we see but glimmering rays of that distant light which pointing out to man his final destiny, and the path which led to it, shone more brilliantly in the law of Moses. The prophets, each one charged with a new light to lessen the obscurity of the law, to announce Him who is to fulfil and give to it its perfection, and He Himself in His holy Gospel completes the work. Is not this order of instruction truly admirable?

THANKSGIVING.

We adore and bless and multiply our thanks, O God of our hearts, for so many

marks of goodness towards us, for your condescension, if I may so speak, to accommodate yourself to our capabilities, communicating to us your lights in proportion as we are able to profit of them. As at the day of judgment you will require from each one only according to the gifts he has received, we should take care of condemning those who have preceded us, as well as these who now exist, for they may be great saints, considering their lights and graces, whilst we may be great sinners, by not corresponding to those brighter illustrations with which you have favoured us. For this new ray of light receive new thanks, O Lord, our God! and grant that if we have received more, and shall be therefore more rigorously judged, that we may now try to be more faithful through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

The Light in Darkness.

God is essentially light, and there is no darkness in Him, so that if we say we are associated with Him and still walk in darkness, we are liars, and the truth is **not** in us, but if we walk in light, we are the children of the light. (John, i.) God dwells in light inaccessible. (James, i.) The Father is called *the Father of Lights, from whom descends every perfect gift.* In the *brightness* of the saints, before the Day Star, was His Son begotten, so that as God of God, He is Light of Light, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Light, who beams His rays upon the faithful when they need internal illumination.

The mystery of the incarnation is a mystery of light, the three divine Persons concurring in it. Hence, in reference to it, the prophet says, "Arise, Jerusalem, be *enlightened*, for *thy Light is come.*" (Isa. lx.) Jesus Christ came to enlighten every man; this Light shone in darkness, and yet darkness still hung over the face of the earth, for the Saviour first appeared in the obscurity of night. But this night became bright as the finest

day illumined by the Author of Light, enlightened by the angels who descend from heaven, and who with the brightness of God conduct the shepherds to the stable : thus the *darkness* of this night *was as its light*.

Let us respect the obscurity of faith, which has nothing but what is holy and mysterious ; let us go to God by its dark paths, and we shall be enlightened ; let us now cast off the works of darkness, and walk henceforward as children of light, (Ephes. v.) and pray our Lord in His holy Sacrament where He is enveloped in darksome veils, and holds His brilliancy enshrouded, to be a *Lamp to our feet and a Light to our path*, lest we stray from the path of His holy counsels and commandments.

DECEMBER XIII.

A DAY OF FIDELITY.

As that strict fidelity which God justly requires of you, requires great attention to your every movement, and great circumspection over yourself, commence this day by promising Him to be *faithful*, and be careful during it not to commit the

slightest infidelity. If any escape you, expiate it immediately. Be *faithful* to all your duties, attending to the divine Presence, to prayer, to mortification, to charity. The God whom you serve will facilitate and reward your fidelity.

Asp. "Thou art my Helper and my Protector, O Lord, do not delay."

EIGHTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Messiah comes a Conqueror. Nothing can arrest His approach, nor dispute His victory.

Go, said the Lord to His prophet, to animate hope in the souls of those who sigh after their Saviour. "*Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees. Say to the faint-hearted, Take courage, and fear not, behold God Himself will come.*" (Isaiah, xxxi. 3.) *Lift up your head, for behold, your redemption is at hand.*" (Luke, xxi. 28.) Yes, the Lord is coming, and coming as a conqueror, certain of victory, whose advance nothing can retard. Ezechiel saw his triumphs through the vista of ages, and in terms like to the following recounts them: "When I was in the midst of the captives by the river Chobar, the heavens were opened, and I saw the visions of God.

And I saw, and behold in the firmament that was above their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the throne was a likeness as of the appearance of a man above upon it, and the resemblance of fire shining round about. The chariot of His triumphs had four wheels of a prodigious form and height, and it was drawn by four cherubim, that is, it followed them, for the Spirit was in the wheels, so that they moved of themselves, and in such a manner that wherever the spirit went and elevated itself, the wheels followed: the cherubim who went before marched with the rapidity of lightning, and when they marched a noise was heard like that of a great multitude, or of an army." We are then certain of the advent of our Deliverer, nothing can prevent His coming to break our chains.

This prophecy, which we have rather imitated than literally copied, shows the victories of the Messiah; before, as well as after His incarnation He was then as well as subsequently, *the God of Armies*. (Isa. iii. 15.) Let us follow the steps of this God who comes *forth conquering that He might conquer*. (Apoc. vi. 2.) The armies of a God on whom all depends, to whom all is submissive, and in whose

hands according to His adorable designs all can be soldiers, are not like the armies of earthly monarchs; nevertheless if we might venture so to do with reference to the advance of the Messiah, we could divide His hosts into three imposing bodies. The right wing composed of prophets innumerable, who like so many foaming torrents, overturn and sweep away all before them, nothing being able to arrest their course; whilst on the left we would see miracles more multiplied than the stars of heaven, overwhelming all opposition from men and things at the will of the Leader, consolidating and upsetting thrones, kingdoms, families, at His good pleasure. Meantime, while these two bodies respectively operate in a manner as splendid as victorious, the Divine Conqueror occupies Himself with His myriads of angels, the centre of this formidable army, which advances from victory to victory since the origin of all things, and shall continue to do so to the end. Yes, it is written of Jesus Christ, "*He hath broken kings in the day of His wrath, He shall judge in nations, He shall fill up ruins, He shall crush the heads in the land of many.*" (Ps. cix. 5, 6.) Even Balaam said of His conquests, "*They shall come in galleys from Italy, and at the last they themselves*

shall perish." (Numb. xxiv. 24.) In this celestial host, ever sure of victory, *the immortal King of Ages* has willed at all times to enrol under His standard *men of good will*, who form the Church Militant. It is befitting that he should reign. (1 Cor. xv. 25.)

THANKSGIVING.

For us and for our love, it is that you have done all these things, O Divine Redeemer, deign to receive our humble thanks for time and eternity. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

A Sovereign become a Slave.

The God whom we adore is the Sovereign of eternity, and He will reign for ever. His sovereignty is so much the more august as it is joined to His divinity. Thou art my King and my God, says the Psalmist; He is King of kings, and Lord of lords; for He is the great King, and

the great God above all gods. (Ps. xlix.) When this almighty Sovereign speaks of the kings of the earth, he alludes to them as servants. He makes them feel it too when it good to Him seems, overturning thrones and breaking sceptres. But after all, He has been pleased to experience the chances of war, permitting Himself to be conquered by love for men ; for charging Himself with our sins, He has submitted to slavery their punishment. Scarcely does He appear on earth, than He is obliged to fly from an ambitious prince whom He could have buried in hell. In His parents' house He performs servile offices, though He is still and ever will be Sovereign Ruler of all ; and on appearing publicly, He declared that he came to serve, and not to be served. (Matt. xx.)

On the eve of His Passion, He washes, like a slave, the Apostles' feet, and He dies between malefactors. While still on the cross, He resumes the office of Sovereign. His enemies give Him the title, "*King of the Jews*" is inscribed over His head. He promises to the converted thief a share in His kingdom ; other kings expose their soldiers to death, our King by becoming a slave makes His soldiers kings.

DECEMBER XIV.

A DAY OF FAITH.

THE moment you awake, go in spirit to the feet of the Incarnate Word, produce an act of most lively faith; adore and love Him in His state of silence, weakness, misery; ask Him to perfect *your faith* by the most profound humility, immoveable constancy, and fervent charity, and vivify all you do to-day by the spirit of faith.

Asp. "Remember us, O Lord, according to Thy good will, and visit us in Thy salvation." (Ps. cv.)

NINTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The triumphs of the Messiah revealed in the vision of Nabuchodonosor as explained by the prophet Daniel.

"The secret which the king desireth to know, and which God hath shown to Him, to me also is revealed. Thou, O king, sawest, as it were, a great statue, this statue which was great and high, stood before thee, and the look thereof was terrible. The head of this statue was of fine gold, but the breast and the arms of silver, and the stomach and the thighs of

brass, the legs of iron, the feet partly iron and partly clay. Thus thou sawest till a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands, and it struck the statue upon the feet thereof that were of iron and of clay, and broke them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of a summer's thrashing floor, and they were carried away, and there was no place found for them; but the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream, we will interpret it, O king, before thee. (Dan. ii. 27, 30.) The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and strength, and power, and glory. * * * He hath put all things under thy power, thou therefore art the head of gold. And after thee shall rise up another kingdom, inferior to thee, of silver, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall rule over all the world, and the fourth kingdom shall be as iron; as iron breaketh into pieces and subdueth all things, so shall that break and destroy all these. And whereas thou sawest the feet partly iron and partly clay, the kingdom shall be divided, a part shall be strong, and a part shall be broken." After simply remarking

that these four great empires signify those of the Chaldeans, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, and finally the Romans, we again resume from the prophet: "*But in the days of those kingdoms* the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, * * and it shall break in pieces and shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever. According as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and broke in pieces the clay and the iron, and the brass, and the silver, and the gold." (Dan. ii. 44, 45.)

This is a striking prophecy, and commencing from the reign of this very king and going on even until now we see its literal accomplishment. As Daniel announced, the kingdom of the Redeemer is prepared under these great empires, and the promise of it is triumphantly fulfilled, no human or infernal agency being capable of arresting its progress: nay more, the frightful and increasing combat which it had to support from their combined efforts, only served to render its victories more splendid. The stone which rolled from the mountain without being detached by human means, admirably represents the incarnation of the Son of God, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and His lit-

tleness, for He is not even called a *rock*; but a *stone*, a pebble, demonstrates the abasement in which He is born. But this miraculous stone soon increases in size and forms a *mountain*, which overspreads the earth, and the progress of the gospel, the establishment and speedy extension of the church which succeeds the abjection of its divine Founder, must ever astonish men and angels. The statue struck down by the *stone* figures the proud kingdoms of the earth, which have all long since crumbled into dust, and the throne of Jesus Christ has been erected on their ruins. Is it not then true that "*Of His kingdom there shall be no end,*" since whilst it outlives all storms and still flourishes, despite of the efforts of men and devils, all others pass away and perish? Ah! unhappy worldlings! learn at last that it is necessary that the Lord Jesus reign. *Be converted*, enter into yourselves, return to Him, since He is disposed to pardon those who desire to be restored to favour.

THANKSGIVING.

Divine Messiah! we thank you for having opened our eyes, and given us the knowledge of yourself, to save us from the punishment thus announced. "*He*

who shall fall upon this stone will be broken, and he upon whom this stone shall fall will be crushed." That such an evil never befall us, grant, O God our Saviour, in your infinite clemency, that we may be always guided by the inspirations of grace, and ever live according to the teaching of holy faith. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

A Spirit become Flesh.

"*God is a Spirit,*" says our Lord Jesus Christ to the Samaritan in His admirable entertainment with her for the enlightenment of her mind and purification of her heart. (John, iv.) God is a pure Spirit, infinitely holy; infinitely great, without local extension; invisible and seeing all; impenetrable, and penetrating all; sublime, and surpassing all. He is the Creator of all spirits, an universal intelligence filling all, capable of all, loving all, sustaining all.

Meantime this God so great, this Spirit

so pure, so sublime, has annihilated Himself by becoming man, still more "He was made flesh." These words deserve to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, for how could one better express than St. John has done, the prodigious abasement of the Son of God. By the flesh there is meant all that is most vile and abject in man, all that is most unworthy of being hypostatically united to a pure Spirit. It is to show us that He really took flesh newly formed for Him in the Virgin's womb, that He has remained there for nine months. *The Word was made flesh*, and, Oh! what honour and comfort for men! says St. Augustine. The pure Spirit has not only united itself to our *spirit* to illumine it, but even to our "*flesh*," that He might consecrate it; He has taken our flesh, He has given us His body, that being wounded by the flesh we might be healed by the flesh; that by incorporating His flesh with ours, He might extinguish in us all the vices of the flesh.

DECEMBER XV.

A DAY OF DOCLITY.

BE particularly attentive to-day in hearing God, and in receiving His divine

word, either spoken, written, or inspired, and this with all the *docility* of mind, and submission of heart, of which you are capable. Fail not to reduce to practice whatever you are taught; be not scandalized at the rigours and humiliations imposed upon you by the Gospel, still less with those that Jesus Christ has endured for your love, and say often, "I will hear what the Lord will speak in me." (Ps. lxxxiv.)

Asp. "Save us, O Lord, and gather us out of all nations, that we may confess to Thy name."

TENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Church, like the Patriarchs and Prophets, sighs for the Messiah as the Wisdom of God.

The Church of the new law like that of the old, puts forth inflamed sighs, conjuring the Messiah to hasten His coming in these terms: "*O wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end mightily, and disposing all things sweetly, come and teach us the way of prudence.*" (Eccl. xxiv. Wisd. vi. Isaiah xl.) As the infant just born puts forth cries for necessary food, as the poor man supplicates the rich to

relieve his poverty, as the invalid calls on the physician to relieve his pain; so mankind, attained to that point in which it is sensible of its misery, anxious for the cure of its ills, and convinced of its need of a Deliverer, ceases not to sigh to Him to hasten His coming. And knowing by faith this Deliverer, it invokes Him as *the Wisdom of God proceeding from the mouth of the Most High*, fully comprehending that by His omnipotence, to which all is subject, He alone is capable of healing its many evils.

If God permitted man to struggle so long and so ineffectually against his numerous ills, it is not through cruelty, says St. Augustine, but with a view to apply a more seasonable remedy. (Ps. ci.) He wished to convince him of his utter inability to cure himself, and to oblige him to say, "*Have mercy on me, Lord, because I am infirm,*" (Ps. vi. 2.) for it is when one ardently desires a remedy, that the physician is well received, that he operates with confidence, and that the invalid more faithfully observes his counsels.

The prudence and wisdom of God are the only true; the world has also its prudence and wisdom which are reprov'd by God, being founded on error, for under the

appearance of temporal goods, of passing pleasures, and false enjoyments, they conduct man to his eternal ruin. After having thus reproved this false worldly wisdom, and confounded this vain prudence, the divine Spirit says to all, "Possess that wisdom from on high which is better than gold, and acquire prudence which is more precious than silver." (Ps. c. 15, 16.) But where is this treasure to be found? The sacred scriptures describe it as *hidden*, and therefore likely to escape the search of the most clear sighted, and not to be discovered but by the little and humble. "I had hoped," says the book of Job, "that old age would speak, and that grey hairs would teach wisdom; but I have erred, seeing that the old man like the child just born is but a tissue of darkness." God alone can give true wisdom, the inspiration of the Most High gives understanding. (Job, xxxii. 8, 9.) Uniting our voices to those of the Patriarchs and to that of our holy Mother, the Church, let us not cease to call upon the promised Messiah to come into our hearts, frequently repeating, "*O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High! come and teach us the ways of prudence!*"

THANKSGIVING.

What a favour, O Lord our God, is not that by which you have given us to understand, by the anticipated lights of your eternity, the extent of our evils and their proper remedy! What mercy to have revealed to us the treasure of true wisdom, and indicated the means of acquiring it, which enriches us with gifts and inestimable treasures, "that neither moth nor rust can consume," nor death deprive us of. We bless your divine bounty for these first graces, the preludes of so many others, and we shall sing your mercies. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Immensity circumscribed.

The immensity of God by which He fills all, and is present everywhere, is one of the most beautiful appendages of His supreme being, one of the most glorious attributes of His Divinity. It is a truth

ever recognised by philosophers, that the boundless spaces of the heavens, earth, and sea, cannot limit nor confine Him. *"In Him we live, move, and have our being."* He is in all beings without being inclosed by them, He is above and about all, without being excluded from them; because His being is an indivisible *all*, an *all* universally diffused and not composed of parts. Through love then it is that the Divine Word has by the Incarnation circumscribed his immensity, and invented the secret of inclosing His Divinity in the body of a little Babe. Here we may extend our reflections:—In this body there is a Spirit, in this Spirit an abyss of science and wisdom, all the brilliant lights and boundless irradiations of the Divinity, and these so eclipsed that no trace of them appears. Still more, this little Body contains a Heart, which is the throne of Divine love to such an infinite degree as to be capable of inflaming all other hearts, and yet it is obliged to restrain its ardent sallies. O what an abyss of wonders, what an excess of love! the august womb of Mary contains Him whom the heavens cannot contain, so too the holy tabernacles where this Divine Jesus still circumscribes His immensity for our love.

DECEMBER XVI.*

A DAY OF GRATITUDE.

ON this day, consecrated to gratitude, enter into the interior of the Holy Virgin, to admire and imitate her grateful sense of God's immense favours. No sooner does she become the Mother of God, than her "*soul magnifies the Lord*," and she visits St. Elizabeth to avow by a public act her grateful sense of the Divine Maternity. Unite your gratitude to hers, thanking the God of all goodness for becoming man to save you, and this as frequently as possible during the day.

Asp. "*My soul magnifies the Lord.*"

ELEVENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Messiah is the Adonai, the God to whom all things are possible.

O Adonai, Leader of the house of Israel! who appeared to Moses in the midst of flames, and in the burning bush, and gave him the Law on Sinai, *come and redeem us by the power of Thy right arm.*" (Exod. vi. 15. Acts, vii.)

* The Novena to the Holy Infant begins to-day.

By sin we all became children of wrath, forfeited our right to that eternal inheritance for which we were created, and at our leaving this world, hell was to be our portion. Who could rescue us from such misery, and removing the cause prevent the effect, taking into account that sin by attacking a majesty infinite in His essence and perfection, contracts an infinite malice, and thereby loads the sinner with an infinite debt? Could man? Could an angel? No, a thousand times no. Let us suppose one man, or one thousand men, or all the men who have ever existed or shall exist to the end of time, to be in a state of innocence, and that all the angels in heaven had received from God bodies in which to suffer and die for the sin of one alone; could that sin be atoned for, and the person who committed it saved? No, though the world were covered with a forest of crosses and deluged in human blood, mortal sin would still remain unexpiated. The reason is, that the debt thereby contracted is infinite, and therefore requires an infinite satisfaction; and that wounds, eternal in their nature, such as those inflicted by this monster evil sin, cannot be healed by human means. All iniquity is, indeed, *like a two-edged sword, there is no remedy for the*

wound thereof! (Eccli. xxi. 4.) What then can pay this debt, break down this wall of separation, rend this eternal chain under which man groans, and restore him to the glorious liberty of child of God? Nothing less than the infinite merits, the death of a God. It is this awful truth which inspired the just of the Old Law, and which still induces the faithful of the New to exclaim, to cry out with sighs and groans, "*O celestial Adonai, come and deliver us by the power of your right arm! that is, by your merits,*" all-sufficient to redeem us.

What ingratitude then to continue to offend God, to commit sin without remorse, when its expiation has cost so dearly, and that at each time it is repeated "*Jesus Christ is again crucified!*" This repetition of sin gives it a new degree of malice, and renders Christians more guilty than the Jews, for *if they had known the Lord of glory they would never have crucified Him.* (1 Cor. ii. 8.) We know Him and have *seen His glory, the glory of the only Son of God,* His resurrection, His ascension, the establishment of His church, &c.

THANKSGIVING.

O divine Redeemer! we thank you for having bestowed upon us the precious gift

of faith, and for preserving it to us despite of our ingratitude. Deign to confirm your divine empire in our hearts. May your *kingdom come*, and may your reign be established throughout the earth, who livest and reignest, &c. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

A God-man.

God! Man! what opposite terms these! How hard to express the immense difference! It is incomprehensible. And yet they have been united, and most closely, by the hypostatic union, but then by the most surprising effect of the Divine omnipotence. For what is God? A supreme, self-existent, independent Being, eternal, without beginning or end, immutable and unchangeable. A pure Spirit, simple, without composition, or parts, or alteration; filling all, ruling all, Creator of heaven and of earth; absolute Master of all, sovereignly happy, and making the felici-

ty of His elect. But why *hisp* His definition? Who could define God? O Holy! O Immortal! O True! O Thou who art known only by Thy own divine intellect, pardon our temerity, since it is committed only to show forth Thy unbounded love, for by trying to say something of Thee as Thou art, we can better estimate the lowliness of Thy abjection in becoming what Thou wert not. *Man!* For what is *man*? A mortal creature, the slime of the earth. weaker than a reed, more brittle than glass, lighter than air, more changeable than the moon, essentially dependant, subject to corruption, to misery, to sufferings, to death. What abjection this! O truly an abyss too profound for our penetration, Lord, is Thy humiliation, Thy annihilation rather, in becoming man, in joining Thyself to our nature. May it teach us to be humble for Thee!

DECEMBER XVII.

A DAY OF OBEDIENCE.

Enter to-day into the dispositions of a soul perfectly obedient to the orders of the Most High; be attentive to His voice, and He will not fail to speak to your

heart. Be fervent in executing His will ; when you see the light, walk on in its brightness, or it will *set in darkness*, and God may speak to you no more. Obey the Divine call, like your sacred model the Holy Virgin ; follow her in spirit and heart, studying her every movement in her visit of charity to Elizabeth, and conforming yours to them as much as possible.

Asp. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it done to me according to Thy word."

TWELFTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Messiah as "Root of Jesse."

O Rod of Jesse ! who standest as a sign, around which all nations should rally, *before whom kings shall be silent, and whom all people shall invoke, come and gather them from the four ends of the earth.* (Isai. xi. 52.) Jesse, otherwise Isai, was the father of David, the great progenitor of the Son of God according to the flesh, who is therefore called Rod of Jesse. It is this divine Branch, who should raise the glorious standard under which all nations were to assemble, that the church now invokes, beseeching Him with sighs and tears to hasten His approach. Isaiah de-

sired Achaz to demand of God the immediate appearance of this divine signal, and Achaz refused under pretence of not *tempting the Lord*. The holy prophet indignant thereat, says, "*Is it a small thing to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, which signifies, God with us.*" And He shall exalt upon a high mountain His glorious standard impurpled in His blood, *and all nations shall gather around it*. The splendour with which He will operate these things, and the prodigies which shall accompany them, will astonish kings themselves; those who refused to believe and adore, shall be confounded and struck dumb at His victories; and drawn along with the multitudes who invoke Him as their deliverer, they too will confess to His name, and feel happy in being ranged under His banner.

Heresy and schism, discord and division, having divided the children of the church, she conjures her Divine Spouse in the words of the prophet to unfold His glorious standard, which by a just judgment He for sometime seems to have withdrawn from our view. It is the only means of reanimating the drooping spirits,

and raising the fallen courage of the children of the faith, and of uniting them one with another, as the standard of an earthly prince raised upon the battle-field, serves at once as a rallying point for his troops, and often insures the victory. Let us unite with our holy Mother, and beseech this admirable Conqueror to hasten and succour us, that we may see broken down the numerous barriers which separate us one from another in faith and practice; that there may be acknowledged *but one God, one Faith, one Baptism*, and we be so united together, that retracing a model of the primitive church, it may be said of us, that there is among us *but one heart and one soul*.

THANKSGIVING.

God of our hearts, while desiring this prodigy, we, the children of the Holy Catholic Church, thank you for having caused us to be born in its bosom, and fed with the milk of pure faith. "You have not done this for every nation," which vastly enhances the precious gift. We shall never cease to thank *You* for it, and to praise and bless you for having bestowed upon us such a mark of predilection.

May our gratitude be sincere and eternal.
Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Liberty enslaved.

As God is independent by His nature, and that His will is the free and uncontrolled mover of all created wills, He is not only free of Himself, but He is the Author and Principle of all liberty. Angels and men have indeed been created free, but it was a favour not due to them, a participation of that of God. They have, or many of them, abused their liberty; but as the liberty of God is inseparable from justice, He cannot will aught but good.

It is by this divine Will, influenced by love for us, that the Son of God has become man, and sacrificed His liberty, taking the appearance of a slave. We are now to consider Him a little Babe, quite dependant on all, subject like other infants to all. He has hands, but He cannot work; feet, but He cannot walk; a mouth, a

tongue, but He cannot speak. His mind and heart He holds free, for with the one He knows us as He did from all eternity, and with the other He loves us, O and loves us so as fondest mother never loved a cherished child !

But why has the liberty of God become enslaved ? to free us from the shameful slavery of sin, and to restore us to the liberty of the children of God ; two reasons for loving our Divine Liberator, and hating our tyrant and his chains, the devil and sin.

DECEMBER XVIII.

A DAY OF PENANCE.

AFTER adoring God at your awaking as "*Father of mercies*," begin the day by an act of sorrow for having offended Him. Invest yourself with the spirit of penance, call to mind past years *in the bitterness of your soul*. Renounce all joy and pleasure ; deprive yourself of every satisfaction ; do all, and receive all, in a spirit of penance ; let those acts proceed from the heart, and let your aspiration be, "A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps. l.)

THIRTEENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Messiah invoked as "Key of David."

"O Key of David! who opens, and no man shuts, shuts and no man opens, come that thou mayest lead forth in the blood of the Testament Thy captives, who sigh in the lake in which there is no water." (Isai. xxii.) In the prophet Isaiah, Eliacim, son of Helcias, destined to replace the impious Sobna in the prefecture of the temple, is thus presented as the figure of Jesus Christ: *"I shall call my servant Eliacim, and I will clothe Him with thy robe, and will give into His hands thy power, and He will be as a father to the house of Juda, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will lay upon His shoulder the Key of the house of David, and He shall open, and none shall shut, and He shall shut, and none shall open."* Speaking to the Angel of the Church of Philadelphia, St. John thus applies the foregoing to our Lord Jesus Christ: *"These things saith the holy and the true One, He that hath the Key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth. I know thy works. Behold, I have given thee a door opened which no man can shut."* (Apoc. iii. 7, 8.) The just of the Old Law thus in-

voked the Messiah to deliver them from their miseries. Zachary, by his prophetic lights, sees their prayer heard, and after having announced to the church of the New Law its happiness in these terms, "*Behold, your King cometh meek, the Just, and the Saviour,*" he adds, "Lord, Thou also by the blood of Thy Testament, hast led forth Thy prisoners out of the pit in which there is no water." (Zach. ix. 11.) We too should address the same prayer to our Redeemer, above all now, when so many are straying from Him, "*digging to themselves broken cisterns which can hold no water.*" The holy souls in Purgatory are crying out to us to solicit Him in their behalf, let us solicit Him to release them too from the prison where they sigh.

THANKSGIVING.

We thank you, O Lord, for having drawn us from *that lake which is dry and arid*, containing not the vivifying waters of your grace, and for having placed us at the source of the divine well-spring, the true church, where we can drink to satiety its salutary streams. Grant that they may be to us "*waters springing up to eternal life.*" Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Innocence—Penitent.

Innocence is the portion of but a few chosen souls ; few indeed there are who by special privilege have preserved unstained the white robe of Baptism. As regards God, it is a grace ; as regards the faithful, it is a strength, a courage proof against temptations. The sanctity of God is an attribute of His divine nature which sovereignly abhors sin. Not so man ; the most innocent can sin, because he is fragile, and that he is led away by his concupiscence to its commission. "The just man falls seven times a-day." God is impeccable by nature ; if he could sin he would not be God ; but the most perfect man *can* sin, and committing faults daily ; although light he is not perfectly innocent, and is consequently obliged to penance.

This impeccable God, alone possessing innocence essentially, has loved us sinners, because formed by His hands, and made

to *His image and likeness*. He has espoused our nature without prejudice to His impeccability, and offering Himself for us to eternal justice, has united the most rigorous penance to the purest innocence, practising it all His life from His manger to His cross. But this does not exempt us from the obligation of penance; we should impose this yoke upon ourselves, accepting moreover that portion of penance which it shall please Him to allot us, and ever uniting our penance and atonement to His infinite satisfaction and reparation.

DECEMBER XIX.

A DAY OF REMISSION.

THE remission of sins being the object, the end, and necessary consequence of the preaching of the Baptist, because it supposes a God appeased, begin the day by saying, "*Forgive us, O Lord, our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us.*" Let it be your ejaculation to-day. But if you desire to be heard, let it be accompanied by a true sorrow for your sins, and a fervent desire of their *remission*.

FOURTEENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

*The Messiah considered as the Orient from
on high.*

“O Orient Splendour of eternal light and Sun of Justice! come and illumine those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.” (Zach. iii. Malachy, iv. Wisd. vii. Ps. xii. 119.) The prophet Zachary announces the Messiah under the title of *Orient*, saying, “Behold a man, *Orient is His name.*” (vi. 12.) And again, “Hear, O Jesus, Thou high-priest, Thou and Thy friends, for they are portending men, for, behold, I will bring my Servant the *Orient.* (iii. 7, 8.) The wise man calls the Messiah the “*Splendour of eternal light,*” and Malachy denominates Him the “*Sun of Justice.*” Before the coming of this divine Sun and celestial *Orient*, the world “*was seated in darkness;*” the few just who appeared on earth from time to time being but as twinkling stars, whose light was quite insufficient to illumine the universe. They themselves felt this, when surrounding the prophets, who were as the sentinels of Israel, they tearfully asked, full of hope and fear, “Watchman, what of the night?” (Isai. xxi. 11.) Will it be soon ended, and the beautiful Day Star appears

announcing the coming of the Sun of Justice? The prophets replied to the inquiry. Jacob, the father of the tribes, marked the time most distinctly *when the sceptre should pass from the house of Juda.* (Gen. xlix. 10.) Those who after him enjoyed the gift of seeing into futurity, fixed the epochs and unfolded the signs of His coming and appearance. Daniel says, "From the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, (Dan. ix. 25;) and Micheas points Him out thus: "And Thou, Bethlehem, land of Juda, art a little one among the thousands of Juda, out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be the Ruler in Israel, and His going forth is from the beginning from the days of eternity." (Mic. v. 2.)

The prayer of the Jews was heard, *the Orient from on high* having come, and the Sun of Justice having dawned upon them. But when *He came unto them*, "*His own*," *they did not receive Him.* Alas! we cannot reproach them for this infidelity; we ourselves have imitated it, for have we not with more malice, and more perversity, outraged the Divinity, and by our crying offences *made void the death of the Son of God, and reckoned as unclean the*

blood in which we were sanctified? But let us not cease to sigh and lament, to supplicate and pray. *Who knows if God will not be moved? who knows but He will have pity, and coming will save us?*

THANKSGIVING.

We thank you, O Lord, for that deposit of faith which you still preserve to us, and which is so much the more to be esteemed, as so many have been deprived of it; grant in thy great mercy that we may never merit and draw upon ourselves so dreadful a chastisement, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

An Avenger, loving.

"*Vengeance belongs to me, says the Lord, and I will repay.*" Yes, says St. Augustine, vengeance belongs to God, because, being sovereign, justice as well as sovereign wisdom, being exempt from all

passion, and consequently incapable of predilection or antipathy, He knows how to proportion the punishment to the crime. In the Old Law only it was, it seems, that God wished to be called "*the God of revenge*," for in the New He lays aside this formidable character, because He desires to gain our hearts and to engrave upon them His commandments.

He is then a loving God towards men, and He becomes like to them that they may be like to Him. He became man that men might become Gods. He assumes through love that which is in man, that man may adopt what is in Him. Love itself can go no further, nor invent anything more powerful. Still more; as St. Fulgentius says, a sinful man despises God, and flies from Him, and God thus despised, becomes man for his love. Ah! says St. Bernard, as man has nothing worthy of love, God seeks in Himself motives to love him. He is then not only a Lover, but Love itself.

Let us love this eternal Lover; let us offer Him our heart all burning with affection and love; and if cold let us offer Him His own ardours, to supply our deficiency.

DECEMBER XX.

A DAY OF REFORMATION.

BEGIN this day by an examen of all that in you needs reform; ask the Holy Spirit to show you yourself, and to give you resolution to undertake the correction of all your failings. Thoroughly study your dispositions, your humour, your inclinations, your manner of behaving towards God, your neighbour, and yourself; note down what you have to reform, and adopt the resolution of earnestly labouring at this great work every day of your life.

Asp. "Help us, O God our Saviour, and for the glory of Thy name, *come and deliver us.*" (Ps. lxxvii.)

FIFTEENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Messiah invoked as Holy of holies.

O Holy of holies, O unspotted Mirror, Mirror of God's majesty and Image of the Divine Bounty! come to blot out our iniquities, and to establish eternal justice (Dan. ix. 24. Wisd. vii.)

Thus did the wise man as well as the prophet Daniel speak of the Messiah. It is principally under the view of God's

great goodness, and with reference to His sanctity, that the patriarchs, prophets, and all the ancient just, sighed for His coming. How necessary was it not that the Holy of holies should appear at that epoch, when a torrent of depravity swept over the earth, and men *drank down iniquity like water; when all flesh had corrupted its way*; when the nations had formed to themselves gods, the work of men's hands; when they even deified their own vices, and that to all but the true God did they erect temples, and build altars! The Jews themselves were then in a state of great degradation, so that our Lord said on appearing amongst them, "*If your justice exceed not that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" A pagan philosopher (Plato) is reported to have said of these awful times, "The world has committed some great crime which God has resolved never to pardon. It is only the just man come from heaven," he continues in a sort of prophetic strain, "who can reform the world in the sad state to which it has been reduced by the crimes of men." And the royal Psalmist too says of this period, "There is no one who does good, no, not one: they are all become abominable." Is the

unhappy era in which we live more distinguished for virtue and wisdom than that which preceded the coming of the Lord Jesus? Is it less corrupt? Can we say it is less wicked? Alas! no; the words of the prophet Osee are but too true of us also: "There is no truth, and there is no mercy, and there is no knowledge of God in the land; cursing, and lying, and homicide, and theft, and adultery have overflowed, and blood hath touched blood." (iv. 2.) O God our Protector! stem this frightful torrent, convert sinners, make the just still more just, and the sanctified still more holy, that when you come at the last day to search Jerusalem even with lamps, we may not be found in iniquity, nor discovered in corruption.

THANKSGIVING.

We thank you, O God, for having hitherto spared and not dealt with us according to our iniquities. In your great mercy be pleased to convert sinners, and make the just humble, fervent, and persevering, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth
a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Wisdom become Folly.

As God is sovereignly intelligent, wisdom is an appendage inseparable from His divine nature, and this wisdom is increased and eternal, it is, in a word, God Himself. It resides in His spirit, its first object is Himself. By it He knows and loves Himself, and all that which is in Him. Its second object is, all that is outside Him, viz. all creatures. When this divine Wisdom speaks of itself it says, that it proceeds from "the mouth of the Most High." To it is attributed the government of all, the conducting all strongly and sweetly to its proper term.

This divine Wisdom, the eternal Word, has become man, and thereby become a folly to the Gentiles, and a scandal to the Jews. He accepted all the consequent opprobrium, but *eventually* He derived from it all His glory. His seeming foolishness has triumphed over the science of pretended sages, even under their eyes: they deemed it folly to attribute to a God pains, humiliations, death; but it was in

embracing those things that God manifested His wisdom ; for seeing that the world did not recognize Him in the works of His divine wisdom, it pleased Him to save them that believe, by foolishness, (1 Cor. i.) O! indeed, to all who will consider the glorious results of the Incarnation, it will seem the work of divine wisdom, and they shall say with St. Paul, "Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom, justice, and sanctification." May we learn His divine maxims, and shaping our lives by them shun all vain worldly teaching !

DECEMBER XXI.

A DAY OF VIGILANCE.

RISE most promptly this morning ; indeed you should always do so ; so much depends on the first moments of the day, but particularly on those of that devoted to *vigilance*. *Sleep not* ; that is, be not careless or negligent in any of your duties ; lose not a moment of your time, "*lest you enter into temptation*." All, every thing, obliges you to this ; the inestimable value of time purchased, as it has been, by the blood of a God, the proximity of your redemption, the near approach of death

and judgment. Let your vigilance extend to all your sentiments, desires, words, thoughts, and actions.

Asp. "O Thou who art seated on the cherubim! exert Thy power, and come to save us."

SIXTEENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

*The Messiah invoked as King of nations,
&c.*

"O King of nations! God of Israel! Saviour! Corner-stone! who makest of both edifices one, come and reconcile both peoples in one mystic body to God." (Jer. x. Isa. i. 45. 28. Eph. ii.)

Speaking of the reign of the Messiah over all nations the prophet says, "*Who shall not fear Thee, O King of nations, for Thine is the glory?*" (Jer. x.) And Isaiah pointing Him out as the Corner-stone says, "*Behold, I shall place a Stone as the foundation of Sion, a Corner-stone tried and precious.*" This figure is thus applied to our Lord by his apostle, "We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief Corner-stone." (Eph. ii. 20.) The spirit of this prophecy being, that at the coming of the Messiah the converted Gentiles, with the remnant of faithful Jews,

united in one same belief, would form one kingdom to Christ, the just of the Old Law have not ceased to invoke Him as "the Corner-stone," "the King of nations."

Until the coming of our dear Lord in the flesh, God was scarcely known beyond the boundaries of Judea. The Almighty himself gloried in nothing upon earth, but in being the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. It is true, that among the idolaters, He had some adorers, as Melchisedech, Job, &c. but it was only in Judea He received public worship. As the luminary of day rises in the east, though he is destined to enlighten every point of the heavens, so the Eternal Sun of Justice emitted His rays in the first instance on Judea, the Orient of the universe, and thence, after dispersing the clouds which surrounded Him, beamed forth His divine light on the entire world. The scriptures employ several figures to unfold this idea: sometimes they call Him "a Giant running His way joyfully;" at others, a Voice, "a Sound, which has gone forth to the extremity of the earth." Again: as a mysterious Vineyard, of which the Psalmist says, "Thou wast the guide of its journey in its sight, Thou plantest the roots thereof and it filled the land.

The shadow of it covered the hills ; and the branches thereof the cedars of God. It stretched forth its branches on to the sea, and its boughs on to the river. (Ps. lxxix. 10, 11, 12.) The application of these figures to our blessed Lord and His Church are quite plain ; from their fulfilment it is evident that He indeed is the chief *Corner-stone*, erecting into one structure the very opposite materials of Jew and Gentile. Well, then, did another holy prophet thus apostrophize the Church the universal edifice thus formed : " The Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen in thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and see all these are assembled together, they are come to thee ; thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged when the multitude of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee." (Isa. lxii. 2.) And again : " Enlarge the place of thy tent, and stretch out the skins of thy tabernacles ; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt pass on to the right hand and to the left, and thy

seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and shall inhabit the desolate cities. (Isa. liv. 2.)

THANKSGIVING.

O God! there is question hear of us, whose forefathers the Gentiles *walked in darkness*. They were long the objects of Thy divine solicitude; for which as well as for their ultimate vocation, and our consequent knowledge of Thee, and of Thy holy law, we humbly thank Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer, page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

The Omnipotent, powerless.

All power is derived to men from God, He is its source. Potentates, kings, He can deprive of it when He pleases; their power is limited and of short duration, and being sinners, they often abuse it. "Power" belongs, strictly speaking, to God: it is a property of His divinity: all is subject to His power. It is eternal,

having neither beginning nor end (Dan. iv.) and being combined with sovereign justice there can be in its exercise no defect.

Yet this all-powerful God has become man, and, O! what weakness is the appendage of humanity, above all in infancy! If I raise my eyes to heaven, I there behold an Almighty God, at whose nod the celestial pillars tremble to their very base, and I am seized with fear and filled with reverence. If I cast my eyes upon the Infant Incarnate Word, I see Him powerless and weak, and I am, or should be, filled with love; for faith teaches me that this weak powerless Babe is that great Almighty Ruler who sends forth lightnings, and they go, and who shuts up the sea with doors. (Job, xxxvii.) And it is by this weakness that the Divine Power has appeared most manifest. The weakness of God is stronger than men; I owe more to His weakness than to His strength: His power, indeed, drew me from nothing, but His weakness has saved me from hell. How much should I not love this divine Impotence and glory in my own infirmities!

DECEMBER XXII.

A DAY OF REPARATION.

You have been hitherto preparing *remotely*, commence to-day your *immediate* preparation for the Nativity of Jesus Christ. "*The night is passed,*" "*the*" joyful "*day is at hand,*" be careful that it find you ready and disposed to share in its ineffable graces. Imagine you hear the voice of the holy Baptist, once more proclaiming, as on the banks of Jordan, "Prepare the way of the Lord;" leave not his company, except it be to follow in spirit Mary and Joseph on the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and let the unspeakable mystery there to be revealed be the point to which you will refer all your actions.

Asp. O my soul, "prepare to meet your God; His name is the Lord, the God of armies." (Amos, iv.)

SEVENTEENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

*The Messiah invited as Emmanuel, or
God with us.*

O Emmanuel our King and Legislator,
the Expectation and Desired of the Gen-
tiles! come, that Thou mayest give Thy

law into our bowels, and mayest write it in our hearts. (Isa. viii. Gen. xlix. Agge. ii. Jer. xxxi.)

In creating man God imprinted in his soul a law, which should at the same time serve him as a light and a rule of conduct. It was impressed upon his heart, as a mysterious seal never to be effaced, or it was as a mirror, which continually set before him the will of his Almighty Maker. David styles this primordial law, "the light of the Divine Countenance." Allegorically, the soul may be here considered as a transparent stone of great price, which so long as it preserves its purity, is penetrated by and reflects the light, but which is no sooner stained and defiled, than the brightest and most resplendent rays are lost upon it. Such is the misfortune that befel our first parents, and in them the entire human race ; so that, as St. Augustine says, the lineaments only of this divine light, as it were, remain to us. Touched with pity for our misery, the Lord promised us a Redeemer, and as a remote preparation for His coming, long retarded for divine ends, gave the written law through Moses, on Mount Sinai, with strict injunctions often to read and meditate upon it ; and whether rising up or sitting down, at home or

by the way-side, to have it before us. Drawn away by the passions, excited by the triple concupiscence, the written law as well as the natural law was soon forgotten, and no resource remained, but that the Lord should engrave it in our very *innermost parts*, accompanied by His grace. This is what the just of the Old Dispensation sighed and prayed for, and they have been heard; the Lord has fulfilled his promise thus made by Jeremy: "I will give my law into their bowels, and I will write it in their hearts." (xxxi. 33.) Those shining lights, those stings of conscience, those bitter interior anguishes, which the greatest sinners experience and acknowledge, when they are candid and sincere, are irresistible proofs that God has indeed *engraven His law in our hearts*.

THANKSGIVING.

Whatever use we make of this grace of salutary remorse, O Lord, it is no less a favour and a mercy which demands all our gratitude. We therefore bless and thank you for it, O divine Legislator, and resolve never to abuse it, but to profit of all those inspirations and graces which you so superabundantly bestow for our

sanctification, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Glory in Disgrace.

To God alone be glory, He alone is truly glorious. Ere He drew men and angels from nothing, when there was no one to know and praise Him, He was not less glorious than now. This God of glory, sufficed to Himself; He knew Himself, loved Himself, took infinite complacency in dwelling in His own greatness, which is His sole privilege, His heaven, His temple, His every thing; and this is the glory which He will not give to any other. Creatures may recognize God's glory by their adoration and praise; but they can add to it nothing essential; the angels celebrate it in heaven, men confess it on earth, even the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of His hands. (Ps. xviii.)

And still this glory was in some degree sacrificed in the Incarnation for humiliation, and contempt, and shame, and disgrace. *The brightness of God* is hidden under the veil of humanity. He who bears up the heavens lies on a little straw. The Delight and Joy of the celestial choirs is the companion of beasts. Why all this? purely because He loved us, because He wishes that we should love Him, and walk in His footsteps. They are become glorious since He has trodden them; shame and disgrace, "good and evil fame," have ever since changed their names, for true glory and honour are only to be found in them. O let us, like our annihilated Lord, seek glory in infamy, grandeur in baseness, elevation in humility; for after all, only he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

DECEMBER XXIII.

A DAY OF RETIREMENT.

BE as feelingly alive to-day as you possibly can in such *retirement* as circumstances will permit, to the nigh approach of your redemption, and to the birth of your Deliverer. Think much, desire

much, but speak little, except to Jesus, just about to come forth from the august womb of Mary. It is now nine months since He there incarcerated Himself; reflect on the interior occupations of the divine Solitary, shun useless conversation, avoid the tumult of the world where Jesus cannot be found. Withdraw from your friends, however holy; speak to God, listen to God, and prepare in silence to give Him a new birth in your heart.

Asp. "I will think only of my beloved," Infant Saviour, "whose turning is towards me."

EIGHTEENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Messiah invoked as Pastor or Shepherd.

O Pastor of Israel, and Ruler of the house of David! whose coming forth is from the beginning from the days of eternity, come that Thou mayest feed Thy people in Thy strength, and reign in justice and judgment. (Mich. v. Ezech. xxxiv. Isaiah, xxxii.)

Ezechiel styles the Messiah, the Prophet of the Shepherds of Israel. Micheas says He is the Supreme Ruler, and that He will not be like other pastors, who pass

away, and cannot of themselves give grace, but that He will remain, and feed His people in the strength of God, in the light of grace, in the sublime knowledge of the Almighty ; and that He will give "peace" to souls, by enabling them to triumph over their passions. Inquiring what conduct he should observe in order to be henceforward placed under His all-powerful protection, Job says, "I have sinned, what shall I do, O Keeper of Man, to be once more one of the sheep of your blessed flock?" (Job, vii. 20.) Behold, what should be done to punish the pride of man, God after his sin made his salvation depend on prayer : the law without grace was insufficient to save him, and hence he cried out, "O Pastor of the house of Israel, come, that Thou mayest feed Thy people. Though man bear the law of his God engraven in his very *bowels*, he cannot be saved without grace. By the works of the law none will be justified, says St. Paul, without the grace of Jesus Christ. (Rom. iii. 20.) And elsewhere, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." (Ibid. ix. 16.) "Without me," says our Lord himself, "you can do nothing." (John, xv. 5.) Remark this word *nothing*, for it means that we can absolutely do

nought for our eternal salvation without the grace of this Divine Saviour. It was then necessary that this divine Messiah, the eternal Son of the Father, become incarnate for us, should be a good Shepherd, as well as a Redeemer and Legislator, and that in this quality He should feed these souls with the spiritual bread of His grace, with all the gifts of His mercy, with Himself; for man could not find elsewhere, either within or without him, the means of observing *the works of the law* meritoriously of salvation. For us too is He this good Pastor. He one day said, with a sort of loving exultation, "I am the good Shepherd; I know my sheep, and my sheep know me; and I lay down my life for my sheep. I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." (John, x.)

The prayer of both covenants has then been heard. We are going to receive from the divine bounty a "*good Shepherd*," who will lead us to rich pastures on the fertile mountain. Mons coagulatus Mons pinguis. In what consists the food wherewith He shall feed us? The word of God contained in His holy Scriptures; the decisions and doctrine of the Church; the sacraments; the graces which are rained down from heaven, either as manna to

nourish, or delicious water to quench our thirst; the tenderness, the love, the mercies of Mary, who procures life for those who invoke her (Prov. viii. 35); the prayers and examples of the saints; in fine, every plant which grows upon that celestial mountain, whither this good Pastor conducts us, and where He feeds us with Himself, that heavenly bread, that nourishment by excellence which gives that superabundant and eternal life which He has promised us.

THANKSGIVING.

O Lord our God! we thank you for having given us this good Shepherd, this amiable Pastor. Grant us grace to render Him love for love, and life for life, through the same Jesus Christ, &c. Amen.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as in page 8.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

The Word silent.

In the beginning was the Word, says the beloved disciple, and the Word was God... All things were made by Him.....And the Word was made flesh. Such is the sublime theology of the Word, as dictated by the Holy Spirit. With the Fathers we may add, that the generation of the divine Word is ineffable and incomprehensible, because the Father who begets is God, the Son begotten is God, and is as powerful, and ancient as the Father. He is the thought by which this adorable principle knows Himself, He is His Word, His Expression, His Son, His own Substance, God of God, His perfect Image. What inconceivable grandeur! But this *Word*, so great, so pure, so holy, has become man and been made a Child for our love. Begotten of God, from all eternity, He wishes to be begotten in time by the operation of the Holy Ghost. This Word, who is the living *expression*, condescends to become mute and silent. What a prodigy of humility and love!

Let us render homage to this unparalleled Word. First, in the august womb of Mary, where, as a prisoner of love He

is *the Word* without a word, observing a silence as worthy of our attention as the sacred Oracles which He will pronounce when conversing with men; and next in the Holy Sacrament, where, though mute and silent too, He speaks to the hearts of those who visit Him.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

A DAY OF SALVATION.

CALL to mind on awaking these words of St. Paul, "We expect a Saviour who is the Lord Jesus," and let this expectation to be realized on to-morrow, fill you with holy joy. Render to Him your homage by anticipation, in the stable where He is about to be born, since it is there He begins to fulfil His glorious functions, by the poverty, humiliation, and suffering which He has endured for your love, and to correspond to His adorable designs, direct all your movements to-day, so that you may be able to say at every moment *I labour for my salvation.*

Asp. To-day we shall know that the Lord will come, "and in the morning we shall see" His "glory."

NINETEENTH ENTERTAINMENT,

Which should be read towards midnight.

The people of God are now joyful, seeing that their prayers are heard and their hopes crowned. "Behold I stand and knock." (Apoc. iii. 20.) "Say to the daughter of Sion, your king comes to you meek." (Matt. xxi. 5.) To-night you will see that the Lord has delivered you, and in the morning you will see His glory. (Exod. xvi.) "At midnight a cry was made, Behold the Spouse cometh, go forth to meet Him." (Matt. xxv. 6.) "You shall have a song as in the night of the sanctified solemnity, and joy of heart as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel." (Isaiah, xxx. 29.) In a few hours the New Testament begins as formerly the Old, but in a different manner, for while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Thy royal throne into the midst of the land of destruction, (Wisd. xviii. 14, 15.) not to manifest His justice, but to exercise His mercy; not to strike with death the first-born of Egypt, but to save us from eternal destruction. O hap-

piness ! O felicity ! He Himself is come. Harken to the angels who compose His court : " Glory be to God on high," do they sing, " and peace on earth to men of good will." (Luke, ii. 14.) In union with the heavenly spirits, let us sing to Him " a new canticle." Children of men, come and with these blessed spirits adore and fall down before the Lord who made us. Look upon Him in the poor manger which reposes His sacred members. O what a prodigy of love ! I cannot restrain my tears ! See how lovingly He stretches forth to me His blessed hands ! Let me kiss His divine feet ! Mary adores Him—then Joseph—now the holy angels !

Who could have thought that a day should come when *the Sun* would rise at midnight ! O Night of nights ! precious Night, brighter than the finest day ! ' Yet the proud, the sensual, the covetous, plunged in the lethargy of their passions and vices, see not at its rising this resplendant Orb. " Fire hath fallen on them, and they shall not see *the Sun*." (Ps. lvii. 9.) Sleep on, then, unhappy sinner ; but the hour of mercy will pass, and a time will come in which you will feel all the horrors of your state ; " poverty will come upon you after your short slumber, as want cometh upon an armed man."

While these sleep, the shepherds are keeping the night watch over their flock, and the God who gives grace to the humble, whilst He resists the proud, sends to them His angel who gives to them this sign, "You shall find an Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." Immediately they set out, they pass over to Bethlehem, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in a manger. Having adored Him "they returned praising God." (Luke, ii.)

THANKSGIVING.

Let us like the shepherds glorify God for "this word that has come to pass." (Luke.) Let us praise His holy name "because he hath visited this people." Abraham desired to see His day, let us who see it be glad."

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations ; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

PRAYER.

O God, who hast deigned to hear our prayers by granting us the Redeemer, after whom we have so long sighed, grant

that by appearing in our flesh He may deliver us from the yoke of our passions and the slavery of sin, and that by His grace and merits we may obtain an eternal crown, through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord. Amen.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Providence in want.

As God is an inexhaustible source of treasures, and that His riches, which are immense, are dispensed with admirable goodness and infinite wisdom, He provides for all without ever being poorer, and without leaving anything wanting to His creatures for their subsistence and conservation. From the most noble to the most abject, because He loves all that He has made, we all receive of His plenitude without in any degree lessening His infinite resources.

And yet this God so rich has become man, and made Himself poor by choice, to detach us from wealth, and bind us more strongly to Him ; to inspire us with a true desire of spiritual goods, which are grace and glory, by infusing contempt for perishable ones, which are their prime obstacles. Coming on earth He

chose a poor mother, a poor carpenter for His reputed father, a poor stable open on every side for His birth-place, an ox and an ass for retinue, a few straws for His royal couch. Yes, it is under these circumstances Mary brings forth Him who poises the earth with three fingers, Him in whom are contained all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God.

Go then to this rustic cavern, behold there the God whose Providence provides for all, in such want and poverty as would move you even in a creature, and learn from Him to love indigence. O what a moving sight! the Mother in the stable, the Son in the manger, and rags His only ornament. (St. Cyprian.)

CHRISTMAS DAY.

A DAY OF HOLY JOY.

At length behold arrived the day after which earth had languished for so many ages; at last see accomplished the desires of the just, for *He is come*, He, our Emmanuel, the God of Israel, the Saviour. On this blessed day He commences His career of suffering, poverty, humiliation.

And why? for our love. O what shall we, what ought we not do for Him? Let us at least spend this day as piously as possible, doing nothing contrary to its sanctity. We should *rejoice*, it is true, but let it be "in the Lord," for every moment of this holy feast is infinitely precious, and should be spent in procuring the spiritual birth of Jesus within us. We have commenced this blessed solemnity last night, *passing over with the shepherds to Bethlehem*, let us stay there all day. We should assist at the three masses if possible, and with all the ardour and recollection of the seraphim. And at one of them take our Infant Saviour, as if from His manger, and place Him by Holy Communion in our heart. Let the fire of our love warm His sacred members, transfixed with cold by the midnight blast, and let us try to inflame our heart with the holy ardour of that charity which incessantly burns in His.

Asp. "Glory be to God on High, and peace on earth to men of good will."

TWENTIETH ENTERTAINMENT.

On the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word

was God. This was in the beginning with God: all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light; that was the true light, which enlightens every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him, He hath given power to be made the sons of God; to them who believe in His name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but who are born of God. And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (St. John, i.)

Such is the unspeakable mystery which we this day celebrate, *the Word made flesh*, and dwelling "*amongst us*." In this

concise, but faithful and sublime narrative, which the beloved disciple gives us of the eternal generation of the Word, we see that He is the Author of all things, and that from the beginning, nothing has been made without Him. The world through which He passed under the veil of the promise, knowing Him not, did not cease to combat against Him, but it was in vain; at His coming all should bend before Him, for a God could not yield to men, nor to any power however formidable. The designs of God are at length fulfilled; behold, He, is "in the midst of us," hidden under the veil of our humanity, in which He will converse with us for our instruction and enlightenment. Let us say, and repeat it one hundred, nay, one thousand times; He after whom we have so long sighed, has taken up His abode amongst us, and invite all creatures to "come, exult, and make joy before" this "God our Saviour."

"On this day," says St. Leo, Pope, "on which life is born for us, it is not permitted to any one to be sad. Let the just rejoice, for he is about to gather the palm of victory. Let the sinner be glad, since he is offered pardon. Let the Gentile exult and confide, because to him also is life offered, for the Son of God, who ac-

according to the impenetrable decrees of His wisdom came amongst us in the plenitude of time, has done so to reconcile all mankind with its Creator, and to conquer by the divine strength, which He thereby communicates to it, the Devil, the author of death, by that wherewith he had conquered." (Serm. i. de Nativ. Dan.)

THANKSGIVING.

"A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us, whose empire is upon His shoulder." (Isaiah, ix. 6.) What thanks, O Lord, shall we render to you for such a benefit! A noble family is naturally glad at the birth of an heir to its wealth and dignity, and why should not we offer you "a host of praise," since, degraded outcasts as we were, "the universal Heir" is given to us, who like to us in all things, except in sin, will raise up our fallen hopes, and restore us to the "glorious liberty of children of God." O Admirable! O Counsellor, O Strong! O Father of the future age! O Prince of peace! May your angels praise you, and may the just bless you for this immense condescension for ever and ever. Amen.

V. Praise the Lord, all ye nations, &c.

R. Because His mercy, &c.

Prayer as on Christmas Eve, "O God, who hast," &c.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

God an Infant.

“You will find an Infant,” said the angel to the shepherds. Such is the sign of the might of a God Saviour. Infinite love alone could unite two such remote extremities as God and man, but a God, an Infant wrapped in swathing clothes, and laid in a manger, is far more surprising, the Divinity associated with infancy far more incomprehensible. Our infancy is no burden to us; our reason being then dormant, we feel not its abjection and disgrace; not so the divine Infant Jesus, He knows all as He can do all, in the womb of his Blessed Mother as well as on the cold straw in the stable, He is perfectly conscious of the degradation, the lowliness of infancy. How much should we not love this divine Infant, and try to become little like Him, humble, simple, docile, patient, disinterested, knowing nothing, seeking nothing but the poverty and simplicity, the humility and subjection of the Lord Jesus!

DECEMBER XXVI.

Feast of St. Stephen.

A DAY OF MORTIFICATION.

DECLARE to day an implacable war against *self*, as your most dangerous enemy; according to St. Augustine's advice, dispose yourself to bear and forbear, to suffer and abstain. Endure all that happens to you, abstain from, deprive yourself of all that which gratifies you; be vigilant in mortifying your taste, tongue, sight, ears, &c. Consider yourself as a person at the point of death, to whom is administered the holy Unction or anointing; and allow not to your senses, any thing which may one day require expiation by that Sacrament.

Asp. "I live now, not I, but" my Infant Saviour "lives in me."

TWENTY-FIRST ENTERTAINMENT.

On the Fruits of the Nativity, as seen in St. Stephen.

"If He lay down His life for sin, He will see a long-lived seed." (Isaiah, xxxiii. 10.) Thus did the saintly prophet express himself concerning the "Lamb slain" from the beginning of the world, in the figures which announced Him; and behold how

soon this divine Victim of His own ardours commences to fulfil these figures. He is but just born, and already He devotes Himself to sufferings and humiliations, to poverty and death. If this be so, He will indeed see a numerous posterity, "a long-lived seed," which shall endure while the world shall last. A splendid proof of this is to-day placed under our eyes by the holy Church in the blessed proto-martyr, St. Stephen. "Full of grace and strength," says the sacred text, "Stephen did great signs and wonders among the people. * * And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke. Then they suborned witnesses who said, 'This man ceaseth not to speak words against the holy place and the law.' * * Now, hearing these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed their teeth at him. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. * * And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and casting him forth out of the city, they stoned him, whilst he, falling on his knees, exclaimed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' " (Acts, vi. 7.) Regarding this heroic death as the fruits of the

merits of the Saviour, St. Fulgentius thus expressed himself, "Yesterday we celebrated the temporal birth of our divine Monarch, the eternal King of Ages ; and to-day we solemnise the victorious combat and eternal triumph of one of His soldiers. Yesterday our dear King, clothed in our mortal flesh, quitted that divine tabernacle which He had built for Himself in the virginal womb of Mary, to visit the world ; and to-day the martyr who confesses Him, quits the prison of his body, to fly environed with glory to heaven. Yesterday, the angels sang among us in transports of gladness, ' Glory be to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will ; ' and to-day these same blessed spirits receive with joy into their eternal society the glorious St. Stephen. Yesterday the Son of God, the Christ, our beloved King, appeared before our tearful eyes, ' wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger ; ' and to-day is seen revealed on high, clothed with immortal glory, the martyr Stephen. Yesterday a narrow crib and the limited circumference of a poor stable, contained the Infant King, the Infinite God ; and to-day Stephen, the conquest of His grace, is received crowned with honour into the immensity of the heavens."

THANKSGIVING.

It is not alone for St. Stephen, O divine Saviour, you have devoted yourself to sufferings and to death, you have "died for all." (2 Cor. v. 15.) You have opened heaven for all, you came to offer to all a place in the kingdom of your heavenly Father, and we all, if faithful to the end, can say when dying, or at least after death, like this holy martyr, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." (Acts, vii. 55.) What thanks shall we not render to you, O Divine Redeemer, for such a benefit! We shall express our gratitude like holy David, like him we shall offer you to yourself, take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as on Christmas Eve, page 96.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

A Priest the Victim.

Although Jesus Christ came not on earth until the plenitude of time, still

“He is the Priest for ever,” as the prophet says, and the source and principle of the Priesthood of all the priests of both covenants. This is a sublime and sacred character, of which that of Melchisedech was but a figure with which the Incarnate God has invested Himself to reconcile us to His Father, to offer Him for us a Host of praise and thanks, and expiation, and propitiation. But this eternal Priest is become our Victim too, and thereby seems to renounce His right to sacrifices, which He possesses with His heavenly Father. In His own Person He furnishes matter for a perfect sacrifice by assuming for our love the quality of Victim. Finally, He offers this sacrifice, He immolates Himself, and so becomes Priest and Victim. The victims of the Old Law were insufficient to honour God ; holocausts and sin-offerings did not please, therefore did His Beloved Son say by the prophet, “Behold I come to do Thy will, to be Myself Thy holocaust, Thy victim.” In His Blessed Mother’s womb He commenced His sacrificial functions, He continued them in the manger, He consummated them on the Cross. What powerful motives to induce us to love Him, to immolate to Him our passions, vices, evil inclinations, our self-love, self-esteem, self-will, to die

to all, to sacrifice all, that we live *to* Him, *for* Him, *like* Him, the great High-Priest of our souls, to whom be glory and honour for ever!

DECEMBER XXVII.

Feast of St. John Evangelist.

A DAY OF HUMILITY.

BEGIN this day by adoring the Supreme Majesty of God, first on His eternal throne, surrounded by myriads of seraphim, and next in the manger, where these same angelic spirits confess this same greatness humbled for your love. Acknowledge before this annihilated God with most profound humility, that you are a worm of the earth, a living nothing, animated clay, a sinner who deserves hell, and act accordingly. During the day let no occasion of practising humility escape, and permit not the slightest sentiment of pride, or vanity in your thoughts, sentiments, words, actions, movements, &c.

Asp. Infant Jesus, most humble, grant us true humility.

TWENTY-SECOND ENTERTAINMENT.

Jesus is the Author of the twofold life of grace and glory.

And He showed me, says St. John, a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Apoc. xxii. 1.) "The Lamb slain" from the beginning of the world is then the inexhaustible source of life, of grace, of love. Already the same holy Apostle had said of Him in his Gospel, that "in Him was life." (John, i.) This Divine Saviour, who has wished that we should be ignorant of nothing involving our eternal salvation, had said, that He was Life in its source: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," (John, xiv. 4.); and elsewhere speaking of those who were to believe in Him, He declared that He was come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly. (Ibid. x. 10.) The tree of life of which Adam after his sin was forbidden to eat, lest he might continue to live, was a figure of Jesus Christ, the true Tree of Life. A Cherub with a flaming sword was placed at the entrance of the terrestrial Paradise where it grew to prevent his return after his expulsion, lest eating he might live eternally. But the case is now altered,

the ministers of the Lord, the angels of the New Testament, have received directions from the Incarnate Wisdom to call all mankind to His feast. "Children of men," do they say, "how long will you love vanity and seek after lies? * * Come, eat my *bread*, * * renounce childishness and live."

There are two species of spiritual life of which Jesus Christ, the Lamb without spot, is the inexhaustible source, these are the life of grace and the life of glory. St. Augustine on occasion of the Feast of St. John the beloved disciple, whose triumphs and glory we this day celebrate, speaks of and compares both these lives. Our Lord had said to St. Peter, as is related in the Gospel, "When thou wast young thou didst gird and didst walk whither thou wouldst, but when thou shalt come to be old, another shall bind thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not;" and subsequently of St. John, he said, "So will I have him remain till I come; what is it to thee?" The holy father St. Augustine discovers in the words addressed to St. Peter, having reference to himself, the life of grace, which is a life of trials and sufferings, and in those which regard St. John, the life of glory and beatitude, and thus expresses himself on the sub-

ject: "The Church recognises two sorts of lives divinely inspired and revealed; the one of which is in faith, and the other in intuitive vision; the one communicated to us during our pilgrimage in this world, and the other in a blessed eternity; the one in labour, the other in rest; the one to sustain the traveller in the way, the other to recompense him in the eternal country; the one in the heroism of action, the other ravished in contemplation; the one which turns away from evil and operates good, the other having no longer any evil to avoid nor to fear, but an infinite good in enjoyment and possession; the one always armed to combat the enemy, the other reigning in the most profound and delicious peace, with no enemy to combat; the one strong to support adversity, the other not experiencing any thing painful; the one, in fine, holding its passions in check, and the other having no longer any passions to contend with. What are we to conclude from all this? That the former of these lives, and which is signified by St. Peter, is precious but painful, and the latter, represented by St. John, better, and moreover its recompence infinitely happy." St. Aug.

THANKSGIVING.

O Divine Saviour, both these lives are the fruit of your sacred Nativity, and of your entire life passed in privations of every sort, in persecutions, humiliations, sufferings, and of your precious death endured for us upon the cross. These lives then have cost you dearly, and our gratitude for them should be proportionably extensive, eternity will not be too long to thank you for them. O Heavens! earth, and sea! O holy angels, and Blessed Virgin Mother! help us to praise and thank eternally this good Jesus, this amiable Saviour.

Prayer as on Christmas Eve.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Grandeur in abasement.

“Who is the God like unto our God?” exclaims the royal prophet; “you, O Lord, who alone do wonders, art great,” he continues, “and greatly to be praised.” God is great by the infinite excellence of His supreme and incomprehensible being; He is great by the prodigious extent of His unlimited authority; He is great by His adorable perfections, which are infinite and without bounds; His greatness can receive neither diminution nor increase;

in fine, He is the source of all greatness ; we are great only by Him ; He alone constitutes His own greatness.

But still this grandeur and greatness, which is above all the powers of heaven, earth, and hell, this greatness which struck as with a thunderbolt the highest beings which it ever created, when they sought to compare with Him, "*and be like to the Most High*," is now abased by love, and ranked with those to whom He has in all things assimilated Himself, *save and except sin*. This increated Word, equal in all to His Father, is become His adorer, His subject ; Sovereign of the Angels, He appears their inferior by the flesh which He has assumed. Go then to visit Him on His mystic throne, where you will find similar or greater abasement, and considering the foregoing, adore His greatness in the body of a child, whose portion is littleness, who weeps, who suffers, who is unknown and despised, and resolve never more to refuse to humble and abase yourself for Him.

DECEMBER XXVIII.

Feast of Holy Innocents.

A DAY OF PATIENCE.

If you this day meet any occasion of suffering, call patience at once to your as-

sistance, and practise it as long as the annoyance may last, without complaining no more than the holy Innocents. Let there not only be conformity to the divine will on the occasion, but gratitude, thankfulness, for being thus distinguished like them, and take care there be no impatience, eagerness, or precipitation in your sentiments or desires, no more than in your words or actions during the day.

Asp. Divine Infant Jesus, make me by "patience possess" my "soul."

TWENTY-THIRD ENTERTAINMENT.

The kingdom of Jesus is peopled with holy Innocents, immolated by impiety in hatred of His name.

The children of error and impiety have ever been the same, cruel, barbarous, ferocious, like their father, who was "a murderer from the beginning." (John, viii.) Pharaoh mercilessly slew the first-born of Egypt, and to-day we behold the sanguinary Herod imbruing his hands in the blood of the Innocents, in the hope of involving the divine Infant King in the slaughter. The world never witnessed such a scene; the tears of the mothers ought to have softened the heart of this barbarous prince, if the blood of their

murdered babes failed to do so. But no, he only became more obdurate in his wickedness.

What fruit have these tyrants reaped from their cruelty? What advantage has been thereby derived to them? None other but frightful temporal punishment accompanied by universal odium, and followed by an eternal hell. Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea, and the impious Herod was eaten alive by worms. This should teach us how careful we should be not to abuse the power which God has given to us, and above all, not to employ it against Himself in the persons of His creatures. Despite of the wicked Pharaoh, the Israelites arrived at the possession of the Promised Land; and notwithstanding the violence of the ruthless Herod, the divine Messiah eluded his search, and crowned with glory these innocent victims, thereby announcing by anticipation, says St. Leo, that love which He subsequently manifested for little children when he said, "Suffer little ones to come to me, for to such belongs the kingdom of God." (Serm. i. in Epiph.) "If you desire to know," continues the same Father, "why this divine Saviour, 'the immortal King of Ages' thus loves infancy with a love of tenderness and of

predilection, I will tell you: He loves it because as model of the predestined, He took it upon Himself in body and mind on the day of His birth. He loves it because it is the mistress of humility, the rule of innocence, the mirror of sincerity and meekness. He loves it, in fine, because it is by it, and according to it, He counts upon and intends to direct the manners of the great of the world, and the geniuses of the age, to dispose them to salvation, saying to all, to every class and rank and condition, 'If you become not as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' " (Ibid.)

THANKSGIVING.

Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast given us in Thyself the model of that spiritual infancy, without which we can never be received into Thy heavenly kingdom. Thou hast been pleased to be born for us an Infant, and every day of that precious life which Thou hast lived for us, Thou hast taught us as children to despise riches and honours, and hast shown us in Thyself that sincerity, candour, innocence, sweetness, and humility, which characterize childhood and infancy. In Thy mercy and sweetness do grant us grace to imitate Thee. Amen.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations ; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as on Christmas Eve.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Immortality liable to Death.

God is immortal, and His immortality constitutes His glory ; as He never had a beginning, so he shall never have an end. He is immortal by His divine essence, because it is most simple, that is, without composition of parts tending to decay. He alone has immortality, says St. Paul, and He is the principle of the immortality of men and angels. (1 Tim. vi.)

But, my God, to what are you not reduced by the Incarnation ? Yes, fallen in a certain sense. Your love for men abases you, O supreme Being, it disarms the Omnipotent, it wounds the Invulnerable, and slays Immortality Himself. The simplicity, the immutability, the impeccability of the divine nature, which are the sources of its immortality, disappear and lose their splendour by the Incarnation. His simplicity suffers because He assumes a passible and corruptible nature, com-

posed of body, blood, soul, &c. His immutability suffers, because He subjects Himself to heat, cold, hunger, thirst, joy, sorrow, fear, and above all, death, the most humbling to man. His impeccability suffers, because He takes upon Him the sins of the world, and all the pains and ignominies which they entail, save guilt. Jesus Christ commences His career to the tomb as soon as His sacred humanity is formed in the womb. Behold the sad portion chosen by an immortal God to confer upon us immortality. O let us never forfeit our title to it by deliberate sin, or if we fall, let us rise by grace that we may live for ever!

DECEMBER XXIX.

Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

A DAY OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

ON awaking, remember that God beholds you, and use every means of preserving this precious thought during the day, until your time for repose again returns, when you can say, "I sleep, but my heart watches." (Cant. v.) Avoid all dissipating actions, and society where God is not spoken of and His presence forgotten. If necessary business, light-

ness of imagination, &c. remove you from the divine presence, return as soon as you perceive your wandering, and say some tender and affectionate word to that God who looks upon and hears you, which may induce Him never to depart from you.

Asp. "Divine Infant, may I ever seek Thy face" and holy presence, and always have my eyes upon Thee.

TWENTY-FOURTH ENTERTAINMENT.

By the humility and sweetness natural to the state of infancy, the divine Infant Jesus attracts all hearts to Him.

"Say to the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King comes to thee meek." (Matt. xxi. 5.) Tell her that He comes to her in a state of infancy which enhances the enrapturing traits of sweetness; that He comes in the state of humble poverty, a third character calculated to efface every species of timidity and fear inspired by His greatness. "*You will find the Infant wrapped in swathing clothes, and laid in a manger.*" (Luke, Ibid.) To determine us fully to go to Him confidently, this divine Saviour will hereafter say Himself, that sweet and mild in our regard, He will treat us with every species of good-

ness, at the same time, He will invite us to learn of Him to be *meek and humble of heart, and that we will find rest for our souls.* (Matth. xi. 29.) This heavenly and all-attractive meekness which forms the essential character of our Saviour, is the reason why St. John designated Him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. (John, i. 29.) St. Basil says of this amiable characteristic, God has then descended amongst us, and has conversed with us no longer in the midst of flames, and lightning, and thunder, nor accompanied with the awful noise of trumpets, which erst resounded on the fuming mountain, but in our own flesh, and under the garb most proper to excite us to confidence, that He might converse with us lovingly and cordially on the affair of our salvation, as a brother converses with a brother.

Who then can withhold me from Jesus my Saviour, who besides all this invites me to go to Him, so lovingly and sweetly, saying, "*Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*" (Matt. xi. 28.) I am of the number invited by Him, since He calls "*all.*" I am most certainly of this number, since every day and every moment I have my passions to combat, and feel the overwhelm

ing weight of my sins and miseries. I shall then go to Him who will relieve me. I shall go to my Jesus, who as He promises, will lighten this burden. He alone can do it, there being no other name under heaven given to men whereby they must be saved. (Acts, iv.) I will go to Him, yes, I will go to my Saviour, who now can display regal pomp, great riches, giant strength, rigour, severity, the dazzling splendour of the divinity. But there is nothing of all that in Bethlehem. The Divinity, yes, but it as if annihilated; in Jesus, enchained, hidden through love, it is divested of everything formidable. Royal pomp. But this King is descended from His throne, and wrapped in the garb of a penitent, He has neither sword to defend, nor soldiers to guard Him. Immense riches! His whole wealth apparently consists in some few straws, tattered swathing linens, and a poor manger. Giant strength! Ah! all His might is the weakness of Infancy, a poor little babe can be feared by no one. A harsh and severe man like myself! No, not a man, but an amiable Infant; only see what enrapturing sweetness is depicted on His adorable countenance! What a sweet smile plays upon His divine lips! He

extends His little hands too, as if to invite us to accept the kiss of peace and love. I shall then go to my Jesus, that He may relieve me from my heavy burden, nothing shall keep me from Him, in the hope that he will give me a share in His love.

THANKSGIVING.

O my God, I bless you for having given me this Divine Saviour! "O happy fault which has merited such a Redeemer!" "The Lord is great and exceedingly laudable," did the Psalmist say with truth; but I can say no less truly, "the Lord is little," and exceedingly amiable.

V. "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and, ye clouds, rain down the just one."

R. "Let the earth open and bud forth a Saviour."

Prayer as on Christmas Eve.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Majesty caressing.

The august title of majesty rigorously speaking suits but God alone, because of the excellence of His supreme Being, and the plenitude of His power, which extends over all. The majesty of God is so res-

plendant as not to be supportable by man. Moses having conversed with Him through a singular favour, received a ray of it so luminous that he was ever after obliged to veil his countenance when treating with the Israelites. The royal prophet chaunted this Majesty, when he said eternally "*blest* be the name of His Majesty, and let all the earth be filled with His splendour." (Ps. lxxi.) And yet this Majesty veils its rays in taking our flesh, lest Mary should be dazzled by their brilliancy; nor does He let them afterwards appear, save for a moment upon Thabor, when their splendour enraptures the apostles and lays them prostrate on the holy mount. The majesty of God is then hidden that He may converse, and O how what love! become concorporeal with men. Go then to the manger and behold this little Babe hiding His rays and caressing the simple shepherds as he afterwards did the kings. See Him in His public mission, observe Him in His passion, contemplate Him in His mystic life, you will ever find concealing His splendours to render Himself easy of access, "*sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy,*" always caressing, though always majesty.

DECEMBER XXX.

A DAY OF KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF THE
HOLY INFANT.

As knowledge produces love, and that love is the perfection of the law, that homage of the heart without which there can be no service of God, no true devotion, endeavour to-day to know the Lord Jesus specially amiable and likely to gain your love in His present form, that of a little Infant. His *body* is the master-piece of the Divine Spirit, formed of the blood of the purest of virgins, and deified by its union with the Word. *His soul* bears all the traits of the increated sanctity, all the treasures of the divine wisdom, all the splendour of glory, the sceptre of omnipotence, the empire of the universe. His divinity is an abyss of infinite grandeurs, which He has invested with the colours of our nature to proportion them to our weak vision and render them more amiable. Let the remembrance of these sweet truths be continual to-day. If accompanied by the recollection that this blessed Infant Lord is as loving as He is great, and perfect you must be if possible compelled to love Him, and will not fail to produce at least every hour an act of divine love.

Asp. I love Thee, my sweetest, dearest, and most amiable Infant God, as often as there are stars in the heavens, drops of water in the ocean, minutes in time, and creatures in the universe.

TWENTY-FIFTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Son of God testifies for us a love of preference in His Nativity.

The angelic nature is far superior to the human, forasmuch as it is not liable "*to see corruption,*" and that it is endowed with incredible strength and beauty. Yet it is not to this so favoured nature that the Son of God has hypostatically united Himself through special love. "The Word was made flesh." (John. i.) God became man. Consider, my brethren, says St. Fulgentius, the extent of this favour, and comprehend if you can this so distinctive mark of the predilection of the Son of God for us rather than for the angels. True God of true God, equal to His Father in all things, He is the life of the angels, and still He has not united Himself to their nature, but He has taken ours, uniting it hypostatically to His divinity. Assuming a body and a soul both are holy; taking our body subject to death, He has taken our soul unsullied by sin, a just

soul by which He could restore justice to our depraved souls, but a *flesh*, subject to death, that dying in it He might in His death vanquish death, and rising in this same flesh He might in the same manner one day resuscitate ours. (Serm. ii. de Dupl. Nativ. J. C.) How many mysteries in this one mystery, and all replete with love for us! On this subject this same Saint continues, What a mystery, my dear brethren, is not this? What an undeserved mark of the love of God, considering our offence of Him! For remark, while man by sin despises and separates Himself from God, God loving man comes to him by an inexplicable excess of mercy. He comes to the impious to make them just, because He loves them. He comes to the infirm to cure his wounds, because He loves him. He comes to the perverse to reestablish him in the ways of truth, because He loves him. He comes to the dead to give him life, because He loves him. What more shall I say? That this God has loved man so much, that after having by His precious death snatched Him from the power of the devil, He has led him, even in His own person, triumphantly above all the angels of God to be seated at the right hand of God, (Ibid.) Is not this the most inconceivable of all

the mysteries of love ? It serves to explain why this divine Master has suffered all with so much patience on the part of men, for love when true suffers all from the object loved, even to immolate itself for it. It shows us why He has submitted to those treasons, strokes, scourges, thorns, horrible death. It discovers to us, in fine, why He subjects Himself to those frightful profanations in the holy mysteries where He resides in person, suffering so patiently. In God all is infinite patience, mercy, justice, *love*.

THANKSGIVING.

Gloria in Excelsis.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations ; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as on Christmas Eve, page 96.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

The Shepherd become a Lamb.

To none is more justly due the quality of "*Pastor of souls*," and none can so worthily discharge it than the Almighty Lord who formed them ; for having drawn them from nonentity, he knows them perfectly ;

being infinitely wise He alone knows how to lead and conduct them ; being infinitely loving He feeds them, brings them back when they stray, and heals them when sick. By becoming incarnate the Word has not ceased to be our Pastor. He Himself proclaimed that He was "*the good Shepherd*" who gave His *life for His sheep*, as He subsequently did on Calvary, but by an excess of love He unites the august quality of Shepherd to that of tender and endearing "Lamb." How sweet ! How amiable !

Go then to-day to the mystic manger, and adore and caress this Lamb, "dumb before His shearer," and who suffers Himself to be divested of His fleece in order to clothe you. (Isa. liii.) This Lamb is "the ruler of the earth," (Ibid. lxvi.) and so replenished with sweetness that He will suffer Himself to be "*carried as a victim*," to save you from eternal death, (Jer. xi.) and He has charged Himself with the sins of the world, to expiate them in His blood. Go to Him, lavish upon Him your caresses and your praises ; He will receive them He is so meek. Beg of Him to mark you with His blood as the Israelites before going out of Egypt, if you wish to arrive at the promised land. Remember that this Lamb has a book of life. Bless-

ed are they *whose names are written* therein. Follow Him now in His humiliations if you wish to share in His glory.

DECEMBER XXXI.

A DAY OF REPARATION.

ENTER on this the last day of the year with a spirit of compunction and sincere and humble reparation for all the sins committed since its commencement. Accompany this atonement with grateful thanks for all the blessings you have been receiving during the past twelve months, and examining cursorily the infidelities you have committed, bewail them, ask pardon for them, and offer for them some acts of penance.

Asp. By your sacred Nativity pardon us, O Infant Jesus.

TWENTY-SIXTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Abyss of our Lord's Humility is the Chain by which He has drawn us from the Abyss of Pride.

“He annihilated Himself.” (Philip. ii. 7.) By consenting to pride, man has become inflated, puffed up with himself, and Jesus Christ yielding for us to the

love of His good heart, has humbled and annihilated Himself. And this He has done freely, for He could have left us in the state of perdition in which we were plunged without the slightest injustice. But "*He annihilated Himself.*" Much has been said of that king of Ninive, who, descending from his throne, clothed himself in sackcloth and knelt in the dust, (Jonas, iii. 6.) like an humble penitent; but what is this in comparison with what we behold in the Son of God, who, coming from the throne of His eternity, invests Himself with the sackcloth of our wretched humanity! What is a king to the Lord, the Creator of kings and kingdoms! Besides, the sovereign of Ninive was a sinner, and if he humbled himself it was to avert a well-merited vengeance from his devoted head; but it is for our sins the Lord Jesus annihilated Himself, it is to save us from eternal woe, into which we were doomed for our foolish vanity, our wicked pride. If He assumed the angelic nature, His humiliation would be immense; but to become man, a poor infant! to appear the son of a carpenter, when His conception was all divine! to pass for a sinner, though the God of sanctity! Truly St. Paul might say, that He annihilated Himself.

“Give me a lever and a place to stand,” said Archimedes, “and I will move the earth;” but no lever sufficiently strong, no point of support, was to be found. What could not be found in the material world, the Son of God has applied to the moral, and thereby drawn it from the abyss in which it was plunged. “Abyss invokes abyss.” (Ps. xli. 8.) By the *abyss* of His humility He has withdrawn the world from the *abyss* of pride. This wicked and worst enemy of our souls is like in its transports, its disdain, its violence, to the Persian chariots, which armed with lances at every point and dragged along by furious horses, after carrying destruction into the enemies’ camp, turned back, and bringing disorder into their own ranks strewed the fields with dead; for pride after immolating all around terminates by destroying itself. O annihilated Lord, deliver us from this wicked spirit !

THANKSGIVING.

I thank you, my divine Infant Jesus, for having abased yourself to raise me from the abyss of pride; grant in your mercy, that by humbling myself truly I may avoid the dread misfortune of receiving so great a grace in vain.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as on Christmas Eve, page 96.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

Eternity subject to Time.

God alone is eternal, because He is without beginning and without end, and is Himself the source and principle of His eternity; so that it is speaking incorrectly of Him, say theologians, to say that He has been, and He will be, but rather that He is, because He enjoys by His eternity an *eternal* present. There is nothing past, nothing future in God; all is present to Him, as well that which has happened in the beginning, as that which will take place at the end. "The Lord is from eternity to eternity." (Ps. cii.)

But what excessive goodness and benignity towards men, that this eternal God should come forth, so to speak, from His eternity, which makes His glory to subject Himself to time, time which He Himself created, and which is but a measure of movements composed of centuries, years, weeks, days, hours, rapid moments,

which conduct men necessarily to the tomb! This eternal God, the Creator of every spirit who has shared with Him, not His perfect eternity, which is incommunicable, but His immortality, has descended in some sense from the plenitude of His eternity, in the plenitude of time, to assume a body like ours, bearing in itself, by the adverse elements of which it is composed, the principle of its own destruction. He moreover subjected Himself for this great work to the period marked by His eternal decrees, and to the times and moments most mortifying and opposed to His independence, greatness, unutterable felicity, which voluntary subjection is another ineffable mystery of His love. He was born in the most rigorous time of the year, and Sovereign Lord of all times and seasons as He was, when His Passion drew nigh, He said, He knew that His *hour* was *come*. Could then the Eternal be subject to hours and times? Yes, to procure us a blessed eternity. A great lesson this to us to profit of time, to be subject to rule, to have all our exercises arranged for each day, never to be the slaves of circumstances, *not to leave a moment void*, and so diligently and fervently to employ every moment, as to earn a blissful immortality.

JANUARY I.

Circumcision of our Lord.

A DAY OF RENOVATION.

COMMENCE at your awaking this day, the first of the new year, by a universal consecration of your mind, heart, soul, of your whole person, in fine, to Christ Jesus, who comes to renew and consecrate the earth by the blood which He sheds under the circumcising knife, and the adorable name which he takes at the painful and humiliating ceremony. Reverently pronounce this holy Name, and ask through it the grace of a perfect renovation. Beg of God in this sweet Name, as fervently as you can, to give you protection against your enemies, light, grace, love, lively faith, final perseverance, and after Holy Communion renew your baptismal promises, good resolutions, and all the engagements you are under to the Divine Majesty in the Name and Blood of your suffering Infant Jesus.

Asp. O holy and suffering Infant Jesus, make us henceforth "walk in newness of life."

TWENTY-SEVENTH ENTERTAINMENT.

At His Circumcision the Lord Jesus becomes our guarantee to His Father's justice.

Submitting to the painful ceremony of circumcision, and taking the holy Name of Jesus, appearing under the form of a slave, (Phil. ii. 7.) our Divine Infant Saviour proves that He not only subjects Himself generously to the observance of the law, but moreover to all the rigours which the prophets announced as reserved for Him, and that He is to redeem His people from their sins. (Matt. i. 21.) It is under this two-fold aspect that He appears to-day, as pronouncing the hitherto prophetic words, "Ecce venio," *Behold I come*, (Ps. xxxix. 6.) and more specially than on the day of His Nativity, offers Himself to be our guarantee to His Father's justice, to take "upon Him all our iniquities;" (Isaiah, liii. 6.) "to be made sin for us." (2 Cor. v. 21.) As witnesses of these adorable wonders, let us exclaim, "What goodness of the eternal Father to give us such a Redeemer! what love of the Son to have thus devoted Himself for us, for it is no longer the promise of Him which consoles, it is *Himself!*" "Be-

hold I come." The letter of a father or a friend, says St. Peter Chrysologus, is valuable and agreeable, but his presence is much more so, and commands an increase of gratitude. A written promise is precious and satisfactory, he continues, but the payment is much more so. We love flowers, but it is only till the fruit appears. The holy patriarchs received the letter and the flowers, but we, far more favoured, gather the fruit and receive the promised gift. They had the announcement, we have the fulfilment. O goodness of God! What bliss! What charity!

How unquiet, how troubled is a family when one of its members, particularly if it be the principal, becomes security to a large amount for an insolvent debtor! Alarm is at its height, fortune, liberty, all being the forfeit: such is the state in which our Lord this day involves His blessed family; His blessed Mother having her soul pierced at the prospect of His future sufferings, and St. Joseph, the officiating Pontiff in this dolorous ceremony, agonised, we may be sure, at the *earnest* wound which he was obliged to inflict. The holy angels, too, who are also of the household of the Saviour, inasmuch as He is their life, being the Word of God, verify upon this occasion the prophecy of Isaiah,

“Behold, they that see shall cry without, the angels of peace shall weep bitterly.” (xxxiii. 7.) But what do I say? Does not the Divine Victim Himself weep, not because He takes upon Him the chastisement of our peace, (Ibid.) but because despite of all that He is going to do for us, so many will be eternally damned for their infidelity to His grace, and ingratitude for His love? Our amiable Saviour weeps, says St. Bernard; yes, He weeps from His cradle, but not like other infants, through weakness or through want, but rather through compassion and love. Through love, if witness of your fidelity He sees that you will share in His glory; through compassion, if by your malice and infidelity, you in spite of Him earn for yourself reprobation. Our Lord wept, knowing full well that He was set for the resurrection of many. And, Oh! that we could sincerely say with the same blessed saint, “How these tears affect me, penetrate my inmost soul, and cover me with confusion, when, considering the expense which my Divine Saviour has been at to secure my salvation, I see in me still so much insensibility for my spiritual miseries, and that I bear within me a heart so unfaithful for, and insensible to, so much goodness!”

Thanksgiving, Praise the Lord, &c. with the prayer
as on Christmas Eve, page 96.

POINT OF THE INCARNATION.

A Redeemer redeemed.

The title of *Redeemer* is one of God's most glorious attributes, and that which His prophets frequently give to Him, to inspire man with confidence, respect, and love. "Thou art my Helper and my Redeemer," says holy David. (Ps. xviii.) Our Redeemer is the God of armies, the Holy One of Israel is His name! exclaims Isaiah. (xli.) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He has visited and wrought the *Redemption* of His people, sings the Pontiff Zachary. (Luke i.) It was indeed necessary, says St. Augustine, that the Word of God, by whom the world was made, should come to redeem the world. But not content with fulfilling this glorious function to manifest more strikingly His love, it was still needful that He should place Himself in a state of being redeemed, in order to perform more efficaciously the office of Redeemer. He then became man, to redeem man. He assumed the form of a slave, to redeem us from servitude. He took upon Him the appearance of a sinner, to redeem us from our

iniquities and the pains which were their just due ; in fine, He subjected Himself to death, to free us from eternal death. What greater mercy than this? exclaims Cassiodorus. What a prodigious redemption and what a miracle of love, to behold a Redeemer redeemed and sold, greatness abased, life enduring death! And then we have been redeemed by the price of the blood of Christ, for as St. Peter says, It is not by corruptible things, such as gold and silver, our ransom has been paid, but by the all-saving blood of the Lamb without spot. Scarcely did our Redeemer appear on earth than it became necessary to redeem Himself from the fury of Herod, which was effected by St. Joseph's timely flight after he had been previously redeemed from the obligation to serve in the Temple, by the sacrifice of two turtle doves offered for His ransom by His ever-blessed Mother.

Let us adore Him to-day in His Holy Sacrament as our merciful Redeemer, and beseech Him to deliver us from the slavery of old Adam ; for unless we shake off the yoke imposed upon us by the world, the devil, and our own concupiscence, we shall never enjoy the liberty of children of God, nor taste the fruits of our redemption.

JANUARY II.

A DAY OF HOPE.

LET the first sentiment and act of this day express your hope of eternal goods in the land of the living, founded on the divine promises. Banish all slavish mercenary fear, and indulge in that holy gladness which is inspired by the hope of heaven, "rejoicing in hope," as St. Paul says.

Asp. "In thy name, O Lord, do I hope ; let me never be confounded."

TWENTY-EIGHTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The greatness, power, and excellence of the Holy Name of Jesus given to our Lord at His Circumcision.

The Name of our divine Redeemer was first pronounced by an angel. (Luke, ii. 21.) It is a Name, says the apostle, above every name ; (Phil. ii. 9.) all other names, whether of kings or princes, are as nothing before it. (Ps. xxxviii. 6.) It is so great, that no one can meritoriously pronounce it without the Holy Spirit, (1 Cor. xii. 3.) "In the Name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, in earth, and in hell." (Phil. ii. 10.) By Pharaoh's command

the Egyptians should kneel before Joseph ; but what was the power of Joseph, received as it was from a temporal prince, contrasted with that of Jesus, of whom it is said, the Father hath given judgment to His Son, (John, v. 22.) that He may one day judge kings and subjects, angels and devils, the living and the dead. But it is also a name of love, and Jesus wishes that we should love it; for *that* it was that He became an Infant. The Lord on the throne of His Majesty inspires fear and reverence, says St. Bernard, and is exceedingly laudable ; but appearing as an Infant that He may inspire our love, He is exceedingly amiable. (Serm. i. on Nativ.) This adorable Name is full of grace, life, and light for us. It enlightens every man coming into the world. It feeds those who pronounce it with faith and confidence of spiritual and eternal life. It cures the lame, gives hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, sight to the blind, health to the sick, life to the dead. How many virtues are hidden in this Name, the source of life and of every grace! Blessed are they who know and pronounce it in the Holy Spirit ; they will receive grace in time, and glory in eternity! "Under heaven there is no other Name by which we can be saved." (Acts, iv. 12.)

“The spouse compares it to ‘oil poured out,’ (Cant. i. 2.) and with reason,” says St. Bernard; “for it has for souls the same properties which oil possesses for bodies. Thus oil enlightens, warms, feeds, heals; and the sweet Name of Jesus enlightens and warms the heart of man, by preaching; it nourishes it by meditation; and when pronounced with faith and devotion, it has for him all the unction of a sovereign and divine balm, adapted to cure every evil and to fill the heart with all manner of consolation. It is not only light for the soul, it is also nourishment by excellence. Tell me, pious souls,” continues the Saint, “is it not true that you feel strong when you pronounce the superamiable Name of Jesus with faith and confidence? What heart, what soul, is filled so soon and so easily with celestial gifts, and fattens more happily on the Divinity, than he who thinks most frequently and most piously on the name of Jesus? What more fit to calm the senses, to strengthen virtues, to inspire pious affections, than the Name of Jesus? If you write, I can read but Jesus. If you argue or confer, I cannot understand, if you do not mention the Name of Jesus. In fine, all food of the soul is dry without this Oil, all meat is insipid if not prepared

with this Salt. This Name, in fine, is Honey in the mouth, Melody in the ear, Jubilee in the heart." (St. Bern. 15. in Cant.)

THANKSGIVING.

We bless and thank you, O Eternal Father, for having given to your divine Son our Saviour, a Name so great to ennoble us, so potent to defend us, so full of life to vivify us; may you be praised for ever. Amen.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as on Christmas Eve, page 96, and following Litany.

LITANY OF THE ADORABLE INCARNATE WORD OF THE FATHER.

Lord, have mercy on us, &c.
 Word which was in the beginning,
 Lover of human salvation,
 Head of the just,
"Key of the house of David,"
"Brightness of the eternal light,"
"Lamp of the holy city,"
"Desired of all nations,"
 Our own "God and Saviour,"
"Expectation of nations,"

I adore and love Thee.

" Chosen amongst thousands,"

" Flower of the field,"

" Lily of the valleys,"

Fruit of eternal life,

Glory of Mary ever virgin,

Light of the world,

Most sweet Manna,

Honey in the mouth,

Melody in the ear,

Who dwellest in light inaccessible,

Consuming Fire,

Mediator between God and man,

Field full of celestial odours,

Oil poured out,

Orient from on high,

Great Prophet,

Prince of Peace,

" Beautiful above the children of men,"

" Sweet, mild, and plenteous in mercy,"

" Faithful Witness,"

Chief Corner-stone,

Tower of Strength,

Jesus, true God and eternal life,

We sinners beseech Thee hear us,

That thou wouldst vouchsafe to inscribe
in our memory and on the tablet of our
heart Thy most sweet Name Jesus.

We beseech Thee hear us,

That living we may ever have it in our
works, and dying on our lips.

We beseech Thee hear us,
That Thou, O benignant Jesus, mayest be
to us a Jesus.
We beseech Thee hear us.
Lamb of God, &c.

PRAYER.

O good Jesus! O most clement Jesus!
O sweetest Jesus! O Jesus Son of Mary,
full of mercy and pity! O sweet Jesus,
have mercy on me according to Thy great
mercy! O most clement Jesus, I beseech
Thee through that precious blood which
Thou didst shed for sinners, that Thou
wouldst wash me from my iniquities and
look upon me, miserable and unworthy as
I am, humbly begging pardon and invo-
king Thy most holy Name Jesus.

O Name of Jesus, sweet Name of Jesus,
delightful Name of Jesus, consoling Name!
What is Jesus but Saviour? O Jesus, I
beseech Thee for Thy most holy Name to
be to me a Jesus, and save me. Permit
me not to be damned, whom Thou hast
created out of nothing. O good Jesus, let
me not be lost by my sins, formed as I
have been by Thy almighty goodness. O
sweet Jesus, acknowledge Thine own, and
purify what does not belong to Thee. O
most benign Jesus! have mercy on me

whilst the time of mercy lasts, lest Thou condemn me when the time of judgment comes. What profit in my blood if I descend into eternal perdition? The dead praise Thee not, Lord Jesus, nor those who descend into hell. O most loving Jesus! O most desired Jesus! O meekest Jesus! O Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! save me and rank me among Thy elect. O Jesus, salvation of those who believe in thee! O Jesus, solace of those who fly to thee! O Jesus, sweet remission of all sins! O Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary, give me grace, wisdom, charity, chastity, humility, that I may perfectly love Thee, praise Thee, enjoy Thee, serve Thee, glory in Thee, with all who invoke Thy most holy Name Jesus.

JANUARY III.

A DAY OF FRATERNAL CHARITY.

To acquit yourself well of this holy practice, be most circumspect in your conduct towards others. Love your neighbour with all his faults, because God requires it, that he is redeemed by Jesus Christ, and with you destined to inherit eternal happiness. Avoid all that can displease or annoy him in word and ac-

tion ; still more, cherish him, bear him in your heart, love him as Jesus Christ loves you.

Asp. Infant Jesus, model of charity, make us love one another as you have loved us.

TWENTY-NINTH ENTERTAINMENT.

Jesus Model of Fraternal Charity

The love of the Son of God for the children of men, of which He has given to them such splendid proofs, is of all His mysteries the most inconceivable. He comes at the same time to be our Saviour, and to serve us as a model of those virtues which are indispensable for salvation. Under whichever of these aspects we consider His excessive charity towards us, we are forced to exclaim with the apostle, "*O the depth!*" (Rom. xi. 33.) It is indeed an ineffable wonder, that besides coming to redeem us, He has also shown us the way by which we should attain salvation, giving us an example that we might follow His steps. (1 Pet. ii. 21.) But let us confine our view of Him as model to His manner of exemplifying charity; it is His particular desire. "As I do," said He in reference to it, "so do you also." (John, xiii. 15.) But how

are we to conceive this prodigy so as to be useful? Let us interrogate Himself, and beseech Him to instruct us. Let us venture to ask Him why He came on earth; He will say with more truth than Joseph in the book of Genesis, "I came to seek my brethren." (xxxvii. 16.) And if we still dare inquire who are the brethren of this great God, so formidable in might, whose Power is above all power, and whose Name is above every name; His apostle tells us, that it is we ourselves. "He is not ashamed," says he, "to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren." But how and in what degree has this Redeemer loved His brethren? This is the most wonderful part of the mystery; love alone could explain it, if it were not inexplicable, for it is that of a God conquered by love. "O indeed," St. Thomas of Villanova might well exclaim, "O charity! O most potent triumph of love! which has conquered and made captive the unconquerable!" (Serm. iii. in Dom. 1 Ado.) Jesus has loved us without measure, and such, says St. Augustine, is the measure of love; for let us imagine all the contempt and insult and ingratitude of mankind heaped together, and it does not move His constancy. He is ever intent on suffering, ever devoted.

in procuring the eternal interest of His creatures, even to the sacrifice of His precious life by an ignominious death. He sends His angels, His prophets, and apostles, to say to the sinner, "Although your sins be red as scarlet, return to the Lord, and He will pardon you." He expects this sinner with a parent's solicitude, and receives him lovingly, if haply, as another prodigal, he return. He goes even in search of the strayed sheep, and if He find it, bears it on His shoulders to the fold. If the obdurate sinner be lost, it is because he has continued, like the bad thief, to repulse his Saviour to his last sigh; and this Lord, outraged to the end, to the end bears, endures it with a patience all divine. Is not this a model of charity and of fraternal love worthy of imitation?

THANKSGIVING.

O divine Master! O God Saviour! how is it that our hearts do not melt with gratitude at the sight of so much goodness and patience towards us; for, O divine Lamb! it is we who have caused your pains and sufferings, and exercised your charity by our heinous sins! Be you for ever blest, for opening our eyes to our miseries and your mercies; our life shall

be the term of our gratitude. The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations ; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as in page 96, and Litany as on yesterday.

JANUARY IV.

A DAY OF PRAYER.

You will this day observe as strictly as you can, this counsel of Jesus Christ, "*Pray always.*" (Luke, xviii.) And do not imagine it too difficult. We pray with the memory, by remembering God ; with the understanding, by considering His holy mysteries, &c. ; with the heart, by loving acts and affections ; with the tongue, by speaking to Him ; with the hands, by working for Him ; and performing all our actions in His holy sight.

Asp. Holy Infant Jesus, teach us to pray.

THIRTIETH ENTERTAINMENT.

Characters of the Love of Jesus for His Enemies.

We must imitate Him if we will have salvation. "Though I had faith to move

mountains, and have not charity, yet I am nothing." (1 Cor. xiii. 2.) Without charity we will remain for all eternity in a state of reprobation, charity alone being, according to St. Augustine, the difference between the elect and the reprobate. Let us once more study the characters of a virtue so indispensable, but to-day with reference to our enemies, and "upon the model shown us on the mount." In our divine Saviour these characters are more numerous than the rays of the sun. We shall consider the four principally indicated by St. Paul when he said to the Ephesians, "I would have you deeply rooted in charity, that with all the saints you might be able to comprehend the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of the charity of Christ." (iii. 18, 21.) Its breadth means that He loves all men, even His greatest enemies. Its length, that He loves till their last sigh. Its height, that He overwhelms them with benefits, as well as if they were His friends. Its depth, that He has endured for them the most profound abasement.

Applying to ourselves this sacred rule, let us see that which is wanting to us. (Ps. xxxviii. 5.) Jesus loves His enemies, and gives them the greatest proof of His

love, laying down His life for them ; “Through the grace of God, He tasted death for all,” says the apostle. (Heb. ii. 9.) Do I love my enemies thus? If I am not at least determined to pray, and make sacrifices for them, I do not belong to Jesus Christ, I am none of His. This divine Saviour loves His enemies with a constant love; whatever outrage He endures from them, He ceases not to love them. If I do not when insulted and outraged love mine, but become indignant with and begin to dislike them, I belong not to Jesus Christ, I am none of His. Jesus prays for his murderers, does good to His enemies, in proportion as they do Him evil, “giving to all abundantly, and not reproaching.” (James, xv.) And do I not perhaps render mine “evil for evil,” and in a greater degree, even than they heap it upon me, again proving that I belong not to Jesus Christ, and am none of His? Jesus kneels before Judas, submits to all the outrages of His cruel tormentors, their scourges, thorns, nails, gall, vinegar; and if I wish to suffer nothing, but am irritated with, and indulge hatred against my enemies, I belong not to Jesus Christ, I am none of His. O Way, O Road to heaven! how little you are known and frequented, when all that is not charity leads to hell!

THANKSGIVING.

I thank you, divine Jesus, for having given me such moving examples ; I will try to imitate them, to merit by my charity, to be yours in time and in eternity. Amen.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations ; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as in page 96, and Litany page 144.

JANUARY V.

A DAY OF GRACE.

ON awaking beg of our dearest Lord His precious graces, purchased for you by His Incarnation and Death, and this through the intercession of His Blessed Mother, "full of grace," and its appointed Dispensatrix. Make this petition fervently, preserve grace with fidelity, and labour with it diligently, that every day it may increase in your soul, and your cooperation with one grace be the seed of another.

Asp. Infant Light of the wise men, give us grace to seek and find you like them.

THIRTY-FIRST ENTERTAINMENT.

*On the Value of Grace purchased for us by
our Infant Jesus.*

If we knew the value of grace bought for us by Jesus Christ, and its indispensable necessity for our salvation, we would more earnestly and unceasingly demand it of God. What is grace, and why is it so valuable? It is, says a certain holy father, *a participation of the Divine Nature*, as sin is a cursed germ which likens us to Satan. Jesus Christ calls it "*a fountain of water springing up to life eternal*." (John, iv. 14.) This divine Stream which St. John saw issue from the *throne of God and of the Lamb*, has then the virtue and efficacy of conducting souls "*to eternal life*." "*He who drinks of this water shall never thirst*;" it will extinguish in him the heat and ardour of the passions, which after consuming, consign him to eternal reprobation. "He who drinks of this water that I shall give," says Jesus Christ, "shall not thirst for ever." (John, iv. 13.) This effect is so admirable, that to the heart of the just, satiated by this precious liquor, no more remains than one holy desire, to see God, as the Psalmist says. He then says, "When shall I come and appear before the face of

God;" and again with St. Paul, "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." Ah! "if we knew this gift of God," as our sweet Saviour said to the Samaritan, "we would perhaps ask it and it would be given to us." (John, iv. 10.) Once more, what is this invaluable grace? It is something divine, better felt than described; it is an emanation from the Most High, which bears light to the mind, nourishment to the soul, strength to the heart, help to the whole man. It is an unction full of life, which fortifies man in the combat, and which causes him to run like the nimble deer in the way of the commandments. To tell the value of this inestimable gift, would be to explain the price of eternal bliss, and what it has cost our Divine Saviour. To give us an idea of it, St. Thomas of Aquin said, that the smallest grace was more precious than all the goods of this life reunited; and St. Augustine, that "one sole grace surpasses by its excellence, not only all the heavens and the stars, but even all the angels." Hence, the Holy Ghost tells us "to lose no part of so good a gift." (Eccl. xiv. 14.) and ascetic fathers say, that as those who labour in gold and precious stones take care to lose none of these precious commodities, with much

more reason should we hoard up, and carefully use the much more valuable gift of grace.

How much more esteem does not all this inspire for grace than I had hitherto conceived, because I knew not its value ! A celestial gem or seed making us participators of the Divine Nature ; a fountain of pure water, cleansing the sinner and purifying still more the just ; a gift of God, conferring that “divine peace which surpasses all understanding ;” a light for the mind, a food for the heart, a strength for the soul, rendering man intrepid, and a match for the powers of hell ; price, in fine, of the blood of Jesus Christ, which imparts to it such value, that it can purchase for us eternal life. O how much shall we not esteem in future this precious treasure ! How carefully shall we not preserve it ! Enriched with, and multiplying it by our co-operation, we shall say, “I can do all things in Him who strengthens me. By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace has not been vain in me.”

THANKSGIVING.

O divine Jesus ! I thank you for having purchased for me this so precious and

necessary a gift, without which I could not be saved. May all your angels and saints bless you eternally for the favour. Amen.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations ; Praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as in page 96, and Litany as in page 144.

JANUARY VI.

Feast of the Epiphany.

A DAY OF MODESTY.

ON this concluding day of the Month of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, practise holy modesty, a perfect type of which is exhibited by our divine Mother in her whole life, as well as in her reception of the Magi who came to-day to adore her divine Son our Infant King. Modesty should regulate the words, the actions, the gestures, all the senses, the every movement of a Christian. It is of the last importance, simple exterior modesty having wrought the conversion of many a soul. St. Paul tells us to "let" our "modesty be known to all men, because the Lord is nigh."

Asp. Come, let us adore, and fall down before the Infant Lord who made us.

THIRTY-SECOND ENTERTAINMENT.

The glory which the humility, poverty, purity, sweetness, &c. of Jesus Christ begin this day to receive on earth

We have collected in our title to this entertainment some of the virtues which our blessed Redeemer most strikingly exemplified on earth, and which were His most faithful companions from His manger to His cross. He comes in a state of humility, "annihilating Himself." He comes in a state of poverty, "there was no place for Him in the inn, and He had not where to lay His head." He exemplifies love for purity, being the fruit of virginity itself, the King of virgins, the true Lily of the valleys. He manifests unalterable sweetness, for His voice was not heard abroad, neither did "He break the bruised reed." He displays unbounded charity, delivering Himself to all manner of privations and sufferings, and dying for each one of us. (Gal. ii. 20. 2 Cor. v. 1.) And the glory of this blessed Lord arises from these virtues. It is said that God will do the will of those who fear Him, and that in His name their strength will

be exalted, and behold the proof in the model of the elect, which will be renewed in all who will follow in His footsteps. At His Nativity the angels sing to Him canticles of joy, the shepherds at their call haste at midnight to adore Him; and to-day, behold the kings of the earth, the wise men, the Magi, invited by His star, come from the "East to adore Him" and acknowledge His divinity, His royalty, His humanity, by their mystic gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. "Thus it is," says St. Gregory, Pope, "that all bends before Him, who Himself bends before God His Father; all inclines, all celebrates the glory of this Messiah, who comes on earth to seek the glory of His Father who is in heaven. The angels sung to Him at His birth, and to-day the stars lead to His feet kings from the remote East. All things will be seen to prostrate before Him, to celebrate His glory and acknowledge His power. The sea grows firm under His feet, the earth trembles at His death, and leaps for joy at His resurrection. The sun veils itself at His humiliations, the rocks are rent in condemnation of man's insensibility, death itself, quite awed with wonder, in those sad circumstances lets its sceptre fall, and

sees its victims confess the glory and exalt the power of Him who has thus annihilated Himself." (Hom. x. No. 2.)

THANKSGIVING.

Blessed be the name of Thy glory, "O Lord my King," for having taught me to-day in what consists true glory. May I never seek honour but in Thy humiliations, nor look for comfort but in Thy sufferings. Amen.

V. "Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people."

R. "Because His mercy is confirmed upon us, and His truth remaineth for ever."

Prayer as in page 96, and Litany as in page 144.

ADDENDA.

A. M. D. G.

A NOVENA

FOR THE REIGN OF CHRIST ;

TOGETHER WITH

PRACTICES WHEREBY TO HONOUR THE FEAST
AND OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

EVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

PRAYER FOR EACH DAY.

O most holy and adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may all the kingdoms of the earth sing Thy praises, may all nations prostrate before Thy throne, may all people, tribes, and tongues submit to Thy law and take upon them Thy yoke, so sweet and light. To obtain and further this great end I humbly offer to Thee all the merits of the adorable Incarnate Word Jesus, of the most holy Virgin Mary, and of all the angels and saints, conjuring Thee through them to bring all men to Thy knowledge and love, and to

grant that all nations, especially Ireland, may serve Thee and glorify Thy holy name, that commencing during this holy Octave, which brought salvation to the Gentiles, to see the brightness of Thy rising, they may no more sit in darkness, but following Thy light may arrive, with the blessed Magi, our parents in the faith, at the happy mansions where Thou, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, wilt make their beatitude for ever. Amen.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

PRACTICE.

Consider Jesus Christ as the King of kings, and adore Him under this quality every hour. Say frequently, Son of the Living God, manifested to-day, have mercy on us. When you visit Him in the Holy Sacrament, as surely you will do every day, pay homage to *His royal power* displayed in this festival, and offer Him *your memory*, beseeching Him to efface from it whatsoever displeases Him, to imprint in it the remembrance of His virtues, that you may imitate them and acquire great command over this power of your soul.

Prayer or Novena for the Reign of Christ as on
Eve of the Epiphany.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

SECOND DAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

PRACTICE.

On awaking, and at every hour to-day, adore Jesus Christ as *King of hearts*, who renders all His subjects happy. Offer Him your *understanding* when you present yourself before Him on His mystic throne in the Holy Sacrament, and entreat Him to efface from it the maxims of the world, to remove all evil thoughts, and to suffer nothing to remain but the image of His greatness. Say occasionally, *Lord, increase my faith*, and thanking Him for this precious gift, take heed you be not of those who say they know God, but in their works deny Him.

Novena for the Reign of Christ as in page 162.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

THIRD DAY IN THE OCTAVE.

PRACTICE.

At every hour adore Jesus Christ as "*King of nations*," thank Him often for the grace bestowed upon the Magi, and for the many celestial lights and movements sent to draw you to Him. When visiting Him in the Blessed Sacrament, offer Him *your heart*, making over to Him your liberty, and pray to Him so to fill

you with His spirit, that He may regulate your will and all your desires.

Novena as in page 162.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

FOURTH DAY IN THE OCTAVE.

PRACTICE.

At every hour adore Jesus Christ as *the end of your existence, and the centre of your heart.* Remember that you should be a light to others by your good example, and serve them as a star in the path to Jesus and Mary. Perhaps you may never reach that happy term if you lead not many with you. In *presence* of your divine Lord, reflect that you should walk while you have the light, that you should not contristate the Holy Spirit, and that your light should so shine before men, as that they glorify your heavenly Father. Offer Him your *imagination*, that He may impress it with His image, and blot out from it all earthly things.

Novena as in page 162.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

FIFTH DAY IN THE OCTAVE.

PRACTICE.

Adore Jesus Christ once more as *King of hearts, and offer Him your heart as the*

seat of the passions, praying Him in His Blessed Sacrament to regulate, to subdue, and hold them under due control. Say often, Lord, reign in the midst of Thy enemies, remove from Thy kingdom all scandals, and make justice and peace flourish. Make many acts of contrition for the sins and passions to which you are a prey. Embrace any occasion of suffering or humiliation that may offer, to honour those of the Son of God, and lovingly exercise patience, "knowing that it hath a perfect work."

Novena as in page 162.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

SIXTH DAY IN THE OCTAVE.

At every hour adore Jesus Christ as *your King and your God*; offer to Him all your senses, exterior and interior, that He may perfectly subject them to the movements of grace. When prostrate before Him in the Holy Sacrament, invite all creatures to come and pay homage to this Infant God, this Infant Creator, saying, "Come, let us adore and fall down before the Lord." A little Infant, it is true, but still the God who made us."

Novena as in page 162.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

SEVENTH DAY IN THE OCTAVE.

Every hour adore the divine Infant as *God and man*, and at the same time Son of God, and Son of Mary. Offer Him every instant of your life and all the spiritual and temporal favours you have received from Him, begging grace to employ them in promoting His glory. In presence of this divine Lamb in the blessed Sacrament, ardently desire that kings may adore and all nations may submit to His dominion.

Novena as in page 162.

LIVE THE INFANT GOD.

OCTAVE DAY.

At every hour adore Jesus Christ as the *best and most amiable of masters*; offer Him when in the *Holy Presence* all your designs, enterprizes, hopes, and whole conduct. Beseech Him to destroy and in you all that displeases Him, and protest that you wish to live no longer but for Him.

Novena as in page 162.

LITTLE PRACTICES FOR THE FEAST OF THE
PURIFICATION OF THE MOST B. V. MARY.

VIGIL OF THE PURIFICATION.

EVERY hour adore the Son of God, who in the arms of His Blessed Mother is about to offer Himself in the Temple *as the price of your ransom*. Thank Him for His gracious designs, and practise some little internal and external mortification to dispose yourself to unite in His sacrifice to-morrow morning.

FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION.

The moment you awake call to mind that this is the day which sees the prophecy of the inspired Malachy fulfilled when the Lord said by him, "Behold I send my angel...and presently the Lord whom you seek shall come to His temple. Behold He cometh." (Mal. iii. 1.) In the spirit of holy Simeon and the pious Anne, prepare to receive Him in His adorable Sacrament, saying when He comes to you with heart and tongue, "Now dismiss thy servant, O Lord, in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation," &c. And at every hour say with holy David, "We have received Thy mercy, O Lord, in the midst of Thy temple. Thy praise like Thy name is spread throughout the earth."

FEBRUARY III.

Every hour adore your Infant Mediator as the first-born of all the elect, and the Sun of glory, whose favour makes saints, and say, Protect us, O Lord, your servants and brethren, whom you have redeemed with your most precious blood.

FEBRUARY IV.

Every hour adore the Son of God as *the Source of all purity*, the Sun of grace and glory, and the Treasure of all the goods of heaven, and entreat Him to endow you with great purity of body and heart. Admire, love, and venerate His most sweet Mother, and thank Him for having made her your Mother also.

FEBRUARY V.

Pay homage every hour to-day to the *essential sanctity of Jesus*, and the admirable purity of Mary; say to her, "You are all fair, my sovereign Lady, and there is no spot in you." Consider the six flowers, I mean the six virtues of this splendid Lily, viz. obedience, love, poverty, humility, piety, and modesty, and try to practise them.

FEBRUARY VI.

Every hour honour Jesus Christ as your *Redeemer*, and the Blessed Virgin as your

mediatrix with Him. Thank the eternal Father for having bestowed upon you the precious gift of His divine Son, and turn it to profit, discharging by Him your duties, and paying by Him your debts to divine justice.

FEBRUARY VII.

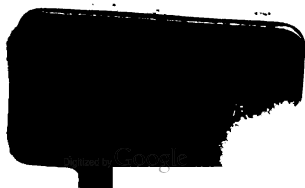
Every hour honour the *spirit of Jesus*, who undertakes the conduct of your soul, and who excites it to the practice of good works. Do nothing to-day but by the movement of grace, and frequently say, "Lord, send forth Thy light and Thy truth ; conduct me to Thy holy mountain and into Thy tabernacle."

FEBRUARY VIII.

Every hour adore the Son of God as the arbiter of life and death, on whom depends the happiness of both, and say often "Whether I live or die I am the Lord's. Let me die, Lord, that I may behold you."

FEBRUARY IX.

Adore the Son of God as the Source of salvation, the Light of souls, the Glory of the just, and say, "Lord, Thou art my glory ; save me for the sake of Thy name, and let the enemy never say he has deprived me of Thee. my Sovereign Good."





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