

Tuesday in the Third Week: Supreme and Supernatural Contrition

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will consider in our next meditation two other essential characters of contrition; and we shall see that it ought to be: first, supreme; second, supernatural. We will then make the resolution: first, to re-awaken in our soul faith in these two truths, and to maintain the habitual sentiment of them in our soul; second, to make more resolute acts, every evening at our examination, and each time that we confess. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of the Psalmist: "*I have hated and abhorred iniquity*" (Ps. CXVIII:163).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore Jesus overwhelmed with grief in the Garden of Olives (Matt. XXVI:37; Mark XIV:33); He sees the frightful evils produced by sin; hell opened, paradise closed, God despised, the devil upon the throne; and the sight of all this saddens His soul to such an extent that it is necessary for an angel to come down from heaven and sustain Him (Luke XXII:43). Let us render to His soul filled with desolation all the homage of which our hearts are capable.

WE MUST BRING TO OUR CONFESSIONS A SUPREME CONTRITION

A supreme contrition is that which makes us feel more sorrow for having offended God than for all the evils which could possibly happen to us. And what is more just, O my God, than such grief? Dost Thou not deserve to be loved above all things? Can the loss of fortune and reputation, even the deaths of relatives and friends, be weighed against the loss of Thy grace and Thy friendship, with the loss of heaven throughout eternity, which is the consequence of sin? No, doubtless; the least particle of good sense assures us of it. It is not necessary that the sorrow of having sinned should be as sensible as the grief of having lost a father or a mother; God does not ask sensibility from us, because it does not depend upon ourselves; but He requires that we should detest sin as a supreme evil, and that we should be ready to lose all and suffer all rather than commit it one single time. Nor is it opportune that we should represent to ourselves all kinds of ills, such as the tortures of martyrs, in order to ask ourselves if we are ready to bear them rather than commit sin; for we do not actually possess the grace necessary for such a trial; it suffices to say: "If I were in such a case, I would pray to God with all my heart to give me the necessary grace; I am confident that He would not refuse it, and this confidence gives me courage to say: Rather all evils than sin." Let us examine ourselves if we have brought to our confessions this supreme contrition.

WE OUGHT TO BRING TO OUR CONFESSIONS A SUPERNATURAL CONTRITION

If, in fact, our contrition were purely natural in its principle, it could have no value in the supernatural order. Our nature cannot of itself rise to the supernatural order; we can do nothing of ourselves, says St Paul; we can neither have a thought useful for salvation nor say a single meritorious word. It is then from Thee, O Divine Spirit, that we ask true contrition, and it is from Thee alone that we can obtain it, but on one sole condition:

it is that we should base it upon supernatural motives as its principle. If we detest sin only because it has rendered us unhappy, tormented us with remorse and disquietude, ruined us in our fortune, our health, or our reputation, it would be a vain and sterile contrition. Useful contrition has higher views; through it the soul, borrowing its motives from faith, holds sin in supreme horror, and feels a profound regret for having committed it, because in committing it it renounces the friendship of God and its portion in paradise, it gives itself to the devil and exposes itself to eternal damnation, it incurs the hatred and the malediction of its heavenly Father, it has been the cause of the Passion of Jesus Christ, of His mortal anguish in the Garden of Olives and of His agony on the cross; but above all because it has displeased God whom it loves above all things, because it has offended His infinite majesty, outraged His goodness and His love. This is what renders the soul inconsolable for its faults, this is what breaks its heart and humbles it beyond all power of speech (Ps. L:19). O Jesus, crucified for my sins, Thou alone canst infuse these sentiments into me; let fall upon my heart some drops of Thy blood to soften it; speak to it by all Thy wounds as by so many mouths; and may these wounds produce in me the supernatural contrition which purifies the soul and inclines it to live henceforth only for Thee, to love only Thee! Let us here examine ourselves and see whether we have brought to our confessions a really supernatural contrition in its principles and in its motives.

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.