

Rev. Fr. Leonard Goffine's
The Church's Year

INSTRUCTION ON THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER



This Sunday and the whole week should serve as a preparation for the festival of Pentecost, that we may be enabled by good works and pious devotional exercises, to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost. At the Introit the Church sings:

INTROIT

Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee, allel. My heart hath said to thee: I have sought thy face, thy face, O Lord, I will seek: turn not away thy face from me, allel. allel. The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? (Ps. XXVI. 7-9.) Glory be to the Father, etc.

COLLECT Almighty, everlasting God, grant us ever to have a will devoted to Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a sincere heart. Through .etc.

EPISTLE (1 Peter IV. 7-11.) Dearly beloved, be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things, have a constant mutual charity among yourselves; for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring: as every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God: if any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth; that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

EXPLANATION The practice of the virtues which St. Peter here prescribes for the faithful, is an excellent preparation for the reception of the Holy Ghost, for nothing renders us more worthy of His visit than true love for our neighbor, the good use of God's gifts; and the faithful discharge of the duties of our state of life. Strive, therefore, to practise these virtues and thus make yourself less unworthy of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Say daily during the week the following prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, who hast assembled the people of all tongues in unity of faith, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy divine love.

GOSPEL (John XV. 26-27., to XVI. 1-4.) At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me: and you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whomsoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that, when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you.

Why is the Holy Ghost called the Paraclete?

Through the apostles and disciples whom He made so eloquent and so courageous that they intrepidly professed and preached Christ to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah. This doctrine He confirmed by astounding miracles, and sealed it by their blood which they shed in its defence. The Holy Ghost still gives testimony of Christ through the Church, that is, the clergy, through whom He speaks, and who must, therefore, be listened to reverently. We must also give testimony of Christ and profess by our lives, by patience in crosses and afflictions that He is our Teacher, our Lord, and our God; for if we do not thus acknowledge Him in this world He will deny us before His Father in heaven. (Matt X. 33.)

Did the Jews sin in persecuting and putting to death the apostles?

Undoubtedly; for although they erroneously believed they were doing God a service, their ignorance and error were very sinful and deserving of punishment, because they could easily have known and been instructed in the truth.

Those Christians who neglect all religious instruction hardly know what is necessary for salvation, and make light of many things which are grievous sins; as also those who are in doubt whether they justly or unjustly possess certain goods, and yet through fear of being compelled to make restitution, neglect to settle the doubts such are in culpable ignorance.

What must every Christian know and believe in order to be saved?

That there is but one God, who has created and governs all things; that God is a just judge, who rewards the good and punishes the wicked; that there are in the Deity three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the Son of God became man for love of us, taught us, and by His death on the cross redeemed us; that the Holy Ghost sanctifies us by His grace, without which we cannot become virtuous or be saved; that man's soul is immortal.

PETITION Send us, O Lord Jesus ! the Paraclete, that He may console and strengthen us in all our afflictions. Enlighten us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may learn and live in accordance with the truths of faith. Amen.

INSTRUCTION ON SCANDAL

These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. (John XVI. 1.)

How is scandal given?

By speaking, doing or omitting that which will be, to others an occasion, of sin: Scandal is given in different ways, for instance: if you dress improperly, speak improper words, or sing bad songs; by which you can see, that your neighbor will be tempted to think, desire or act wrongly; or what is worse, if you act sinfully, in the presence of, others, or bring bad books., books against good morals, or against the holy faith, among people; if you incite others to anger, cursing, and vengeance, or if you prevent them from attending church, the sermon, or catechetical instruction, etc. In all these things you become guilty of scandal, as well as of all the sins to which it gives rise.

If at the Last judgment we will be unable to, give an account of our own sins, how, then can we answer for the innumerable sins caused by, the scandal we have given? Therefore Christ pronounces a terrible, woe upon those who give scandal. Woe to that man, He says, by whom the scandal cometh! It were better for him, that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matt. XVIII.)

How do parents give scandal?

By giving their children bad example; by excessive anger, cursing and swearing; by avarice, injustice and cheating; by discord and quarrels; by gluttony in eating and drinking; by extravagance and vanity in dress; by sneering at religion, good morals, etc.; by not keeping their children from evil company, but sometimes even bringing them into it; by not punishing and endeavoring to eradicate their children's vices. How much parents sin, through such scandals, cannot be expressed; at the Day of judgment their children will be their accusers!

How do masters give scandal to their servants and those under their care?

In the same way as parents do to their children; by keeping them away from, or not urging them by their own example or command to attend church on Sundays and holy-days; by giving them meat on fast-days; by commanding them to do sinful things, such as stealing, injuring others, etc.

INSTRUCTION ON PREPARATION FOR PENTECOST

1). We should withdraw, after the example of the Blessed Virgin and the apostles, to some solitary place, or at least avoid, intercourse with others, as much as possible; speak but little, and apply ourselves to earnest and persevering prayer; for in solitude God speaks to man.

2). We should purify our conscience by a contrite confession, become reconciled to our neighbor, if we have lived in enmity; for the Holy Ghost, as a spirit of peace and purity, lives only in pure and peaceful souls. (Ps. IXXV. 3.)

3). We should give alms according to our means, for it is said in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts X.) of the Gentile centurion Cornelius, that by prayer and alms-deeds he made himself worthy of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

4). We should fervently desire to receive the Holy Ghost, and should give expression to this longing by frequent aspirations to God, making use of the prayer: "Come, O Holy Ghost, etc."