

There is only ONE sacrifice—the Sacrifice of the Cross. The Last Supper and the Mass are not sacrifices. *The Last Supper and the Mass are THE Sacrifice of the Cross*; as a man who has changed from cold to heat or from right to left is one and the same man; but not with one and the same accident.

(7) From this we conclude that the investigations into the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass seem to be based on a misapprehension.

It is clear that when a being changes its accident it does not change its essence. John is essentially one and the same when he has (accidentally) changed from cold to warm. If there is only a modal or accidental difference between the two, then these two are essentially one.

(8) The question: What is the essence of the Mass, which is only accidentally different from the Cross, is paralleled by the question: What is the essence of John cold (as different from John warm).

This question has two meanings. (a) What is the essence of John? or (b) What is the essence of warmth?

Now if the Cross is the ONE absolute Sacrifice in its absolute mode, and the Mass is the ONE Absolute Sacrifice in its representative and applicatory mode, the question "What is the essence of the Mass?" has two meanings.

(a) What is the essence of the Sacrifice of the Cross? or

(b) What is the essence of its representative and applicatory mode in the Mass?

To the first question the answer is: "The essence of the Sacrifice of the Cross is Jesus Christ's obedience unto death."

To the second question the answer: The essence of the representative and applicatory mode is the separate Consecration of the Body and Blood, whereby "As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice you show the death of the Lord till He come." (I Cor. xi, 25.)

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## ON PATIENCE

In our age of frenzy and unrest, when peace and tranquility are threatening to leave Europe altogether, it is a good thing to reflect for a while upon patience, and thus reflecting to recover that spirit of quiet and detachment, which is an essential condition of our spiritual regeneration.

Patience is not a popular virtue. It lacks the splendour of charity, or the persuasiveness of humility. Its light pales beside

the brilliance of an heroic virtue such as courage. To the superficial observer its attraction is only slight. This low estimation of patience is not unfounded in fact. St Thomas Aquinas teaches that this virtue is not only second to the theological virtues; it ranks lower than prudence and justice, fortitude and temperance. For these either establish man in the good life or restrain him from the more serious obstacles to virtue, while patience only enables him to suffer evil without being unduly cast down by it. Thus patience appears as an almost negative quality, no more than a necessary condition for the practice of virtue and the development of the spiritual life.

Yet patience is by no means an insignificant virtue. God Himself attached to it a promise which is well worth pondering, "In your patience you shall possess your souls." The Church, in her wisdom, reminds us of that virtue in the very periods of the liturgical year, which are marked by slow development rather than by outstanding events. The "*Dominus autem dirigat corda et corpora nostra in caritate Dei et patientia Christi*" of the Apostle is a prayer appropriate to that hidden life of the spirit, which continues quietly under the surface, whose fruits will only be revealed in the next world.

If patience is the virtue which enables man to bear evil with tranquility, the evil which immediately comes to mind in connection with it, is the deferment of good. To bear this deferment with serenity is only possible with the assistance of Divine grace. In the ordinary course of events, such is the impatience of the human heart, the apprehension of a good thing almost automatically creates the desire for its possession. Often this desire is so strong that even the most reasonable delay is almost instinctively resented. To see and to desire is one, so to desire and to possess would be one. Thus, as it were, a spiritual short circuit is effected. The present moment is deprived of its dignity, and the future invested with an undue value. The time, which must necessarily elapse before a truly desirable object can be attained, is depreciated; and all the virtues of perseverance and constancy, upon which, in the last resort, the continuity of the spiritual life depends, are put out of play.

Behind this attitude of impatience there lies a serious misconception of the nature of time and its place in the Divine economy. Even in the natural order God has appointed the seasons and periods of growth. But modern man has forgotten this. Not only does he demand and procure the fruits of the earth in season and out of season. With an insensitiveness to realities which would have appalled the Middle Ages, he expects all things to be possible at all times. He has forgotten that each period of life has

its appropriate activity, every action its appointed hour. A word of truth, uttered at the wrong moment, may do untold harm; an insight unduly withheld may wreck a life; when the same word, spoken at the right time, may help and heal; the same insight duly communicated, may bear fruit into eternity. It is not without reason that Ecclesiastes reminds us, "Birth has its hour and death." (iii, 2.)

The gospel abounds in references to the right time, as appointed by God himself. Before performing his first public Miracle, our Lord says to his Blessed Mother, "My hour has not yet come," thus signifying that there was a definite time fixed by Divine decree, at which he should begin his ministry. With Divine freedom of spirit Christ allows two days to elapse before hastening to Bethany, where the greatest miracle of all is wrought. In the eyes of the Apostles, who knew the love our Lord bore Lazarus, this appears strange and inexplicable. Perhaps they understood, when Lazarus had risen from the dead. How many times does Jesus escape, when his enemies endeavour to lay hands on him! Yet when the hour of darkness comes, he permits everything to happen, even as the prophets had foretold. Darkness has its hour as well as light. There is a time for work, and a time when effort will no longer avail. Yet in his ignorance man would believe that time is merely a vessel to be filled with any content according to his pleasure.

The true nature of time is most clearly revealed in the dealings of God with his chosen people. With infinite wisdom and care he prepared the way for the coming of the Redeemer. He guided the course of secular history. He allowed millennia to elapse till the time was fulfilled and all was ready for his Son to pitch his tent among men. From the point of view of the world this meant 4,000 years of weary waiting, for the world does not understand these truths. It cannot teach us about the "fulness of time," because the world's time is, of its nature, empty. In the world things "happen," great events and small. But as in most cases they take place without reference to the Divine Author of all things, they have no real significance. For whatever is done without regard to those laws of growth and appropriateness, which govern the natural as well as the supernatural order, can be of no real and lasting value.

As with the greatest event of human history, so it is with all things. There is one hour and one alone, in which it is appropriate that an event should come to pass. It is not within the power of man to hasten or to postpone its coming. Man can only bide his time and wait in patience, praying that he may be granted the grace to observe God's time more and more fully.

This waiting is not identical with inactivity. The story of the incredulity of St Thomas will prove this, if proof, indeed, were needed. The other disciples have seen the Risen Lord. Thomas will only believe if he sees and touches. Jesus does not appear the next night, nor the next. It is only after seven days that the hour for Thomas comes. What must have passed in his soul during those days, what conflicting emotions—love and longing, incredulity, that earthiness which will only accept what is apparent to the senses, scrupulous honesty. They all had their time, and without their interplay the adoring consent of Thomas would not have been possible.

The consideration of the true nature of time leads man to overcome the impatience to which he is prone, and enables him to bear the deferment of good with equanimity. However, the deferment of good is not the only, or even the greatest evil which can befall man. There are others, more serious by far, which he may meet at any moment, and it is the virtue of patience that makes it possible to suffer these with tranquility, provided some higher good may thereby be attained.

Such was the patience of Christ, Who for our salvation drank the bitter chalice of affliction. His whole life was made subservient to this one end, the redemption of mankind, which He wrought by perfect submission to the Will of the Father. So precious, indeed, was fallen man in the sight of God that his Son did not hesitate to undergo tortures and humiliations far beyond the sacrifice demanded by Divine Justice. In order to obtain the reinstatement of men to the sonship of God, Christ lived a life of labour and lowliness, died an ignominious death on the cross. He had come to live on earth solely for this purpose, and longed for the hour, when all would be consummated. "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." (Luke xii, 49, 50). On several occasions our Lord reveals this urgency of his desire to accomplish the Divine Will. "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer." (Luke xxii, 15.)

However, his impatience is divinely controlled. Christ submits to the thirty years of the hidden life at Nazareth with the same patience as he corresponds to the demands of each crowded hour of the three years' public ministry. The gospel does not record one single instance when the Will of the Father, which was his meat and drink, was not humbly accepted by the Son. Even the agonizing prayer in the garden of Gethsemane only serves to disclose the unfathomable depths of the patience of Christ. "Not my will but Thine be done." From this supreme act of acceptance

are born the silence before his judges, and amid the jeers of the crowd; the patient bearing of the cross, the three hours of speechless agony, with only one word to signify his own need, and six to come to the relief of others or to pay tribute to the Divine Majesty. The various incidents of the Passion reveal the patience of Christ in all the fulness of its perfection. In the Passion there are combined an eminently desirable object; the redemption of mankind, complete conformity to the Divine Will, and sufferings unequalled save by the loving patience with which they are borne.

Even in the natural order men are prepared to submit to various privations with cheerfulness to obtain some desirable object. The abstinence of the athlete and the discipline of the soldier are cases in point. How much more should they, who run for an immortal crown, prepare themselves to suffer for the sake of the greatest good of all, the possession of God.

It is the glory of man that he was created to be *capax Dei*; that each, according to the measure allotted to him and according to his correspondence to Divine grace, should be enabled to hold God. This requires an emptying of self, so that the soul may receive more fully. It is the function of discipline in the spiritual life to facilitate this emptying. God gives himself, and man receives—a receiving, that takes place in the transitoriness of each fleeting moment, in which, for all its perishing frailty, man's eternal destiny is wrought. Each moment holds a decision valid for all time. In each man may receive or reject God. He may do the bidding of his Creator, or he may refuse. It is not the heroic achievement of some future hour, which determines his salvation, but the patient acceptance of each moment, as it comes from the hand of the Almighty.

The challenge of each moment varies. Some may demand the joyful reception of the divine bounty, others the humbling of the will, the patient bearing of slights and humiliations. Some will exact the utmost sacrifice, of which human nature is capable, others only the willing acquiescence in the monotonous round of distasteful duties. Yet, if in each the Divine Will be humbly sought and patiently performed, the corruptible vessel of time will be filled with an incorruptible treasure.

By patience, therefore, all that the moment offers, be it good or evil, is accepted, and the soul enabled to grow in virtue undisturbed by passions. So necessary, indeed, is patience, that it would seem impossible for man, without it, to pursue the path of perfection to the end. For, as St Thomas remarks, patience removes those obstacles to the exercise of virtue, which are raised by adversity. Thus patience alone ensures that tranquility, in

which man may truly be said to possess his soul.

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### CONTEMPLATION AND COMMUNITY

The importance of human life is seen from the end towards which it tends. That which gives a human being his unique value and place in the symphony of creation is his possession of an immortal soul made by God, for God, and whose duty it is to become "worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called," which is the "lot of the saints in light." This is the dominant theme interwoven throughout the fiery melody of God's love for the human soul, and the integrating principle for all human activity. The fecundity of the divine self-contemplation is made manifest in His creative love which has ordained all things so that they form a far away reflection, a passing shadow of those riches of beauty and order whose plenitude is in Him. "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also and divinity." The social structure, therefore, composed of a community of persons mystically united through charity, one in grace yet diverse in operation, whispers of the Trinity of Persons in God. The very fact that we all partake of the same divine life obliges each, through charity, to serve and participate in the necessary Mass of his brothers sanctification, in order that we may become "a chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation." And the fundamental unit of this greater unity is the family, natural and supernatural, both motivated by the same principle of love, though differently directed as to the immediate end, and each affording to its members an ideal and natural context for the plenary development of those powers within the person whose need of fulfilment occasions their unity.

In the natural family whose members are normally ordained to the service of the community, the means chosen are in proportion to the end in view, and are as manifold as the needs of the community itself. In the supernatural family, whose vocation is to God, there is also diversity, but diversity in method and not in kind. And although the one seeks God indirectly through the service of his fellow men, and the other immediately, the same divine command, to seek God, is incumbent upon all. The life of prayer and contemplation, being an abiding in the Lord, constitutes a state with its own validity, and the proper means for deepening and apprehending our baptismal union with God.

Contemplation which is a *donum Dei*, but normally given to those who faithfully seek to realize the riches of the divine in-