'Growth in the knowledge of our Lord', meditations, adapted by a 'daughter of the Cross'

by
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“Growth in the knowledge of our Lord.”
“Growth in the knowledge of our Lord.”

MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR,
EXCLUSIVE OF THOSE FOR EACH FESTIVAL, DAY OF RETREAT,
ETC.

Adapted from the French Original
OF THE
ABBÉ DE BRANDT,
BY A "DAUGHTER OF THE CROSS".

VOLUME II.

LONDON:
BURNS AND OATES.
1882.
A nihil obstat.

LAURENTIUS JOHNSON,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur.

HENRICUS EDWARDUS,

Die 27 Sept., 1882.
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PRAYERS.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven; hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners; now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me;
Body of Christ, save me;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me;
Water from the Side of Christ, wash me;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me;
O Good Jesus, hear me;
Within Thy Wounds hide me;
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee;
From the malignant enemy, defend me;

In the hour of my death, call me; and bid me come to Thee, that with Thy Angels and Saints I may praise Thee, for all eternity. Amen.

O God, Who didst teach the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that we may, by the gifts of the same Spirit, be always truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
PRAYERS.

TAKE, O Lord, and receive my memory, my understanding, my whole will: all that I have, all that I am, I give to Thee; to be made use of, according to Thy good pleasure. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace: with these I am rich enough.

O JESUS, living in Mary, come Thou and live in my soul:—by Thy Spirit of Holiness,—in the fulness of Thy Strength,—in the perfection of Thy Virtues,—in the power of Thy Truth,—and by communicating to me Thy mysterious Graces. Deliver me from all the enemies of my salvation; and govern me by Thy Spirit, to the glory of Thy Father. Amen.

O LOVING Jesus! open Thy Sacred Heart to me, show me Its charms, unite me to It for ever: may every breath I draw, every beating of my heart, be so many proofs of my love; and remind Thee, that I belong entirely to Thee, O Lord. Receive graciously, O my God, the small amount of good I am able to do each day; so that I may bless Thee in this life, and praise Thee for all eternity. Amen.

O God, Who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, didst prepare a fit habitation for Thy Son, we beseech Thee, that as by the foreseen Death of her same Son, Thou didst preserve her pure from all spot, so Thou wilt likewise grant, that by her intercession we may be made free from sin, and attain unto Thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.
MEDITATIONS.

Ninth of February.

The return of Jesus to Nazareth.

*Jesus went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them.*—S. Luke ii.

I. Prelude.

Let us represent to ourselves the little House at Nazareth; —the small, poorly furnished rooms, and particularly the workshop, where Jesus laboured as a carpenter.

II. Prelude.

O Jesus, Model of true submission, give us a better understanding of Thy obedience, and grace to conform ours to Thine.

I. Point.

The obedience of Jesus should be the constant theme of our admiration.

*He was subject to them.* And then the holy Gospel is silent until thirty years of Jesus' Life have passed away!—
NINTH OF FEBRUARY.

But these few words say very much: let us try to understand thoroughly the important lesson they convey. The Son of God came down from Heaven to procure the redemption of mankind; to enlighten the world, and to instruct us concerning the way of salvation; and yet He, the Second person of the Undivided Trinity, spent thirty years of His Life on earth in a state of absolute submission to Mary and to Joseph. What could be more incomprehensible? He was subject to them; He accomplished their will, as if it were of the first importance to do so; as if He had no higher work to perform, than that of aiding Saint Joseph in carpentering,—and in attentively and lovingly assisting His Holy Mother in her homely duties: by His forethought anticipating their desires, and by His promptitude proving the willing readiness of His obedience. Our Saviour—to Whom each moment was precious—who could do such mighty works—passed nearly all His Lifetime under the control of a poor artisan. What could He have done more astonishing to human reason?—more instructive for us?—more fitting to make us grasp the true idea of obedience?—Do we love obedience as He did?—Do we prefer it above all things?—in order to practice it, do we give up our own gratification—pleasure—desires? Let us entreat our Divine Master to make us real lovers of His spirit of obedience; so shall we practice it as He did.

II. POINT.

The obedience of Jesus should constantly be the object of our imitation.

It was the pride of man which our Lord came to condemn by His Example, even more than by His Words. Each of His steps leaves behind it, as it were, the impress of obedi-
ence, which we discover the more clearly, the more closely we follow Him. If we think of Him in the Home of His Childhood—of His Youth—and of the part He took in all the labour of the house, from His early years until He left its roof to fulfil His public Ministry, we may well ask ourselves, where our spirit of submission is? Does obedience demand of us that we should toil as Jesus toiled?—that we should perform lowly functions as Jesus did?—that we should serve those who may be, in some ways, inferior to us, as Jesus served Mary and Joseph?—If so, do we rejoice that we are permitted to share in the honour attached to submissiveness by God Himself?—The Great—the Wise—the All-powerful Creator served—obeyed His own creatures, and that in little ways;—for there was nothing great to be done in the carpenter’s work-shop at Nazareth. Ought not this consideration to humble our proud wills? and cause it to be our delight, our nourishment, to do the Will of the Heavenly Father, manifested to us by those who are in authority over us?

COLLOQY.

This lesson must needs be very necessary for me, O my Saviour, since Thou dost enforce it by Thy own example during the space of thirty years.—I humble myself at Thy Feet; and acknowledge all the imperfections of my obedience. I will endeavour to subject myself more entirely to Thy Will.—Make my heart like unto Thine, that it may esteem, love and practice this virtue of obedience,—indispensable in a Religious.

RESOLUTION.

To obey my Heavenly Father, in the manner in which Jesus did so—at Nazareth.
TENTH OF FEBRUARY.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Tenth of February.

The obedience of Jesus.

He was subject to them.—S. Luke II.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us again picture to ourselves the little House at Nazareth;—the small, scantily furnished rooms;—and the carpenter's shop, in which Jesus worked.

II. PRELUDE.

Make us thoroughly to comprehend, O Saviour, the advantages and the merit of the excellent virtue of submissiveness; so that we may adopt it, as our own, more perfectly.

I. POINT.

Obedience is a sure and easy means of arriving at religious perfection.

Jesus, our Divine Saviour, would not have recommended so strongly, by His words and actions, the love of submis-
sion had He not known how manifold are the advantages which this ensures to such as exercise themselves in it.—The first of these advantages is—perfect security.—One who acts only by obedience is safe from illusion; God so loves this spirit of subjection that He will Himself take care to watch over every step of the child of obedience, directing each one towards the goal of eternal happiness.—Another advantage is this; that we shall avoid the sinfulness of self-will, of presumption, and of despair, if we place ourselves in the hands of those who receive their commission from God to guide others. The implacable enemy of our salvation hates nothing more than to see us thus awakened to the perception of his wiles; and escaping them by means of obediently following the counsel of our spiritual directors or superiors; and what satan hates most, must be that which is the very opposite to the sin to which he tempted our first parents. Obedience undoes his work. Saint Francis de Sales says: “Blessed are the obedient, because God never allows that they should go astray;—even if their rightly-appointed guides should err in their counsel, if there be no manifest sin, they do not err from the right path in obeying them; God may be in such a case trying and proving them; He knows how to bring good out of apparent evil”.

II. POINT.

The path of obedience is strewn thickly with merits.

God has prepared, for such as tread this path, rich rewards, both in time and eternity. Each step taken along its course, being the result of a supernatural motive, procures for the soul some further grace. Grace is the seed of glory; and that recompense which awaits the obedient is so great,
that Saint Teresa (to whom our Lord made its measure known) remarks, "that she would not hesitate to endure all the torments of martyrdom, to obtain a single degree more of the special glory and happiness destined for the recompen-sing of the most ordinary actions—those most hidden—most insignificant—which had been ennobled by a lively motive of holy obedience." Reckon, if we can then, the treasures of merit which are amassed in a single day by one who does nothing save by obedience, and whose every action, even the least, bears the impress of this excellent virtue. These riches are put in our way: let us accept the opportunities of winning them, with thankfulness.

COLLOQUIY.

O Jesus, by the recollection of Thy Life at Nazareth, make me to understand the excellence of an entire submission of my own will:—increase in me the esteem and love of this virtue of obedience. May I make it the motive of all I do, so that I may act and speak in accordance with its promptings; thus pleasing Thee, and rendering myself worthy of an eternal reward.

RESOLUTION.

To fulfil all my duties in the spirit of obedience.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He was subject to them.

PRAYER.

Take, O Lord, and receive.
ELEVENTH OF FEBRUARY.

ELEVENTH OF FEBRUARY.

As Jesus advanced in age, His wisdom increased.

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.—S. LUKE ii.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us look within the Home of the Holy Family.

II. PRELUDE.

Grant, O Saviour, that like Thee, we may increase in true wisdom, and be strengthened in grace, before God and man.

I. POINT.

We should, each day, grow in holiness.

In saying that Jesus advanced in wisdom and in grace, as well as in age, the Holy Ghost would have us to understand that the Son of God manifested progressively that fulness of grace and of wisdom which He, in fact, possessed from the first moment of His Incarnation. From this we may learn that we must not stop in the path of perfection, but he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.—And where are we? Our progress in the ways of God,—the sanctity required by our profession,—is it as a shining light, going forwards and increasing, even to the perfect day? Are we becoming more disengaged from the ideas, the customs, the allurements of the world? Have we lately acquired a greater love of God? more fervour?—more sincerity?—more self-forgetfulness? As we advance in years
is there more solidity and generosity in the virtues we practise? Let us make a serious examen of conscience on this subject of spiritual progress; for we ought to be very sure that (after the example of Jesus) we are advancing every day in grace and perfection.—Should there not be a perceptible difference between those who have just begun to tread in the path of religious perfection, and such as have long since made profession of serving God within the cloister?—Let none think they can stand still;—if we would not retrograde we must advance.

II. POINT.

We ought to grow each day in virtue—before God, and before men.

We must increase in grace and in wisdom before God, that is to say, we are not to rest contented with an outward appearance of sanctity: God, Who trieth the hearts, can only be glorified by solid virtue.—Words—appearance—a certain exterior reserve may deceive man, but not God, Who sees if the thoughts are holy,—if the desires, the sentiments of the heart are pure and upright. We should be growing in grace day by day, so that we may approach more closely—as closely as possible—to the perfection of God Himself. Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.—We should also advance in virtue before men, because it is one of our chief duties to edify others. Even the world, all perverse as it is, expects to find an increasing holiness in those who make profession of religion; and amongst such as do, like ourselves, openly make this profession, what sincerity of desire should there not be, to let the light of our good example so shine before men that they may glorify our Father, Who is in Heaven. The cause that
ELEVENTH OF FEBRUARY.

often so little progress is made, and perfection so seldom attained is this: almost always the dictates of nature and human reasoning are listened to and followed; and we will be guided so little, or not at all, by the Holy Spirit, Whose office it is to enlighten the understanding and to direct the will. However well human reason and good sense may help us to form a right judgment, they are powerless in themselves (if unaccompanied by the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost) to produce religious perfection. Let us then see if, before God, our progress in holiness is real; if our neighbour has cause to be edified more and more by our good example.

COLLOQUIY.

O Saviour, Thou hast poured out upon me Thy benefits, and placed me by Thy mercy in such a condition of life that I may find opportunities of advancing each day in the way of perfection; and yet how little have I profited by these spiritual advantages.—What ought I not to do, to make reparation for all my ingratitude?—to cause Thee, O Jesus, to forget it? It seems to me that I am less ready to sacrifice myself, less fervent in my prayers, less zealous in the discharge of my duties than formerly.—I will keep within the little House at Nazareth, and there learn of Thee how to advance in wisdom and grace.

RESOLUTION.

I will try to serve God with somewhat of my first fervour, —begging Him to renew it within me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

Going forwards and increasing, even to perfect day.

PRAYER.

Soul of Christ.
TWELFTH OF FEBRUARY.

Twelfth of February.

Jesus leads a hidden life in Nazareth.

Jesus dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: That he shall be called a Nazarite.—S. Matt. ii.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us make our meditation within the little Home of the Holy Family.

II. PRELUDE.

O Jesus, make our hearts conformable to thy Divine Heart by a preference for an ordinary manner of life;—and by the practice of hidden virtues.

I. POINT.

Beneath the ordinary exterior life, led by our Lord for thirty years, His perfections are concealed.

In meditating again to-day on the conduct of Jesus at Nazareth, we see that nothing remarkable appeared in His words or His actions.—When the time should arrive for Him to speak and teach openly, He would do so; but until then He would share the quiet, ordinary life of His Parents. He prayed—He worked with His Hands—He took His repasts—His rest, like other men; but in all this He was most pleasing in the Sight of the Celestial Father, because He did in the most perfect manner the most ordinary duties of life.—And this is what God wills:—in this consists that
TWELFTH OF FEBRUARY.

real excellence which God approves,—and the perfection of every condition, whether high or low.—He who does what God asks of Him, and does it well, the same is already perfect.—How important is it for us to take hold of this lesson; and to remember that we can acquire perfection, if we will only take pains to do well all—even the least duties of our calling, to do them out of love for God and with a view to please Him alone. We should ask Him (Who only can do this) to make us understand the excellence of a simple ordinary life; this being the shortest and easiest road to holiness and true happiness.

II. POINT.

We should imitate the life Jesus led when He was at home in Nazareth.

Jesus, buried in retirement, spending His days in prayer and other daily duties, regulating His actions by the law of obedience, condemns the conduct of those who imagine that they should seek for sanctity outside the ordinary duties of their vocation. We find that some disturb good order by thinking that they ought to work when it is the hour for prayer; or they wish to pray when it is the time for repose; but this is not to act as Jesus acted. He did all things at the right time, and in the most perfect manner. Can we not in spirit dwell with Jesus, Mary and Joseph? so that we may the better observe the influence that the Presence of Jesus should have over all our actions, our words, our senses?—There would then be no want of regularity,—no ostentation,—no pretention,—no negligence,—no hasty words,—no discontent,—no love of ease,—nothing un-mannerly.—We can still watch His actions.—Their one aim was to glorify unceasingly His Father in Heaven, and to
procure the salvation of men.—To repair the Divine glory, which had been outraged by sin, and to augment the treasure of grace He was preparing for us, He multiplied His acts of virtue, even in the smallest details of His Life. He was always intimately united to God the Father; doing all things for love of Him, and in conformity with His holy Will.

COLLOQUY.

O my Jesus, how different is my daily life from what Thine was at Nazareth; and yet if I only studied it more diligently, more constantly, might I not make my actions a reflection of Thine own? O give me grace to keep near to Thyself, when engaged in the ordinary duties of my everyday life, so that they too may merit the approval of God, and be by Him rewarded. O Mary, O Joseph, witnesses of the effects of the hidden life of Jesus, ask of Him, for me, the grace to copy it better.

RESOLUTION.

To avoid all that may draw attention to myself.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*And the world knew Him not.*

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.
Thirteenth of February.

The Holy Family.

They had but one heart and one soul.—Acts iv.

I. Prelude.

Let us enter silently into the quiet House at Nazareth, there to contemplate that which is taking place. We see Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

II. Prelude.

In contemplating the Holy Family—perfect model of a religious household—let us observe all that may speak to us of the holy life of each member of it.

I. Point.

The spirit of unity existing in the Holy Family.

What beautiful harmony we find in the family life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.—Three hearts—so pure—so holy—were united in loving,—adoring,—serving God perfectly. We first contemplate Jesus:—His bearing was noble and condescending,—His aspect kind,—His demeanour sedate,—His words were full of humility and peaceableness,—He was continually attentive to do the will of His Parents; His whole Exterior forms a picture which we, as religious persons, should love to gaze upon. On the holy Face of Jesus there was never the least trace of anxiety nor trouble. It was a true index of that calmness and recollection which had such absolute possession of His Soul. Whether He
THIRTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

spoke—whether He kept silence—at all times—He was gentle, kind, and thoughtful for others. How edifying and pleasant would it be to live in our company, if we, each one of us, resembled Jesus; then we should draw souls to God, —we should rejoice the hearts of those with whom we come into contact.—And if we now turn our attention to Mary and Joseph. In her features we see poured the most angelic qualities of heart and mind. In Saint Joseph we observe a quiet cheerfulness, and assiduity in his work; both of them live in the most intimate union with Jesus. The slightest cloud of misunderstanding never appeared to disturb the tranquillity of their lowly dwelling, there were no vexations,—no indiscreet words. Full of pure love, Jesus, Mary and Joseph formed a trinity on earth, which imaged forth the Holy Undivided Trinity of Heaven.

II. POINT.

The spirit of love which influenced the Holy Family.

Let us further meditate upon the admirable regularity and tender charity which reigned in the house of Joseph, to whom Jesus and Mary were subject, as being the head of this saintly household. What respect is paid to him; what deference!—and then what mutual care the one for the other, and sincere cordiality. We may readily imagine how the wishes and needs of one another were discovered—anticipated—and provided for; their charity being ingenious and active, and exercised with equal warmth of affection and calm unobtrusiveness. Jesus loved His Mother, and the venerable Joseph—the holy patriarch and Mary loved Jesus;—and with what a pure unselfish love!—So should it be in a religious community; and so would it be, if through sentiments of respect and charity we were subject, one to
another, in the fear of Christ. There should exist no other rivalry than that of being the most thoughtful for others,—the most unobtrusive,—the most gentle,—the most humble. If, as in the Holy Family, delicacy of feeling, and mildness of manner constituted the charm of our house,—if piety formed its riches, and the good pleasure of God its happiness,—if it were only so, we should find reigning amongst us, that gentle peace—that divine unity—that religious calm, which are infallible signs of the Presence of Jesus. Does He live amongst us?

COLLOQUIY.

O noble and holy Family, I could not grow weary of admiring thy perfections, so attractive do I find them! I see before me the perfect model of community-life. Discover to me and to all around me, more and more, the beauty—the holiness—the advantages—the excellence of this life; that we may strive to revive amongst ourselves the sublime virtues which grew so luxuriantly in the abode of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

RESOLUTION.

I will make it my delight to serve and please all with whom I live, imitating the social virtues of the Holy Family.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

_They had but one heart and one soul._

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.
FOURTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

FOURTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

The Baptism of Jesus Christ.

Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised by John in the Jordan.—S. Mark i.

I. PRELUDE.

Let us go in spirit to the banks of the River Jordan; and there see Jesus amongst the crowds of people who came thither to receive baptism at the hands of Saint John.

II. PRELUDE.

O Divine Saviour, Who didst thus place Thyself amongst sinners, to teach us not to seek for any distinction, grant that the knowledge of our unworthiness, and of our misery may humble us deeply; and make us to seek rather to be considered as the last and the least of all.

I. POINT.

Jesus begins His Public Life by practising humility.

Jesus leaves His home.—After having there practised, during the space of thirty years, all the virtues he proposed to teach openly during the remaining three years of His Life, He wills at length, according to the designs of the Heavenly Father, to begin His important Mission, and to appear for the first time in public. By what act does the Divine Saviour enter upon this new career, which is set before Him? He goes from the holy companionship of
Mary to take His place amongst sinners, and mingling in the crowd that surrounds Saint John, He asks of him the baptism of repentance. What an act of humility on the part of the Saint of saints!—He Who came to destroy sin, appeared to take upon Him the form of a sinner: He consented to pass for such. Until now, He had been concealed from the world; He begins to make Himself known to it, but under the guise of a penitent. How then will He be recognised as the Messias?—the Son of God?—the Saviour?—Truly the thoughts of God are different from those of men.—Jesus abases Himself;—He seeks not His own glory;—therefore His Father is waiting only for the right moment, to proclaim that He is His Own Beloved Son. Let us take care to profit by the first lesson Jesus gives us in His public Life; and to learn from Him the true means of drawing down upon us God's notice and approval. Yes! if we humble ourselves, and have no fear of appearing insignificant, full of defects, God—Who loves the humble, will bless us and our works.

II. POINT.

We ought to begin, and maintain in ourselves, the spiritual life, by the exercise of humility.

If Jesus, the very Essence of sanctity, has willed for our instruction to prelude His evangelical career by a long period of abnegation; if the first step He took in that career was an act of profound humility, what humiliations should not they impose on themselves who aspire to the perfection of a religious life? These humiliations may lower us in the esteem of the world, and make us little in the eyes of men, but they raise us in the esteem of God. He looks down with pleasure on the true disciples of His Divine Son,—in being which our
real glory consists. On occasions when we may prove our humility, we should consider that if men despise, censure, or ridicule us, before God we are exalted by the very means which lower us in their sight.—Jesus Christ Himself takes delight in seeing us wear His livery; the Angels envy us this honour. The victory the Saviour gained over the devil and the world, is the victory of humility over pride; and it is only with the same weapons that we can likewise triumph. If the Son of God, having taken the likeness of man, judged it therefore necessary to perform an act of open penance, in order to fulfill all justice, what does not this same justice demand of those who should participate in the holiness of the Saviour, and yet are sullied by many sins, and subject to many defects. It little becomes us to seek to pass for saints, when the Saint of saints willed to appear as a sinner.

COLLOQUY.

O my Saviour, how does Thy example confound my pretensions! When I see Thee humbly coming to ask for Baptism, amongst those who stood in actual need of it, placing Thyself in the throng with the guilty, I am ashamed of my unjustly claiming respect and esteem. I take pains to hide my weakness, and cover my failings with excuses. I understand how the sight of the sanctity and self-abasement united in Thy Divine Person, must have well pleased Thy Heavenly Father. Oh! that I might learn to please God in the same way that Jesus did.

RESOLUTION.

I will keep before my mind the thought of my unworthi-
FIFTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on me.*

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

——

Fifteenth of February.

Jesus,—the Beloved Son of the Father.

*Thou art My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*—
S. Matt. iii.

I. Prelude.

Let us see Jesus, coming to be baptised: And the heavens opening. The Holy Ghost descends in a bodily shape, as a dove, upon Him; we hear a Voice, saying: *This is my Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*

II. Prelude.

O Adorable Jesus, Who didst manifest Thyself at length to the world, discover Thyself to us also; and grant that we may attach ourselves to Thee as the only object worthy of our affections.

I. Point.

Jesus, the Beloved Son of the Father, is given to us.

God, the Father, in proclaiming Jesus as the Object of
His divine complacency, willed to call the attention of all the world to His Son, that He might be glorified. In the carrying out of this purpose, the proclamation is also made that God is Charity; and hath so loved the world, as to give His Only Begotten Son. It was not an Angel—not a Prince of His royal Court, whom He sent to instruct and to save us; from Heaven He speaks to earth and tells the inhabitants thereof that He Who now cometh up out of the water, is the God-Man, in Whom He is well pleased. Had we been present at that wondrous scene, what would have been our feelings? Should we not have poured forth our love and veneration at His Sacred Feet, and have protested that we would follow Him even unto death? Then let us do so now;—and whilst we are engaged in showing Him, Whom God has sent, every mark of reverence and affection, let us, in Him and through Him, praise and thank His Father and ours, for thus openly declaring that the Divine Nature and human nature are united in our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Point.

Jesus, the Well-beloved Son of God, is worthy of all our love.

Who is more worthy to fill our hearts than Jesus? One with the Father, He possesses all the perfections of the Divinity, the fulness of these dwell within Him Who is beautiful above the sons of men; grace is poured abroad in His Lips. In His Sacred Person He was gentle, sedate, dignified. Now in Heaven His glorified Humanity is the admiration, the delight of those who encircle Him. And He loves us with an eternal charity; unchangeable as Himself. He came to earth to instruct us, to point out to us the way which conducts to endless happiness, and to merit
FIFTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

this, for us, by His Death. During His public Life, He proved Himself to be the Good Master, and at the same time the Perfect Example. Our poor hearts, even at the best, are so incapable of loving Him as He deserves, but could we not love Him better if we got clear of the miserable slavery of self-love? We should then serve Him purely for love of Himself; and with the simple desire of pleasing Him alone. The consideration of His poor, laborious Life,—the persecutions and sorrowful Death He endured, should surely dispose our hearts to entertain a greater devotion towards Him, Who is the Well-beloved Son of the Eternal King.

COLLOQUY.

O my God, how good Thou art to have given Thy Divine Son, not only to live on earth as my Example, and to die on the Cross as my Saviour, but also to be the Lover of my soul, my Celestial Bridegroom. All praise, all glory be to Thee, O Lord! Make me to appreciate more and more the happiness of belonging to Jesus, may I love Him better and imitate His virtues more perfectly.

RESOLUTION.

To strive to love Jesus more myself, and to win for Him the love of others.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.
Sixteenth of February.

Jesus retires into the desert. He is tempted by the devil.

Jesus returned from the Jordan; and was led by the Spirit into the desert, for the space of forty days.—S. Luke iv.

I. Prelude.

Let us go into the desert with our Lord. He is about to lay the foundations of the penitential life, which should always accompany the apostolic life.

II. Prelude.

O Divine Master, grant that we may learn from Thee how to prepare aright for the performing of our works of charity; and how to resist the enemies of our salvation.

I. Point.

It was in retreat, and by prayer and mortification that Jesus made His preparation for His evangelical labours.

Our Divine Lord had no need at all to prepare for His public Life; but He desired to make it clear to those whom He would hereafter associate with Himself in the important work of saving souls, that they must qualify themselves for their mission. That was why, following the movements of the Holy Ghost, Jesus retired into the desert; and during forty days and forty nights remained in perfect solitude, and discoursed in prayer, with His Father, on that most momentous subject—the redemption of the world. To His continual prayer He added austere penance. These are the duties
He has traced out for apostolic men,—for all who work for Him. In the exercises of retreat, in the time of preparation for active labours, or renewal of the forces of our souls, we see how necessary it is to be penetrated with the spirit of our Lord; and the thought of what the loss must be to such as badly employ these seasons of retirement, is brought home to each one, who has enjoyed the privilege of following Jesus into the desert. Have we spent such seasons near Him in recollection and fervour? laying in a store of grace to help us to persevere amidst all the difficulties and temptations we may be called upon to encounter for Jesus' sake.

II. Point.

Our Saviour, in permitting the devil to tempt Him, proves that He compassionates our weakness, and would have us compassionate that of others.

Jesus Christ, having clothed Himself with our feeble degraded nature, willed to submit Himself to all its miseries,—sin only exempted. He, full of pity, knew how much temptation afflicts souls that fear to offend God; He subjected Himself to it, to show that neither sanctity of life, nor the solitude of the desert can shelter us from the attacks of the enemy of our salvation:—hence, when tried by them, we should be neither troubled nor discouraged, but have recourse to the Victor over Satan, with entire confidence. He would teach us also that no temptation can sully the soul that resists it,—it left Him untroubled, notwithstanding the artifices of the evil one; on the contrary the soul becomes by this means strengthened in virtue. That we may understand how needless are our alarms, even should the temptations be most painful, Jesus permitted the devil to approach,
to handle His Sacred Body, and to transport It from one place to another. The consideration of Jesus in the desert, led there by the Spirit to be tempted, affords us much valuable instruction. By putting it into practice we shall render ourselves strong in His strength; and, in meeting temptation, know how to turn to His Sacred Heart for shelter and safety.

COLLOQUIY.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, Source of all holiness and strength. I thank Thee for having condescended to subject Thyself to my weakness, so as to inspire me with courage to overcome it. Remembering the numberless combats, the continual warfare, in which Thy faithful servants—Thy best friends have been engaged, I will, instead of being discomfited by temptation, make it a subject of joy. In coming off victorious over my enemy, may I trust in Thy strength alone for the future, whilst I thank Thee for having upheld me by Thy grace; without which I should utterly fall.

RESOLUTION.

I will watch against the attacks of my spiritual foe, and pray to be delivered out of temptation.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted.*

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.
Seventeenth of February.

Jesus—the Lamb of God.

The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world.—S. John i.

I. Prelude.

We see how full of joy Saint John-the-Baptist was, when he perceived Jesus coming to him: he pointed Him out to all those who were standing by.

II. Prelude.

O Divine Lamb of God, the very sight of Whom rejoiced Thy holy Precursor, discover to our souls Thy infinite goodness, that they may be attached entirely to Thee.

I. Point.

Jesus is called the Lamb, on account of His gentleness.

Gentleness and meekness were among the chief traits, pointed out by the prophets, which should characterise the Messias. Thus Isaiah saith: He shall not cry, neither shall His Voice be heard abroad: the bruised reed He shall not break, and the smoking flax He shall not quench. How fully was the prophecy accomplished; for Jesus went about doing good,—preferring mercy to judgment,—practising patience and goodness towards sinners, whose conversion He desired. He was justly likened to a Lamb by reason of His innocence—His docility—His obedience. The Lamb
of infinite value, unspotted and undefiled, sent on earth to be sacrificed, that by His Precious Blood men might be washed from their sins; sent to offer them a remedy for all their ills, and to procure for them an abundance of that good which is eternal. It was at the sight of this inexhaustible Source of all spiritual riches that Saint John rejoiced:—it was a renewal of that joy which he had experienced before his birth.—He loses no time in making Him known, directly he finds himself in the Presence of his Lord. Do we feel the same joy when we see Him before us, under the Veil of the Most Blessed Sacrament? With what love and respect ought we to hear the words of the Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world. Does His Presence fill us with the desire to make Him known to others, and cause us to pray for the extension of the knowledge of His Love in their hearts?

II. POINT.

They who labour for the salvation of souls should win them to God by gentleness and goodness.

Let us consider how greatly gentleness and kindness assist, by their power and attractiveness, to gain hearts. Scarcely had Saint John announced Jesus as the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world, when two of his own disciples leave him to follow the Lamb withersoever He should lead them. The very Title He bore captivated their hearts; a sacred attraction drew them after Him; they wished to know Him, and to enjoy His society. The effects of the gentle goodness which characterised our Lord, were extraordinary; often He, Who was holiness itself, was surrounded by sinners, whom He received with friendliness and instructed with simple kindness. It is not science, nor
eloquence, nor talent, nor other human means, which render
us fitting instruments to procure the salvation of souls;—
but sanctity of life—a union with God—manifested by our
charity, patience, and gentleness. These form the shortest,
the easiest road into hearts; how many we should gain for
God, how much glory we should procure Him, if we resem-
bled the Divine Lamb in His patience and meekness.
Perhaps we displease Him by the discouraging hardness of
our manner, or the severity of our words, of our rebukes: if
it be so, let us watch over ourselves, and keeping in view the
Lamb of God, do and speak as He would have done.

Colloquy.

Even in the presence of Thy cruel tormentors, O Jesus,
Thou wast as a Lamb before its shearsers; after dealing so
gently with others Thou wast Thyself so cruelly treated;
Thou wast the Lamb of God, Whose Sacrifice, as such,
had to be consummated, and Thou didst not open Thy
Mouth. Under whatever aspect I see Thee—whether
attracting Thy disciples to follow Thee—giving proofs of
Thy meekness in Thy dealings with the sinful, the afflicted—
or suffering patiently as a Victim of expiation, I must yield
to Thy gentle influence. Lamb of God, Who taketh away
the sins of the world, grant me Thy peace.

Resolution.

To sacrifice for Jesus' sake all that is opposed to gentle-
ness and kindness.

Thought for the Day.

Behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world.

Prayer.

O Loving Jesus.
Nineteenth of February.

Jesus casts out the profaners of the Temple.

Take these things hence, and make not the House of my Father a house of traffic.—S. John ii.

I. Prelude.

We see before us Jesus, Who embodied in Himself all gentleness and forbearance, driving out those from the Temple who were profaning it.

II. Prelude.

Thou wast, O Saviour, so zealous for the glory of Thy Father that Thou couldst not suffer the violation of the purity of His Temple: inspire us with a like zeal, with regard to Thy material Temples; and also to preserve the sanctity of our bodies, the living Temples in which Thou dost deign to dwell.

I. Point.

God makes our heart His Sanctuary.

Our faith concerning the Presence of Jesus in our churches is firm and unchangeable, and we love to offer to our Divine Master, Who willingly dwells in them, our homage of adoration, gratitude and love. But are we always careful to prove our belief by a reverent behaviour before the Tabernacle, within which Jesus reposes? The sellers were in the outer courts only; of the Temple; and they were selling what would be offered in sacrifice therein, and yet our Lord
shewed more severity in His zeal for His Father's glory on this occasion than perhaps on any other. Let us bear this in mind to increase and confirm in ourselves a sense of awe and reverence for the Majesty of God, Who would not have even the surroundings of His Temple used for ordinary purposes. Let us guard our Holy of holies, not only from profanity, but from the slightest mark of disrespect. Does our faith also often remind us that God lives also in us? in our bodies, and in our souls, which form a Sanctuary for the Divinity. *Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* says Saint Paul. One should often repeat to one's-self,—"I am the dwelling-place of God—He is within me—He takes pleasure in being there, and in being thus intimately united with me". With this thought ever before us, how can we remain cold and indifferent in the Presence of our Divine Guest? Should it not cause our hearts to rejoice unceasingly? to turn towards Him with loving attention? and to fear nothing so much as to lose Him?

II. *Point.*

*How zealously we should preserve personal holiness.*

*The zeal of Thy House hath eaten Me up.* If it would grieve us deeply to witness any profanation of the sacred vessels, any irreverences committed in our Churches,—if we are happy to see our Altars adorned with all that is most beautiful, in honour of Him Who dwelleth there, with what carefulness should we not avoid the smallest fault which could tarnish the sanctity of our bodies, those sacred tabernacles which God inhabits? *Glorify God and bear God in your body.* With what fervour ought we not to endeavour to embellish these living temples, and to adorn them with all
those virtues, which may render them pleasing to Him? Let us drive away far from us, with the scourge of mortification, all sensuality, vanity, and avarice, the spirit of the world, and all that might profane or violate the abode of the Spirit of God.

COLLOQUIY.

O my God, Thou dost make of me, unworthy as I am of this high honour, a temple in which Thou wilt dwell. How often should I recall this consoling thought, how much should I rejoice in the assurance that Thy Spirit is within me, and that I am not my own!—May I be more careful to adorn Thy sanctuary with these virtues in which Thou dost take delight, making in my heart a tabernacle for Thee, out of the pure gold of charity.

RESOLUTION.

To avoid the least faults, because they tarnish the tabernacle of the Thrice-holy God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

PRAYER.

O Jesus, living in Mary.
Twentieth of February.

Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His Voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh, or whither He goeth.—As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.—St. John iii.

I. Prelude.

Let us represent to ourselves that scene in our Lord's Life, when Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, comes into His Presence; and receives His instructions with respectful attention.

II. Prelude.

Grant, O Lord, that we may ever be obedient to the Voice of the Holy Spirit; so that we may merit to enjoy the precious advantages of a truly spiritual life.

I. Point.

It is the Holy Ghost Who causes us to advance in the spiritual life.

After having revealed to Nicodemus the mystery of the new life received in Baptism, our Divine Lord continues His instruction, and unfolds further secrets of the spiritual life. We may listen also to these heavenly lessons, which are particularly addressed to those who are called to a higher degree of perfection. The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou.
hearest His Voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh, or whither He goeth. The Voice of the Spirit speaks the divine language of holy inspiration and of the attraction of grace. It cannot make itself heard in restless souls, nor by those who seldom or never look within; nor occupy themselves with the DivineGuest. He seeks a heart which is recollected, attentive, and desirous of knowing the good pleasure of God.
—Thou knowest not whence He cometh. Often this Voice is recognised after a fervent Communion—a pious reading—an instruction attentively heard—a meditation well made;—but at other times His visit is quite sudden—unforeseen. It may be in the form of a striking example—an edifying word, which awakens in us holy thoughts, and as with a flash of light illuminates our understanding. Thou knowest not whither He goeth. An inspiration, faithfully followed, often opens the door to a sequence of graces, which render progress in goodness both easy and rapid. How watchful should we be over ourselves, how recollected, how attentive to the movements of the Holy Spirit! How prompt to correspond to them also! for the moments of His special visits are most precious, but often of short duration.

II. Point.

Jesus proceeds to speak to Nicodemus of the end for which He Himself came into the world.

After having spoken of the office of the Holy Spirit and the necessity of Baptism, our Lord alludes to His own Mission, and His Death upon the Tree. From the stream of grace imparted to us by the operation of the Holy Ghost in our souls, He leads the mind of His disciple up to its Source—the Cross:—on it He is to be lifted up, so that
all men being drawn to Him, and believing in Him, may not perish but have everlasting life. Let us place ourselves at His Feet, as He continues His instruction, and meditate upon the way in which, after the children of Israel in the desert had offended God by their ingratitude, they were saved from the punishment of death, in looking at the brazen serpent which Moses set up for a sign: a figure of Jesus Crucified.—When we are suffering from the wounds inflicted by sin, from the effects of the corruption of nature, do we look up to the Cross, with faith in the merits of the Passion and Death of Him Who hung upon it, in the desert of the world? The redemption of mankind, by God the Son, and his sanctification by God the Holy Ghost, were the mysteries revealed to Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night. He made known to him, that light had come into the world in Himself; and that it would be perpetuated by the Spirit of Truth, Who should enlighten the Church, and guide Her into all truth.

COLLOQUY.

I thank Thee, O God, that in Holy Baptism, I have been born again of water and of the Holy Ghost: may He enlighten me by His grace and guide me by His Holy inspirations, and teach me all truth. I thank Thee that Thou, O Father, didst send Thy Only-Begotten Son into the world; may I keep near His Cross, and looking continually up to Him, be saved from the punishment I deserve, being cleansed from my sins in His most Precious Blood.

RESOLUTION.

To be faithful to good inspirations, out of love and gratitude towards God.

2——3
TWENTY-FIRST OF FEBRUARY.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

*The Spirit breatheth where He will, and Thou hearest His Voice.*

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twenty-first of February.

Distinctive characteristics of true zeal.

Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea; and baptised: John also was baptising in the Jordan: His disciples came and said to him: Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to Whom thou gavest testimony, behold He baptiseth, and all men come to Him: John said: He must increase, but I must decrease.—S. John iii.

I. PRELUDE.

We represent to ourselves the towns and villages of Judea; where the Divine Saviour caused His converts to be baptised, by the hands of His Disciples.

II. PRELUDE.

Give us grace, O Lord, to despise ourselves, and seek only the advancement of Thy glory in all things.

I. POINT.

True zeal, like that of Saint John-the-Baptist, should be pure, simple, and disinterested.
TWENTY-FIRST OF FEBRUARY.

We perceive how the disciples of Saint John, jealous for the honour of their master, could not see without anxiety that Jesus also was giving Baptism, and drawing to Himself the respect and confidence of the people. This natural feeling is but too common in persons, whose zeal is not yet sufficiently free from all selfishness; they do not relish the good that is done by others,—it even irritates them, and at times, under some specious pretext, they go so far as to oppose it.—All this arises from secret pride, which makes one believe that one is seeking only God's glory; and all the while there is only self-seeking, and self-glorification. Why, for instance, is it that those whom we succeed in some employment—some charge, have, nearly always, as we imagine, left fallow the ground they should have cultivated with care? Why do the good works of such an one, or the pious undertaking of another, appear, in our eyes, to be presumptuous or imprudent? Is it not because our zeal does not resemble Saint John's? is it not yet pure—simple—disinterested. If we were faithful friends of the Bridegroom, we should rejoice with unfeigned joy whenever, and by whomsoever His glory is advanced; instead of being envious of the success others procure Him, we should be truly glad. Let the means, and the instruments made use of, be what they may, it should delight our hearts to know that His power on the earth is on the increase. Is there not work enough in the wide field of this world for all? is there not in it variety enough, so that every capacity may find scope for its zeal and energy?

II. POINT.

The way to render our zeal productive of good results.

Jesus must increase in us, and self must decrease. If we
would be successful in labours undertaken for God's glory and
the salvation of souls, we must free ourselves from natural
inclinations, and be filled with the spirit of God.—We are
leaning perhaps on our own resources—our diligence—our
constancy—and not on God's help alone: we feel pained if
surpassed by others, or if our endeavours fail: if such be
the case, our labour will be in vain in His Sight, Who
weigheth our motives. God leaves such workers to work
alone; how can they do any real good? But if, on the con-
trary, we mistrust our own powers, and depend solely on
Divine assistance,—if we deny our natural tendencies so far
as to be ready to suffer any humiliation, and to accept any
sacrifice which may promote the honour and glory of God,
keeping back no share of these for ourselves, then the
empire Jesus has over our hearts is increasing. We shall be
powerfully aided by His grace, and our labours will be pro-
ductive of abundant fruits of salvation.

**Colloquy.**

My God, it is assuredly a proof of true zeal, and of being
a faithful friend of the Bridegroom, to abase one's self as
did Saint John-the-Baptist; so that the honour of Him,
Who should be preferred before himself, might be upheld.
I desire, after this example, to attribute to myself no good
that I may do, but refer it to the Divine Author of all good:
—so may Jesus Christ increase in me, whilst I grow in the
knowledge of His love.

**Resolution.**

I will mistrust myself; and never say anything to depre-
ciate the meritorious actions of others.
TWENTY-SECOND OF FEBRUARY.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.

He must increase, and I must decrease.

PRAYER.

Our Father, and Hail Mary.

Twenty-second of February.

Conversion of the Samaritan Woman.

Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sichar. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with His journey, sat down on the well: There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith to her: Give Me to drink.—S. John iv.

I. Prelude.

We see our Saviour Jesus sitting by the well, patiently waiting for the woman whom He desired to convert.

II. Prelude.

O Loving Jesus, grant that, while considering the goodness with which Thou dost draw souls unto Thee, by the power of Thy preventing grace, our hearts may be replenished with love and thankfulness.

I. Point.

The wisdom with which Jesus procures our salvation.

After many times soliciting a soul to turn to God, Jesus.