

Thursday in the Third Week: The Hatred God has for Sin

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow on a second motive for contrition; it is the supreme displeasure which, first, venial sin; second, mortal sin cause to God. We will then make the resolution: first, very carefully to avoid the least venial sins, since God has such a great horror of them; second, to weep, all the days of our life, over the mortal sins which we have had the unhappiness to commit during the past. We will retain as our spiritual nosegay the words of the Psalmist: "*My sin is always before me*" (Ps. L:5).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us prostrate ourselves with trembling before the justice of God pursuing sin with implacable hatred (Wis. XIV:9). O God, Thy justice is higher than the mountains and deeper than the abysses (Ps. XXXV:7); it surpasses all imagination. I adore it without understanding it, but at the same time I love it, because everything in Thee is amiable! Be Thou forever praised and blessed in Thy justice as well as in Thy goodness.

HOW WE OUGHT TO WEEP OVER VENIAL SINS, INASMUCH AS THEY DISPLEASE GOD

God hates venial sin so much that in the next life He visits it with chastisements which, during almost an eternity, are a kind of hell, and He keeps the gates of His Paradise closed against souls which are His friends and are dear to Him until the complete expiation of the least of their sins. He hates it so much that even in this life He has often visited it with terrible chastisements. The wife of Lot permitted herself to indulge in thoughtless curiosity; at that very instant she is struck dead (Gen. XIX:26). A man is discovered picking up a little wood on the Sabbath day; stone him and let him die, said the Lord (Num. XV:32 *et seq.*). Moses indulged in a little mistrust of God; he is not allowed to enter into the promised land, which he had deserved to see by forty years of service (Deut. 1:37). A prophet, through complaisance, remains a little longer than necessary in the place to which he had been sent; a lion comes out of the forest and devours him (I Kings XIII:22, 24). David, animated by secret vanity, causes his people to be numbered; seventy thousand men die of the pestilence (II Sam. XXIV:15). O God, what then is venial sin in presence of Thy divine Majesty? How bitterly ought we to weep over evil which displeases Thee so supremely! and how just it is to bring every time to the holy tribunal a lively contrition for our sins, accompanied with a firm resolution to correct ourselves of them. Is it thus that we act?

HOW MUCH WE OUGHT TO WEEP OVER MORTAL SIN, INASMUCH AS IT IS SUPREMELY DISPLEASED TO GOD

When we reflect on the terrors of hell, and when we call to mind that those who are suffering such incredible torments there were the children of God, His well-beloved, for whom He had given the whole of His blood; and that a single mortal sin, converting such ineffable love into such implacable anger, will make the whole weight of His divine vengeance weigh them down throughout eternity, we are seized with stupor,

and we exclaim: Oh, how much, then, does mortal sin displease Thee, O my God, and with what hatred dost Thou pursue it! If from hell we raise our thoughts to heaven, what do we see? Empty places which were formerly occupied by angels, pure spirits, shining with admirable beauty, clothed with the most magnificent perfections, masterpieces of the hand of God. A day comes when they allow themselves to indulge in a proud thought; at that very moment God pronounces against them a terrible sentence. But, O Lord, if Thou wouldst grant them pardon, they would praise Thee throughout eternity; if Thou wilt cast them into hell they will blaspheme Thee everlastingly, and will drag down to eternal damnation millions of men; it does not signify: let them fall into the bottom of the abyss. But they have only committed one single sin; it is their first sin, and, after all, it is only a sinful thought; it does not signify: let them fall into the bottom of the abyss. O holiness of my God, how pitiless is thy hatred of sin! But if Thou dost thus punish the officers of Thy court, what ought not I to fear I, the last of Thy servants, guilty of a thousand treasons; I who have sinned, not only once and in thought, but millions of times and in all my senses, all the members of my body, in all the powers of my soul, and against the majority of Thy commandments (St Bernard). From heaven, thus depopulated of a portion of its inhabitants, I descend to the terrestrial paradise, and I there see the place which Adam occupied when he was innocent. A day came when he had the misfortune of yielding to an intemperance, which seems apparently very slight; he ate a certain fruit which God had forbidden him, and immediately he lost all the graces of his first state; he was condemned to all kinds of evils, even to death, and not only he, but all his posterity. All men, down to the end of the world, will be a prey to innumerable miseries, to war, to pestilence, to famine, to murders, to tempests, to ignorance, to concupiscence; nay, every one of them would have been damned if the entirely gratuitous mercy of God had not redeemed us. Great God! how many punishments at one and the same time for a single sin! and if one single sin displeased Thee to such a degree as to make Thee resolve to visit the world with so many calamities, what will be the consequence of my innumerable sins? Can I ever weep enough for them, and conceive a sufficiently lively contrition for them? Nevertheless, my God, it is not even in these things that is shown in all its intensity the horror which Thou hast for sin. I take my crucifix in my hand, and I say to myself: He whose image I contemplate was the only and well-beloved Son of God; He was God, but because He took upon Himself the semblance of sin, His heavenly Father launched upon His head all the weight of His anger; He delivered Him up to the most cruel of torments, the most terrible ignominy, to death, and death upon the cross. O sin! how horrible thou art in the sight of God; how I ought to regret and to weep over the evil I committed in allowing thee to enter into my heart! If, for the mere semblance of sin, God thus treated His only Son, how for so many real sins will He treat a rebel and contemptible subject like me? If wood that was green had to pass through such a furnace, what will it be with dry wood which is ready to be consumed by fire? (Luke XXIII:31) Behold here the most powerful of motives for weeping over sin and conceiving a better contrition for it.

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.