

22 Third Sunday of Lent

“And when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke” (Lk. 11: 14)

In today’s gospel Our Lord casts out the devil from a dumb man - and points out the contrast between his kingdom and that of the devil. He states **the necessity of a resolute choice** between good and evil, between sanctity and impurity, between grace and wealth, between heaven and hell and between God and belial!

By the sacrament of baptism, we have made a positive choice of Jesus Christ, and a solemn renunciation of Satan. And therefore, **in our Christian vocation compromise is impossible**. If we attempt to serve God and belial, to please Christ and his enemies, to mingle with sanctity and impurity,” our last state becomes worse than that of the first.”

Unless we are resolute in the abandonment of the worldly principles, unless we have the internal detachment from sinful pleasures – the devil cannot be cast away from us! Many of us, even the **Traditional Catholics are trying to modernize our life** on earth, i.e.: to conform the spirit of prayer and penance to the evil spirit of ease and luxury of the modern times.

The holy season of lent is a time of acquiring special grace by making **a good and general confession** and **amend** our lives.

All those who are in the state of mortal sin and are in the habit of some grave sin - are in a sense - **really possessed by the devil**.

And **Satan makes people dumb** – by keeping them from speaking to their spiritual director, from telling all their sins in the confessional or from going to confession for a long time or all their life! “And **when Jesus had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke**” (Lk. 11: 14)

Yes, my dear brethren, by the mercy of God, and due to the prayers and sacrifices of some good souls, the devil has been cast out from us, and there are many coming back to the sacraments and are making good effort to amend their lives.

But when the devil is driven out of them, he does not go off on other business as we might expect; but he has always an eye on his old home! When he finds that he does not get along so well elsewhere, he says to himself: “I will return into my house whence I came out”; and too often he finds it easy to get in again. And he finds it even well swept and garnished – and **better prepared for his reception!**

What a pity this is! And yet how common it is! How many there are who a month or so after a retreat or a good confession – are **back again in their old sin!** Just the same as if they had never confessed them at all!

The reason is very simple. It is just the one Our Lord gives in today's gospel; it is that **the house of the soul from which the devil has been driven – is EMPTY!** "Swept and garnished"; nothing has been put there in the place of the vices and bad habits that were there before. **Our house of the soul must be filled with sanctifying grace, supernatural virtues and divine truths** of faith and morals. "He that gathereth not with me (these gifts) scattereth". (Lk. 11: 23)

Practice of acquiring sanctifying grace, and of supernatural virtues

St. Thomas Aquinas believed that **man is** not only composed of body and soul, he is elevated to a **supernatural order** and participates, in **the very nature of God.**

Accordingly, a person in the state of grace, or divine friendship, **possesses certain enduring powers**, the infused virtues and gifts, that give him abilities of thought and operation - born, "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (Jn. 1:13) True character of the supernatural appears in the endowments of **infused virtues** which some people possess, and others do not.

Now those who do not possess it, **should practice** acquiring sanctifying grace, and supernatural virtues.

Today let us take the practice of one virtue; How to practice virtue of faith.

The object of faith is God. When we are asked what we believe, we say, "I believe God and everything else that He says."

What is the Virtue of Faith?

The First Vatican Council defined faith as "a supernatural virtue" by which, "with the inspiration and help of God's grace, we believe that what he has revealed is true, not because its intrinsic truth is seen with the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God who reveals it, of God who can neither deceive nor be deceived."

How Faith is acquired?

- Through repeated acts of faith, one acquires a natural habit of removing the obstacles to the growth of faith.

- one merits an increase in sanctifying grace when in the state of grace and, on this account, an increase in the accompanying virtue of faith.
- the supernatural habit of faith increases indirectly by repetition of acts.

The means to make faith grow:

- asking God to increase it, as the Apostles begged the Lord: “Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).
- reading the Sacred Scriptures.
- receiving instruction on the truths of faith.
- practicing it in one’s words and life; and doing apostolate.

Can one choose which doctrines to believe?

A Catholic accepts everything that Jesus Christ has revealed and teaches through His Church. Whoever consciously denies any one of the truths of faith taught by the Church, no longer believes with supernatural faith. Denying even one truth implies denying that God cannot deceive nor be deceived or that the Church infallibly transmits these truths.

After a person has accepted God’s Revelation, human reason should **make an effort** to go deeper in understanding the truths of faith.

Thus, two fundamental attitudes follow:

- Man receives divine Revelation with humility.
- Man tries to cultivate and illuminate his faith ever more and more.

And two obligations result:

- The obligation to preserve one’s faith and avoid sins against it.
- The obligation to propagate the true faith.

The Internal Act of Faith

There is a divine precept requiring an internal act of faith about all the chief articles of faith. This is done, for example, in praying the usual prayers.

Therefore, one must know and believe the truths contained in the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments.

External Profession of Faith

There is a divine precept of externally confessing one’s faith, since the Church founded by Christ is visible, and its worship is also visible. “Everyone therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.” (Mt. 10:32). On the other hand, it will be an irreverence towards God to conceal the faith for a trivial reason. “But he that shall deny me before men, I

will also deny him before my father who is in heaven.” (ibid -33) The external manifestation of faith also helps to strengthen it internally.

Can one endanger his faith?

- It is not licit for Catholics to participate in non-Catholic religious ceremonies. It is never licit to participate in their sacraments.
- Parents have the duty of sending their children to schools that will best help them in their task of giving Christian education to their children.

Dangerous Readings

It is not lawful to read publications that pose a danger for the faith. The closer the danger, the more illicit it is. In judging the danger in a concrete case, especial care and vigilance must be exercised. For example: Children handling computers and cell phones; joining bad fiends for entertainments; holding secret contacts with free masons and witchcrafts.

Mixed Marriages

Marrying a non-Catholic usually constitutes a danger to the faith. For this reason, the Church has always discouraged mixed marriages, even to the extent of putting obstacles to their celebration. Nevertheless, she tolerates them when some specific conditions are met. these are basically:

- the commitment to have the children **baptized and brought up** in the Catholic religion, - and that the non-Catholic spouse **will not object** to the other’s practicing the Catholic religion.

Thus, by practicing the supernatural virtue of Faith, let us fill our house of the soul with sanctifying grace, supernatural virtues and divine truths, so that the devil, once caste out of us should not find our soul swept and garnished to enter again.