

## Saturday in the Third Week: Mid-Lent

### *Summary of the Morrow's Meditation*

We will employ our meditation tomorrow: first, in returning to the first half of Lent through which we have already passed; second, in reflecting upon the means for spending in a better manner the second half of this holy season. We will then make the resolution: first, to apply ourselves to the practice of recollection and to a spirit of prayer by the frequent use of pious ejaculations; second, better to put in practice the instructions given to us and the spiritual reading to which we shall devote ourselves. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of St Augustine: "*Be afraid of losing the grace which is passing by*".

### *Meditation for the Morning*

Let us adore Jesus Christ, alone in the desert during the holy forty days of which we are celebrating the memory. The divine Solitary calls upon us to become better during this season of salvation. Let us be confounded at having until now responded so ill to His appeal, and let us ask of Him grace to respond to it better during the second half of Lent.

### WE WERE NOT WHAT WE OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN DURING THE FIRST HALF OF LENT

In order to understand it, it is sufficient to consider what we ought to be and what we have been. First, what we ought to be. It is a great error to suppose that in order to assure our salvation it suffices not to commit great crimes. The young man in the Gospel who had kept all the commandments (Matt. XIX:20) refused to embrace the highest perfection, which was to sell all his goods in order to give the price to the poor, and that was enough to make Our Lord exclaim with a sigh: "*How difficult it is for the rich to be saved,*" and for the apostles to ask: "*If he is not saved, who then can be saved?*" (Ibid. 25)—two sentences which seem to prophesy the loss of the unhappy young man's soul. The apostles even had a discussion amongst themselves arising from self-love, but which did not exceed the limits of venial sin (Luke XXII:24), and yet Jesus Christ said to them: *If you are not converted, neither shall you enter into the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. XVIII:3). The Bishop of Ephesus, who it is believed was St Timothy, deserved to be praised by Our Lord for his labours and his zeal; nevertheless he would not have been saved if he had not endeavoured to become better. You were more fervent at the beginning, Jesus Christ said to him; "*Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and do penance, and do the first works, or else I come to thee, and I will move thy candlestick out of its place*" (Rev. II:5), that is to say: I will withdraw the light of My grace. All these examples show us clearly that we are mistaken in thinking our salvation to be assured if we do not commit great crimes. In order to make our vocation and our election certain we must take it to heart to lead a perfect life and to multiply our good works (II Pet. I:10). We must correspond with the graces which we receive and lead a life in harmony with them, for more shall be demanded from him who has received much (Luke XII:48). These, then, are what ought to have been our efforts during every day of the first half of Lent. Now is it thus that we have lived? Have we really taken to heart the great work of our perfection? Have we understood that those words of Our Lord, "*Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect,*" are not the enunciation of a mere counsel,

but a precept to tend to perfection according to our strength and the grace given to us by God? Have we consequently endeavoured every day to do better than we did the preceding day, and at every hour to do better than during the hour which preceded it? What fruit have we derived from all the means of salvation during this holy season, so many instructions and exhortations, so many spiritual readings and so many pious examples, so many good thoughts and pious emotions, lastly, so many interior and exterior graces? Alas, let us confess, with sighs, that we have not been that which we ought to be.

#### MEANS FOR SPENDING THE SECOND HALF OF LENT IN A BETTER MANNER

First, we must renounce a life which is given up to levity, in order to devote ourselves to the practice of recollection, without which any kind of virtue is impossible. Second, we must say, from the bottom of our hearts, I am determined to be a saint; and in consequence of this resolution, we must carefully avoid even venial faults, without ever permitting ourselves deliberately to commit any; then we must often put to ourselves this question: Is it thus that the saints thought, acted, prayed, conversed? and regulate our conduct thereby. Third, we must not resist any grace, but put ourselves in the hands of God, in order to allow ourselves to be led by His Holy Spirit, like a child by the hand of its mother. When we read, or when we have an instruction given to us, we must say, what fruit shall I derive from it? To each good thought which comes to us we must answer God, as Samuel did, "*Here I am, Lord*" and follow the inspiration. Fourth, we must fix upon some special defects, the reformation of which we must pursue during the whole remainder of Lent, such as self-love, our temper, or sins of the tongue.

*Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.*