

MEDITATIONS & READINGS

ST. ALPHONSUS

VOLUME IV – PART II
AFTER PENTECOST
XVIII TO XXIV SUNDAY

Edited by Rev. J. B. Coyle, C.S.S.R.

VISITS TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT and TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (ST. ALPHONSUS). Paper Artistic Cover in two colours.

THE VISITS, with MASS and COMMUNION Prayers. Morocco, Reindeer Padded, etc., etc.

PRAYER. By ST. ALPHONSUS. Jubilee Edition.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR AND IRELAND. (Ár mairé-
cean Siort-ádhraic ir éire). S. Ua C., O'Áir-
tuis.

Meditations and Readings

FOR

EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

Selected from the Spiritual Writings of

SAINT ALPHONSUS

*Doctor of the Church and Founder of the Congregation
of the Most Holy Redeemer*

VOLUME FOUR
PART II.

FOREWORD

BY

HIS EMINENCE JOSEPH CARDINAL MACRORY

Edited by

JOHN BAPT. COYLE, C.S.S.R.

EX LIBRIS C. S. S. R.
KANSAS CITY, MO.

B. HERDER BOOK CO.
15 & 17 SOUTH BROADWAY, ST. LOUIS, MO.

THE TALBOT PRESS LIMITED
DUBLIN AND CORK

EX LIBRIS C. S. S.
KANSAS CITY, MO

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FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

VOLUME IV—PART II
AFTER PENTECOST
(XVIII TO XXIV SUNDAY)

333 Broadway, Kansas City, Mo.

Imprimis Superioris:

PATRITII MURRAY, C.S.S.R.

Superioris Generalis et Rectoris Majoris.

Romae, die 9 Nov., 1931.

Imprimi curavit:

JOANNES BURKE,

Censor Theol. Deput

Imprimi potest:

✠ EDUARDUS,

Archiepiscopus Dublinensis

Hiberniae Primas.

Dublini,

die 8 Decembris, 1931.

FOREWORD

BY

HIS EMINENCE JOSEPH CARDINAL MACRORY

THE present volume completes the series of **MEDITATIONS AND READINGS** from the spiritual writings of St. Alphonsus. The complete series in eight volumes will be for sale early in the coming year. That year will be an *Annus Mirabilis* for Irish Catholics by reason of the great International Eucharistic Congress to be held in Dublin, and because it will be the fifteen-hundredth anniversary of the coming of our National Apostle; but it will also have a very special additional interest for Redemptorists as the Bicentenary of their Congregation's foundation.

Father Coyle, the able and zealous Editor of the series, has been striving hard to have the work completed for 1932. Irrespective of business considerations, he has been anxious to be able to make this offering of labour and love to his Congregation on the occasion of its Bicentenary, and desirous that the devotion of our people in that memorable year may be warmed and stimulated by the glowing fervour of the spiritual writings of St. Alphonsus. He is, therefore, to be congratulated on having the work completed; and I trust it will serve to nourish and kindle devotion not only in 1932, but for generations to come.

There is no need for me or anyone else to sound the praises of St. Alphonsus or extol the merits of his books. On his sanctity and learning the Church has set her

seal; while Popes and Professors and the simple faithful have vied with each other for two centuries in admiration of his writings. I will, therefore, content myself with saying that in *MEDITATIONS AND READINGS*. Father Coyle has given us the chief portions of the great Saint's devotional works, and in a handy and most attractive form and a much improved English translation. For each day of the year there are two *Meditations* and a *Spiritual Reading*, which taken together cover usually from eight to ten or eleven pages, all suitable for the faithful as well as for Clergy and Religious. Thus the work will be a vast storehouse of devotion, admirably arranged for daily use, while its orthodoxy is guaranteed by the authority of a great Saint and Doctor of the Church.

Who does not see that such a work is of very great importance in the fight against evil and dangerous literature? If we are to succeed in the fight—and no success is more important at the present time—we must create and foster a taste for good reading, and to this end the present work seems admirably adapted. I trust, therefore, that it will be diligently and devoutly read and re-read in many homes. I feel sure that neither St. Alphonsus nor Father Coyle would ask any better reward for his labour.

✠ JOSEPH CARDINAL MACRORY.

ARA COELLI,
ARMAGH.

November 6th, Feast of All the Saints of Ireland, 1931.

*LETTER FROM HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL LOGUE
TO THE EDITOR.*

ARA COELLI,
ARMAGH,
16th March, 1924.

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

I have put off writing to thank you for your interesting and edifying volume, *Meditations and Readings for Every Day of the Year*, till I should find time to look through it. I have done so now, and I can congratulate you on undertaking a very useful work; and I hope you will be spared till you complete it.

The *Ascetic Works* of St. Alphonsus have done wonders in conveying solid instruction, nourishing piety, and exciting fervour among the people in every state and stage of life. They have been an ever enduring source of piety, especially in inspiring love of our Holy Redeemer and tender devotion to His Blessed Mother. It is a question whether his great Theological Works have contributed more to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Hence it was not without regret I noticed that these *Spiritual Works* were not so common among the people as they were in my early days. They seemed to be giving place to more showy and more superficial modern works which are far from breathing the fervent spirit of the great Doctor and Saint. One of the chief fruits which I expect from the work you have undertaken is the redress of this serious spiritual loss.

You have commenced well, and I trust you will be
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able to continue till the Spiritual Works of St. Alphonsus are again as extensively circulated among the people as they were in the past. The scheme you have sketched out for yourself will familiarize the people with the beauty and fervour of St. Alphonsus' Works, and from using your volumes for casual reading they will be likely to drink more deeply of the source of fervour the Saint has opened up to them.

Wishing you every blessing and success in your useful work,

I am,

Dear Father Coyle,

Yours gratefully,

✠ MICHAEL CARDINAL LOGUE.

AS FOREWORD TO VOLUME III. PART II.
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM

wrote :—

As a boy I read with great profit the popular spiritual works of St. Alphonsus Liguori. I am delighted to know that Fr. Coyle is having them republished in an enlarged edition and in the new form of "Meditations and Readings for Every Day of the Year."

I do not know of any religious books at once so sane, so spiritual and so adapted to the intelligence of the ordinary reader. They go straight to the root of normal spirituality. They are commonsense founded on the Truths of Faith. Such books were never so much needed as at the present day. We are living in an age of secularism. Never before did life offer so many attractions to divert the mind from the consideration of the Eternal Truths. Never before was there such an output of purely secular books, magazines, and newspapers, so smoothly written and so beautifully illustrated that the temptation to read them is universal and almost irresistible. Some of them are mere covers for sensuality, and others are hostile to the Faith, and all have a demoralising influence on the mind. To counteract the resulting influence we want a corresponding output of wholesome Catholic literature, including books that advertise the attractions of the spiritual life. We want books that will bring home to our youth that there is no happiness comparable to the humble joy of the good

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL O'DONNELL wrote :

It is a pleasure to me to subscribe my name to the beautiful letter written by my lamented predecessor, his Eminence Cardinal Logue, to commend Father Coyle's publications from the Spiritual Works of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

✠ PATRICK CARDINAL O'DONNELL,
Archbishop of Armagh.

Armagh, 20th February, 1926.
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Christian. We want books that will, with flashes from the Beyond, dissipate the spell that the prospect of sensual pleasure casts over the imagination of youth. We want books, too, that will terrorise the hardened sinner and confirm the struggling aspirant to the higher life in the grim determination to walk in the narrow way. Now such are the ascetic works of St. Liguori that Father Coyle is engaged in having re-published. From my heart I wish him success in this apostolic mission. From my heart I pray that these volumes may have a wide circulation.

It is recognised that St. Liguori was one of the greatest missionaries of all time. He was himself a great preacher of the Gospel. He founded the Congregation of the Redemptorists who have been in the thick of the fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil for well-nigh two hundred years, and who are only growing more vigorous with time. The Saint was a classical writer of Moral Theology. And while his Moral Theology holds the scales evenly between laxity and rigorism, his spiritual writings hold the scales between sentimental piety and cold ascetical teaching, with a like evenness, which attracts and converts the sinner, encourages the weak, and confirms the strong.

✠ T. P. GILMARTIN,
Archbishop of Tuam.

St. JARLATH'S,
28th April, 1929.

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AS FOREWORD TO VOLUME IV., PART I., HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL

wrote:—

I WELCOME with special pleasure "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR." These beautiful volumes provide the clergy and laity with salutary illustrations and inspirations. Immersed in affairs of the world we are in danger of forgetting the things that really matter. The lure of excessive amusement and the attractions of morbid literature create an unhealthy atmosphere. Our minds are turned away from heavenly thoughts and are coloured by the evil influences that surround us. In these "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" we have the means of filling our minds with holy thoughts and our wills with fruitful resolutions that will enable us to live in a world of supernatural ideals.

The "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" are selected from the spiritual writings of St. Alphonsus, Doctor of the Church, and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. In St. Alphonsus we have a guide whose spiritual outlook on life, wonderful gift of sane advice, and unquestioned supremacy in the sacred science are a guarantee of religious perfection. His writings have been models of spiritual instruction and have won many souls to the life of grace. Their publication in new form deserves high praise.

The "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" are edited by Fr. Coyle, C.S.S.R., whose experience as a missionary has

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given him an insight into the needs of the day, and whose experience as an editor has fitted him for the loving task of publishing the Works of the great Founder of his great Congregation.

I bless Fr. Coyle and his work. I hope that his "MEDITATIONS AND READINGS" will be widely known and properly appreciated. We are indebted to him for volumes that cannot fail to help us in the important and difficult task of saving our souls.

✠ J. M. HARTY.

Archbishop of Cashel.

*Feast of the Blessed Oliver Plunket,
11th July, 1930.*

*LETTER OF APPROBATION AND BLESSING FROM
MOST REV. PATRICK MURRAY, C.S.S.R.,
Superior-General and Rector Major*

J.M.J.A.T. SANT' ALFONSO—VIA MERULANA,
ROMA, 23rd October, 1928.

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

I am very glad to hear that you have the first part of your "Meditations and Readings for every Day of the Year from the Writings of St. Alphonsus" ready for publication, and I wish this and the succeeding Volumes every success. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of these "Meditations and Readings" as is seen from the following statements of two Popes :

His Holiness Pope Pius IX, in speaking of the writings of St. Alphonsus, wrote : "The works of this most holy and learned man, written with extraordinary tender piety and devotion, breathe in every page a great love for Jesus Christ and great confidence in His mercy and merits. They also inspire their readers with the most ardent devotion to the Virgin Mother of God and to the Saints, and they inflame the hearts of men with the desire of receiving the Sacraments, as well as furnish a most abundant supply of excellent admonitions, counsels and directions to those who labour for the salvation of souls."

Pope Benedict XV also wrote recently, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Doctorate of St. Alphonsus, that the excellence and utility of his teaching are becoming every day more apparent, and that his writings are helpful, not only to Theologians and Professors of the

Sacred Sciences, but also to the faithful of every condition of life, to whom he points out the way to solid virtue, and smoothes for them the way to the highest Christian perfection. His Holiness adds that the Saint's one great ambition in all his writings was to make known to all men the infinite amiability of Jesus Christ.

It is unnecessary for me to add anything to these words of two Popes. I wish only to say that this infinite amiability of Jesus Christ is particularly well shown in the present volume, for, in addition to the Meditations and Readings on the Religious State and on other subjects, there are given about forty Meditations on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, in which are contained some of the most beautiful and devotional pages written by the Saint. Moreover the division of the ascetic writings of the Saint into two Meditations and a Spiritual Reading for every day of the year, and this arranged in such a way as not to interrupt the sequence of any work of the Saint, will please many, both in the Cloister and in the world, who desire to know and follow in their spiritual life the teachings of this great Doctor of the Church and Director of Souls.

In conclusion, in the name of St. Alphonsus I bless you and these Meditations and Readings with the hope that they may be everywhere known and read and well thought on, so that all may know the infinite amiability and mercy of Jesus Christ and the unspeakable amiability and mercy of His Blessed Mother, and that they may thus seek and love and serve Them alone.

Your devoted servant and confrère,

PATRICK MURRAY, C.S.S.R.,
Sup. Gen. and Rector Major.

REV. J. B. COYLE, C.S.S.R.,
ST. JOSEPH'S,
DUNDALK.

THE EDITOR'S WORD OF THANKS

The publication of the present part (Pt. 2, Vol. 4) completes this Series of *Meditations and Readings for Every Day of the Year*, from the Ascetic Writings of St. Alphonsus de Liguori. It was a labour of many years but, needless to say, a labour of love. I thank Almighty God and His Holy Mother I have been able to complete the work for a Commemoration in 1932 of the Bi-Centenary of the Foundation of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. Five thousand Redemptorists to-day in all parts of the world praise and thank the Lord God for all He has done for their Congregation since its Foundation in lowliness and poverty by St. Alphonsus in 1732.

In this final volume I take the opportunity of tendering my heartfelt thanks to those who have helped with useful suggestions and in the preparation of proofs.

To His Eminence Cardinal MacRory I return my sincere thanks for the very gracious words with which he prefaces the present volume. His illustrious predecessors, Cardinal Logue and Cardinal O'Donnell, also gave cordial encouragement from the beginning, and both have my grateful prayers.

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I thank His Grace the Archbishop of Tuam, and His Grace the Archbishop of Cashel, for their kindly Foreword to previous volumes.

To the publishers I tender very grateful acknowledgments and thanks for unvarying courtesy, and I think I should add, patience, and for the excellence of their workmanship.

Finally, I thank Most Rev. Patrick Murray, Superior-General and Rector Major. It was exceedingly helpful and inspiring to have his blessing and encouragement from the very beginning. As a token of filial thanks and gratitude, I place these volumes in his hands, and ask him to be pleased to lay them at the feet of our holy Father and Founder, St. Alphonsus, as our Act of Thanksgiving, Loyalty and Affection in this Bi-Centenary Year, 1932.

J. B. C., C.S.S.R.,

St. PATRICK’S, ESKER,

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MEDITATIONS AND READINGS

Achtzehnter Sonntag after Pentecost

Morning Meditation.

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL.

(September 29.)

The Church assures us that St. Michael has been given as our defender, and that he comes to the aid of all who have recourse to him. Beseech him that he may be thy special protector with God Who loves him so much.

I.

Among the angels in Heaven none surpass St. Michael in glory; and, according to St. Basil and others, none, indeed, equal him. St. Michael was chosen before all others to subdue the pride of Lucifer and of all the rebel angels, and to expel them from Heaven. If thou lovest this Archangel, who has so great love for men, rejoice at the glory he enjoys in Heaven, and beseech him, that, as he is the protector of the whole Church and of all the faithful, he will be thy special protector with God, Who loves him so much, and Who rejoices in beholding one who is so faithful to Him and so zealous for His honour, so much glorified by all.

In the Mass for the Dead, the Church prays: "*Let the standard-bearer, St. Michael, bring them into the holy light.*" The learned explain this prayer, and say that St. Michael has the honourable office of presenting

to Jesus Christ the Judge, all the souls that depart out in this world in the grace of God.

Protect me, therefore, O holy Archangel, and by thy protection enable my soul to become worthy to be presented by thy hands on the day of my death, clothed with Divine grace, before my Judge Jesus Christ.

II.

St. Laurence Justinian says that our holy mother the Church honours St. Michael as her own special protector and faithful intercessor. and the holy Church herself declares she venerates St. Michael, as the ancient Synagogue venerated him, as protector and patron. The holy Archangel, then, as the protector of the whole Church continually intercedes with God in favour of Christians, and obtains for them all the help they need. He also aids the Sovereign Pontiff and all the bishops in the government of souls, and most carefully watches over the defence of the faithful against the attacks of those demons whom he formerly expelled from the heavenly kingdom.

The Church prays to St. Michael, in the name of all the faithful, to defend us from the assaults of the wicked enemy at the hour of our death, that we may not be conquered and may not lose our souls: *Holy Michael, Archangel, defend us in the battle, that we may not perish in the dreadful Judgment.*

O holy Archangel, the devil has many weapons to employ against me at the hour of my death; these weapons are my sins, by which he will then endeavour to cast me into despair. He is also preparing furious assaults of temptation, to cause me to fall again into sin. Do thou, who hast conquered him, and expelled him from Heaven, conquer him now for me, and drive him far away from me at the hour of my death; I beseech thee to hear my prayer, for the love of that God Who so much loves thee, and Whom thou dost so much love. O Mary, Queen of Heaven, procure for me the assistance of St. Michael at the hour of my death.

Spiritual Reading.

ST. MICHAEL PROTECTS US AGAINST THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE DEVIL.

Mankind being lost through the fall of Adam, God sent on earth His only Son to redeem it, and He at the same time charged St. Michael, as a valiant combatant, to repress the powers of hell. He moves through the whole world with great rapidity in order to strengthen men against the temptations of the devil.

We should take care to honour and invoke this great minister of God, for the Church assures us that St. Michael has been given to us as our defender, and that he comes to the aid of every one who has recourse to him. He is specially prompt in succouring those who are tempted by the devil. Pantaleon says that he discloses to us the snares of our enemy, and that he baffles his artifices. The evil spirit often tempts us to regard a bad action as permissible, and even as good, and seeks by this means to destroy us; but St. Michael permits us to see the danger, and thus enables us to avoid the dangers that threaten us.

Father Nierenberg relates that the servant of a great lord, after having, during many years, led a wicked life, was at the point of death. The devil placing inwardly before his mind all his sins, strongly tempted him to despair, and succeeded in making him say that he did not wish to make his Confession, nor to receive any other Sacrament, because he was damned. But as this unfortunate sinner in the midst of his disorders had never ceased to keep up some sentiment of devotion towards St. Michael, and to recommend himself to him, the good Archangel appeared to him at the moment of death and revealed to him that he had prayed for him, adding that the Lord, through his intercession, had granted him three hours more to live in order that he might confess and receive the Sacraments, so as to be able to die in the grace of God. Thereupon the dying man with tears in his eyes, thanked his heavenly

benefactor for having obtained for him so great a favour. He then called his brother and begged him to go at once and bring him a confessor. His brother set out at once and directed his steps towards a Dominican convent that was not far away. On the road he met two of these Religious, who told him that they had been called by an unknown person to hear the Confession of the sick man, and that they were going to his house for this purpose. It is presumed that the holy Archangel himself gave them this information and requested them to seek out the dying man. When they arrived the sick man made his Confession and received the Sacraments with lively sentiments of compunction; and after the lapse of the three hours, the man died, giving every hope that he had saved his soul.

Evening Meditation.

ST. MICHAEL BATTLES FOR US AGAINST THE INFERNAL DRAGON.

I.

The Deacon Pantaleon assures us that St. Michael not only obtains for his pious servants the courage and the strength to resist the temptations of hell, but comes in person to fight when he sees any one hard pressed by the devil, and exposed to the proximate danger of falling into sin. Moreover, St. Bruno, bishop of Segni, who lived at the end of the Eleventh Century, says that this generous Archangel loves us so much that he does not cease day or night to give battle for us against the infernal dragon, and that he even calls together those angels under him to combat with him, so that we may not be overcome by our enemy. Pantaleon also adds that St. Michael is always encamped, as it were, near God's people, that is to say, he comes with his angels and places his guards around Christians, in order that they may not become the prey of hell, especially when they implore him to come to their aid.

II.

St. Michael comes to the assistance of his pious servants if they happen to fall into sin. He obtains for them the grace to know the baseness of their faults, and to detest them. This is the reason why the Church wishes us to confess ourselves guilty, first to God, then to the Blessed Virgin, and then to St. Michael. Here we see that the holy Archangel is also specially asked to help us to recover the grace of God.

St. Saphronius, patriarch of Jerusalem in the Seventh Century, in a discourse in which he greatly eulogizes St. Michael, calls him the guide of those who go astray; that is to say, he brings back to the path of duty sinners who live far from God, and helps them to find the means of obtaining pardon. The Archangel is also described by the same Saint as the one who raises up those who have fallen; for the holy Archangel by means of salutary inspirations induces sinners to rise out of the unhappy state in which they find themselves.

The Deacon Pantaleon pronounces the same eulogy: "The Archangel leads them forth to the road of penance, and procures for them the remission of sins." St. Michael, who ardently loves our souls, when he sees them lying in the abyss of sin, seeks in different ways to conduct them to penance, which is the only way to return to the state of grace. He adds that the generous Archangel goes so far as to make himself responsible for sinners; that is, seeing one of his pious clients in disgrace with God, he supplicates the Lord to wait for him till he does penance, and he becomes in some way surety for him by promising God that this sinner will offend Him no more, because he will take care to aid him when he sees him in danger of relapsing into sin.

God is never angered, since anger is passion, and passion is incompatible with God. He is always tranquil; and even in the act of punishing, His tranquillity is not in the least disturbed. *But thou being master of power, judgest with tranquillity*—(Wis. xii. 18). But the malice of mortal sin is so great, that if God were capable of wrath and affliction, it would anger and afflict Him. This is what sinners do as far as in them lies, according to the words of Isaiah: *But they provoked to wrath, and afflicted the spirit of his holy One*—(Is. lxiii. 10). Moses writes, that when God was about to send the Deluge, He declared Himself to be so much afflicted by the sins of men as to be obliged to exterminate them from the earth. *And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, he said: I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth*—(Gen. vi. 6, 7).

I.

God commanded Jonas to go and preach to Ninive. Instead of obeying God, Jonas fled by sea towards Tharsis. But, behold, a great tempest threatened to sink the ship; and Jonas knowing that the tempest was raised in punishment of his disobedience, said to the crew of the vessel: *Take me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea shall be calm to you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you*—(Jon. i. 12). And they actually cast him into the sea, and the tempest ceased. *And the sea ceased from raging*—(Jon. i. 15). If Jonas had not been thrown into the sea the tempest would not have ceased. What do we learn from all this? We may learn that if we do not cast sin out of our souls, the tempest, that is, the scourge of God, will not cease. The tempest is excited by our sins; the tempest which is hurrying us to destruction. *Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away*—(Is. lxiv. 6). We may practise many external devotions, but to what purpose if we be not converted, if we do not rid our souls of sin? If we do not abandon our sins, we cannot please God.

It is said that the pain is not removed before the thorn has been plucked out. St. Jerome writes that

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Monday—Eighteenth Week after Pentecost

Morning Meditation.

TO PLEASE GOD WE MUST ABANDON SIN.

The man sick of the palsy besought Jesus Christ to restore the health of his body; but before doing so the Lord first restored health to his soul. *Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee*. (Matt. ix. 2). The pain will not be removed till the thorn has been taken out.

II.

St. John Chrysostom says that sin alone is the cause of all our sufferings and chastisements. Commenting upon these words in Genesis which the Lord spoke after the deluge: *I will set my bow in the clouds*—(Gen. ix. 13), St. Ambrose remarks that God does not say: *I will set My arrow, but My bow, in the clouds*; giving us thereby to understand that it is always the sinner who fixes the arrow in the bow of God by provoking Him to chastise.

If we wish to please the Lord, we must remove the cause of His anger, which is sin. The man sick of the palsy besought Jesus Christ to restore the health of his body; but, before granting his request, our Lord first restored his soul's health by giving him sorrow for his sins, and then saying to him: *Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee*—(Matt. ix. 2). St. Thomas says that the Redeemer first removed the cause of his infirmity—namely, his sins, and then freed him from the infirmity itself. "He asked for the health of the body, and the Lord gave him the health of the soul; because, like a good physician, He wished to remove the cause of the disease." Sin is the root of every evil, and

hence the Lord, after having healed him, warned him against sin in these words : *Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee*—(John v. 14). Ecclesiastics had said the same : *My son, in thy sickness . . . turn away from sin . . . and then give place to the physician*—(Eccclus. xxxviii. 9-11). You must first apply to the physician of the soul in order that he may free you from your sins, and then to the physician of the body that he may cure you of your disease.

Spiritual Reading.

“BE NOT DECEIVED, GOD IS NOT MOCKED.”

Oh, surely *God is not mocked!* (Gal. vi. 7). I never commanded you, God says, to perform those devotions and acts of penance : *For I spoke not to your fathers . . . concerning the matter of burnt offering and sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, saying : Hearken to my voice, and I will be your God*—(Jer. vii. 22-28). What I wish of you, says God, is that you hear My voice and change your life, and make good Confessions with real sorrow, for you must know yourselves, that your other Confessions, followed by so many relapses, have been worth nothing. I wish that you should do violence to yourselves in breaking with that danger, with that company. I wish that you should endeavour to restore that property, to make good to your neighbour such a loss. *Hearken to my voice, and I will be your God.* I will then be to you the God of mercy, such as you would have Me to be. Cardinal Hugo, in his commentary upon these words of our Lord, in the Gospel according to St. Matthew—(Matt. xi. 15) : *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,* says : “Some have ears, but not ears to hear.” How many attend sermons and receive admonitions from the confessor, in which they are told all that they must do in order to please God ; but they leave the church only to live worse than before. How can God be appeased by such ? or

how can such be delivered from Divine chastisements ? *Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord*—(Ps. iv. 6)—says David. Honour God not in appearance, but by your deeds. It is that which is meant by “the sacrifice of justice” ; honour God by bewailing your sins, by the frequentation of the Sacraments, by a change of life and then hope in the Lord. But to hope while you continue the state of sin, is not hope—it is rashness, it is a snare of the enemy, and renders you more odious in the sight of God, and more deserving of punishment.

You see that the Lord is angry, that He already has His hand lifted to strike with the scourge which threatens us. How do you think to escape ? *Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance*—(Matt. iii. 7, 8), thus spoke St. John the Baptist, preaching to the Jews of his day. You must do penance, but penance deserving of pardon. It must be true and resolute. Your anger must be changed into meekness, by forgiveness of those who offend you ; your intemperance must become abstinence, by observing the fasts of the Church, and by abstaining from the immoderate use of intoxicating drink which changes man into a beast. Therefore you must avoid the public house. Chastity must reign and all impurity be cast out. Resist evil thoughts ; use no bad words, and flee from bad companions and dangerous conversation. *Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance,* and the bringing forth of such fruit implies also that you attend to the service of God, and endeavour to serve Him more than you have offended Him ; *For, as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity . . . so now yield your members to love justice*—(Rom. vi. 19). Thus did St. Mary Magdalen live after her conversion, and St. Augustine, St. Mary of Egypt, St. Margaret of Cortona who by their works of penance and sanctification rendered themselves more dear to God than others who had sinned less. St. Gregory says : “For the most part, a fervent life after sin is the more pleasing to God than a life which, though innocent, is tepid.” And thus does the Saint explain

the following passage of the Gospel: *There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance*—(Luke, xv. 7). This is understood of the sinner who, after having risen from sin, sets about serving God with greater fervour than others who have long been just.

This is truly to bring forth fruit worthy of penance. To content one's self with hearing sermons and going to devotions in the church, without abandoning sin, or avoiding the occasion of it, is rather a mockery of God, and calculated to provoke His greater wrath. *And, think not, as St. John the Baptist warned sinners, think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham for our father*—(Matt. iii. 9). It will not do to say, we have the Mother of God to assist us, we have our Patron Saints to deliver us; because if we do not abandon our sins the Saints cannot help us. The Saints are the friends of God; hence they not only have no inclination, but they would even be ashamed to succour the obstinate. Let us tremble, because the Lord has already pronounced the sentence: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire*—(Matt. vii. 19). How many years have you been in the world? Tell me what fruit of good works have you hitherto borne, what glory have you rendered to God by your life? Sin, outrage, contempt, such are the fruit you have borne, such the glory you have rendered to God! God now in His mercy gives you time for penance, in order that you may bewail the injuries you have done Him, and love Him the remainder of your days. What have you resolved to do? Resolve at once to give yourself to God. What do you expect but that unless you turn at once to God, you shall be cut down and cast into the fire of hell?

Let those, then, tremble who have not yet resolved to change their lives. But, on the other hand, be joyful if you mean to turn in good earnest to God. *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord*—(Ps. civ. 8), because God is all tenderness and love for those that seek Him. *The Lord is good . . . to the soul that*

seeketh him—(Lam. iii. 25). Neither does the Lord know how to reject a humble heart that is sorry for its offences. *A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*—(Ps. l. 19). Let us be joyful, then, if we are determined to change our lives; and if, on seeing ourselves guilty of many sins before the Lord, we stand in fear of the Divine Judgments, let us have recourse to the Mother of Mercy, the most Holy Mary, who defends and screens from the Divine vengeance all those who take refuge under her mantle.

Evening Meditation.

ST. MICHAEL GIVES TO EACH A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

I.

The Deacon Pantaleon teaches that St. Michael, according to the order that God has established, takes care of all the faithful. Hence, though residing in Heaven, he nevertheless does not omit to console here below those Christians who are in tribulation.

St. Bruno de Segni adds that St. Michael having been raised by the Lord to the dignity of Chief of all the Angels, it is his duty to give to each soul on earth a Guardian Angel; and he invites us to consider how much we are indebted to him for this. As St. Michael is the light and the guide of all the Angels, who are all inferior to him, it is he who directs our Guardian Angels by teaching them the best manner of guiding us and of protecting us against our enemies. When, therefore, we see a person who is drawn into ruin by his vices, or who persecutes us, we shall do well to pray to St. Michael to advise the Angel Guardian to whom this person is intrusted by pointing out to him the best manner of enlightening him in order that he may correct himself or that he may cease to persecute us.

Again, Pantaleon assures us that this powerful Archangel, when we invoke him, delivers us from

