

SCHOOL OF VIRTUE

PRIMARY SECTION

THE VIRTUE CONSIDERED IN COMMON

LESSON 1. – *True happiness*

1. Q : What is happiness?

R: A perfect state that unites everything that is good.

Q: In how many ways could happiness be considered?

R: There is objective, formal, perfect, imperfect, natural and supernatural happiness.

Q: In what consist the objective?

R: In those that makes us happy.

Q: In what is the formal?

R: In an act through which an objective is possessed or attained.

Q: Which is the object that can make a person happy?

R: Only God.

Q: How could we possess God?

R: Through the vision, the understanding* and the fruition in the glory: this is the perfect happiness.

Q: Through which means a person moves, reaches and unites himself with the object of his happiness?

R: *Through virtue. This is the imperfect happiness.*

Q: *What is natural happiness?*

R: The possession of the natural goods.

Q: What is supernatural happiness?

R: The possession of supernatural goods.

Q: Could a person be happy in this world?

R: Can be, but with imperfect happiness.

Q: According to this, virtue is the only thing that can make a person happy in this life?

R: No doubt.

LESSON 2. – *Virtue and its nature*

2. Q: What is virtue?

R: A quality that does good to the one who possess and it makes all his actions good.

Q: In how many kinds virtue can be divided?

R: There are natural and supernatural, acquired and infused.

Q: What is natural virtue?

R: *A habit or disposition that disposes a person to do good in order to reach his natural end.*

Q: *How can we sub-divide the natural virtues?*

R: In Moral and intellectual.

Q: What is intellectual virtue?

R: A habit or disposition that perfects the intellectual aspect of a person and rectifies the judgment of reason.

* The vision, comprehension and fruition of God in the glory are the gifts of soul that correspond to faith, hope and charity. – Original note.

Q: What is moral virtue?

R: A habit or disposition that perfects the appetitive aspect of a person and disposes him to follow the judgment of reason.

Q: What is supernatural virtue?

R: A habit or disposition that perfects a person in regard to his supernatural end.

Q: Are theological virtues supernatural?

R: Yes, Father, because they have God as the direct object.

Q: What is acquired virtue?

R: A habit or disposition that a person acquires through the repetition of many acts of the same kind.

Q: What is an infused virtue?

R: Already the name itself says: a habit infused in the soul through the Holy Spirit.

Q: How many are the intellectual virtues?

R: Five: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, prudence and art.

Q: How many are the moral virtues?

R: Many, but all could be reduced to four major ones, that are as cardinal points of the others. They are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

Q: How many are the theological virtues?

R: Three: faith, hope and charity.

LESSON 3. – *Grace, gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit*

3. Q: What is sanctifying grace?

R: A quality infused in the soul, which makes a person a friend of God, his adopted son and a participant in the Kingdom of heaven.

Q: Is sanctifying grace the same as the gift of the Holy Spirit?

R: No, the two things have distinct objects.

Q: In what are they distinct?

R: Grace makes us friends of God; but the gifts of the Holy Spirit dispose all our abilities, capacities and strength to follow the divine inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

Q: How do we understand by the gift of the Holy Spirit?

R: An infused quality in the soul, through which a person disposes himself to follow the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit regarding his supernatural end.

Q: How many are the gifts?

R: Seven: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of God.

Q: What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

R: Those which are more perfect, heroic and matured in the acts of virtue.

Q: How many are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

R: Many, but all could be reduced to twelve major ones, they are: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, forbearance, gentleness, faith, modesty, continence and chastity.

LESSON 4. – *Connection, Order and harmony*

4. Q: Is there any relation among the virtues, the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

R: Yes, Father.

Q: Where is the origin of this union?

R: From the unity of the object to behold.

Q: Which is this?

R: The one that leads a person to his ultimate end and union with God, the object of his happiness.

Q: Can you present to us this relation with some simile?

R: Yes, Father. Such as the roots, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the fruits, the sap, all these form a single plant; in the same way, in the tree of virtue charity is the trunk, its habits or dispositions are the roots, its acts are the branches and leaves; and what is more perfect in the acts is the fruit of perfection. Our heart is a garden, grace is the rain that waters the plant, and the gifts are the sap that

enters into the roots, it unites in the trunk, and it divides and spread circulating and filtering through all the branches, leaves and fruits.

Q: According to this simile, are all the virtues united only in one, which is charity?

R: Yes, Father.

Q: Are the intellectual virtues taken cared of by some order?

R: Yes, Father. All are united in the wisdom.

Q: And the moral virtues?

R: The same, all are adjunct linked – together among themselves and are united to prudence.

Q: The infused virtues, the gifts and the fruits, can they be in one person who has no charity?

R: In a perfect manner, no; but imperfectly, yes.

Q: The moral and intellectual virtues, can they be without charity?

R: Yes, because they are natural virtues.

Q: Can faith and hope be in a person without charity?

R: As perfect virtues, no; but as inactive (unformed) virtues yes.

Q: If the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are united among themselves and form one thing, all can have everything?

R: No. There are virtues that are proper to one state, which are in respect to their duties and practice, only those individuals who constitute the state can possess them; but all can have everything if there is a good disposition and enthusiasm to practice them, and if the circumstances demands.

Q: From where do the multitude and the variety of virtues come from?

R: They come from the different objects to which they are directed.

LESSON 5. – *The seed of virtue, its birth and its growth in the field of our soul*

5. Q: From where does virtue originate?

R: From God. He is the Lord of virtues.

Q: Which is the seed of natural virtues?

R: These have its beginning in good judgment.

Q: From where do the supernatural virtues begin?

R: From the Holy Spirit - those are infused in our hearts. Some and others are sowed by God. These like an author of a supernatural order and those as author of nature.

Q: Where does God sow this seed?

R: In the garden of our soul.

Q: Which part of our soul receives the seed of virtue?

R: In the superior part that is, in our understanding and in our will. The tendencies of the intellectual faculties have the capability to receive the truth; and the inclination of the appetites to do good in our soul, is a garden that is apt and capable to receive the seed of all the virtues.

Q: This same garden, is it capable of receiving the seed of vices?

R: Yes, because our understanding is capable of receiving light and darkness, truth and error, and our will, being free, can embrace the evil and the good.

Q: From where does it come that some are good for one virtue more than the other and that in the same person has more capacity for some virtues than the others?

R: This comes from the complexity of our body, which helps for the practice of one virtue more than the other; it can also come from what the Holy Spirit infuses to whoever likes; some joined by circumstances have compromised to practice them with more study than others.

6. Q: The virtues, be it natural or supernatural, how are they formed, how do they grow, how do they increase?

R: In the same manner that all living beings that exist in time, that is, little by little, with time and by degrees: the supernatural virtues through a new infusion of grace and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; and everything, through experience, practice and acts on them.

Q: Are they sown, formed, grown and increased all together?

R: Already we have said that all the virtues are united to charity and are formed, under these circumstances, as only one plant; this is the plant in its seed, is plant when it is formed, is plant when it is grown and is plant when it reaches to its maturity and, consequently, it was sown entirely, it was formed entirely, it had grown entirely; but under other circumstances, they appear in the field of our soul some earlier than the others. According to the order of excellence, charity is the chief of all; formed with all, grown with all and is the trunk that unites in itself all the roots – symbol of all the habits and dispositions of all, - the branches - are the acts that are shown to the earth - and the fruits. Through this trunk passes the sap, the substance of grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that nourishes, sustains and nurtures the whole tree. According to the order of generation, the gifts are formed earlier than the infused virtues, faith earlier than hope, faith and hope earlier than that of charity. We acquire some of them earlier than others.

LESSON 6. – *Person's perfection*

7. Q: In what consists a person's perfection?

R: In the union with the origin from where it comes. A person comes from God through creation, returns to him and unites with him through charity and the practice of all virtues.

Q: According to this, the perfection of a person consists in charity?

R: No doubt.

Q: The virtues that are in all persons are in equal degree of perfection?

R: If we consider this according to its nature or essence it is equally perfect in all those who possess it. It is a plant in its seed, it is a plant in its roots, branches, leaves and fruits; it is perfectly a plant when it was sown, when it was formed, and when it grew; it is equally a perfect plant when at the opportune time it gives sweet and ripe fruits. If we consider it according to its different variety, it neither yields different degrees of perfection; the nut is as perfect seed as a grain of wheat: the walnut tree and the wheat are plants equally perfect according to its kind. If we see them according to its

object, some are nobler and more excellent than the others, but no more nor less perfect. If we contemplate them individually, one person can possess the same virtue in a greater degree of perfection than the other, in the manner that the same kind of plants can be in different field, in different degrees of maturity; in one in the seed, in the other in leaves and branches and in the other giving ripened fruits.

Q: Persons move towards perfection by degrees?

R: Yes, as all other living beings.

Q: To know the different degrees of a person's perfection, what must we attend to?

R: To charity.

Q: According to this, does charity perfect a person little by little and by degrees, with time and through the practice of all virtues?

R: No doubt.

LESSON 7. – *Degrees of growth in charity*

8. Q: If virtue grows like plants and animals, that is, little by little and with time, can we see in it a regular course of growth and development?

R: Yes. The regular and natural course of plants will disclose to us the spiritual aspect of charity. To this end it is necessary to observe: once a seed has been sown in good soil, with the care of the gardener, it spreads its roots deep into the earth and will sprout, producing leaves and branches, until its full growth at opportune times. If it is of those that exist many years, like the walnut, they reach to a certain degree of maturity and will bloom, then fall, and from there fruits come out; these are not good to eat, but as it grow and are ripened little by little until it reached to its maturity and at a convenient time, they serve as nourishment to the trunk.

Q: Is this course not obvious to our sights?

R: Yes.

Q: Well then, in this visible natural course of plants, can we contemplate and know the invisible and spiritual aspects of charity?

R: Let us remember what we had said earlier: that all virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and its fruits form only one plant; the seed of this plant is charity, because all other virtues, gifts and fruits are united to it. In order to know charity and its growth in the spirits, its functions have to be regarded and to know its objects. The main functions that charity does in a person are two: first, it unites with the object of its happiness, in whose union consists in its perfection; second, it channels its actions and strengths for the good of its neighbours. In these two functions consists the whole Christian perfection: the love God, and our neighbours as ourselves.

Love of God: degrees of growth

9. 1st. God already sowed charity in the garden of our soul on the day of our baptism.

2nd. It is formed in the adults by the practice of acts of piety, which are: frequency of the sacraments, assistance in the celebrations of worship, observance of the precepts of the law, listening to the word of God, spiritual reading, prayers and supplications, almsgiving, and visiting the sick, etc.

If an adult loses this by sin, the gardener comes again to sow with the sacrament of reconciliation, and form in it with acts of piety.

3rd. Charity, already formed with the religious practices, is nourished, strengthened and invigorated with the resolutions and firm determination always to strive for perfection, which a person had understood and conceived through the practice of prayer and meditation.

4th. Charity, nourished and vitalized with holy resolutions in the meditation, is strengthened with constancy, with perseverance and with fidelity in the actual performance; with these moral virtues are acquired.

5th. Charity, formed, nourished, strengthened and fortified with fervent practise of all moral virtues, perfects the superior part of a person through the three theological virtues: - faith, hope and charity - and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. With faith and the gifts the

understanding of a person is purged, imparting to him the object of his supernatural happiness and disposing him to contemplate the eternal truths.

6th. Faith, representing God to a person as the supreme good – even though it is difficult to obtain and possess, but possible through the assistance of his omnipotence and good works - it disposes, prepares and animates the heart to strive to be united with him.

7th. Charity, having comforted, strengthened and formed the inferior part of a person with the practise of all the moral virtues and, perfecting the superior part through the practise of the theological virtues with fervent acts of love, transforms it into the living image of God and it unites with him. This is the first function of charity.

LESSON 8. – *Love towards the neighbours*

10. 8th. Charity, after perfecting a person unites him with God through the practise of all the moral, intellectual and theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit disposes all his strengths and actions for the good of neighbours. With this the tree of virtue begins to produce flowers and fruits.

9th. We said that the fruits were not yet ripe after coming out of the flower; it need time to reach its maturity. Charity, after setting in order its actions and strengths and all the virtues of a person for the good of neighbours, it nourishes, strengthens and fortifies and perfects them little by little, with time, through experience and practice.

Once the person is made perfect in the love of God and of his neighbours through the constant practise of all the virtues, he is in disposition and is capable of making heroic acts of perfection. These are the sweet, healthy and ripened fruits that the Holy Spirit produce in a person in due time.

We see this same progressive growth in the body. This does not reach to its maturity but little by little and with time; it cannot propagate its species without attaining a certain degree of perfection, as in the same manner neither can a tree give ripened fruits without having reached a certain degree of maturity. In the

natural course of growth that we observe in the body and plants, we can contemplate a regular course of spiritual increase in charity. A person, who in the meantime is interiorly disturbed, must use all his energies to settle himself with God; uniting love for love, use time and put his life in order for the common good of others.

Q: Is much time necessary for charity to make its regular course of growth in a person?

R: A walnut tree grows during an interval of forty years; an olive tree grows very slowly, but lives for a long time; there are countless plants, like vegetables, that in less than a year it increased in number, but very soon they perish. Charity, even though it grows with time in persons, not in all it produces branches and fruits of perfection of same kind. It functions in each one of us according to the special vocation to which we are called.

LESSON 9. – *Vice*

11. Q: What is a vice?

R: A bad habit acquired through the repetition of many sinful acts of same kind.

Q: Is vice the same as sin?

R: No. They are distinguished in that sin is an act, and vice, is a habit acquired with many sinful acts.

Q: How many are the vices?

R: Many. All the moral virtues, as we will discuss later, are at the centre; they are attacked by vices, by excess or by defect. Against the theological virtues there are also vices. The intellectual virtues have its contraries, as well as gifts.

Q: Are there vices called capitals?

R: Yes.

Q: Which and how many are they?

R: Seven: Pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, jealousy and laziness.

Q: Why are they called capitals?

R: For being the cause, source and the root of many others.

Sin

12. Q: What is sin?

R: A word, deed or desire against the eternal law.

Q: How many kinds of sins are there?

R: There are formal and material sins, of commission and omission.

Q: What circumstances must agree and coincide that makes a sin grave or venial?

R: Three: The matter, that is, a deed, a word or desire is against the eternal law; prior knowledge of the sinful act; voluntary and free-will. If some of the above requisites are lacking, the act is material sin.

Q: What is the difference between formal and material sin?

R: By the formal sin it is a person at fault and guilty before God, and incur with his debts justice, that he is obliged to atone in this life with penance, or in the other with eternal torments in hell if it is a grave sin, or in the purgatory if it is venial. The material is not sin.

Q: Are there circumstances that decrease or increase the malice of sin?

R: Yes. The ignorance, concupiscence and violence.

Q: What is sin of commission?

R: The infraction of a negative precept.

Q: What is sin of omission?

R: Negligence in the fulfilment and complaisance of an affirmative precept.

LESSON 10. – *The virtue consists in a just centre*

13. Q: Which is the object of virtue?

R: The good, arduous and difficult, but possible to obtain.

Q: For what reason this good is arduous and difficult?

R: Because it has excesses to avoid and defects to correct, difficulties and obstacles to overcome.

Q: Does a virtue consist in the centre?

R: Yes. Such as the perfection of a thing consists in whatever may conform to its rule and standard, in the same way the goodness of human acts are in those that are conformed to their rule and standard.

Q: Which is the centre of moral virtues?

R: The right reasoning of a person.

Q: Which is the centre of intellectual virtues?

R: The same as that of the moral virtues, with a difference that the uprightness of the reasoning is the centre of intellectual virtues and rectified reasoning is that of the moral virtues.

Q: The theological virtues also have any centre?

R: Yes. As God is the object who governs, by this part there is no excess and, where there is no excess, there is no centre because this is found between the defect and the excess; they have a centre on our part. Every human being must go to God, believing, waiting and loving according to his disposition, state or degree of perfection. In this there could be excess and defect.

Q: Could we see by any comparison the centre of virtues?

R: Yes. There is one that comes much to our notice. The holy city of Jerusalem is built on the most sublime and on the highest of all the mountains; only virtue leads us to her. The original sin opened by all sides cliffs, precipices and abyss, such are the total darkness of the understanding, malice of the will, concupiscence of the flesh, frailty and weakness of the heart to do good, the compulsion of passions for evil. Virtue is the way, it has at its right and at its left precipices of excess and defect; to fall in the fire or in the water, to fall in the abyss of a defect or in the well of excess, everything is to fall.

LESSON 11. – *Precepts given to a person on the practice of virtues*

14. Q: Is a person obliged to work for perfection?

R: Yes. God decreed in his wisdom not to give to the person all his perfection at the first moment of his creation. The time that the Divine Providence gives him on earth is regulated in which he can in

time and with time obtain his perfection. He was born imperfectly. And, as in the holy city of glory nothing enters that is not perfect, he must use in this life the time, his strength and actions in perfecting himself.

Q: If the person is obliged to work for perfection, having the virtues that can do this work in him, is he obliged also to practice them?

R: On the practice of virtues negative and positive precepts has been imposed on us.

Q: Which are the negative precepts?

R: Those that prohibit an evil act, such as: “Do not kill” (Dt 5,17)

Q: What are the affirmative precepts?

R: Those that command a good act, like love God for what He is – this is infinite goodness - and to love the neighbour as yourself (Lev 19, 18; Mk 12, 30-31; Rom 13, 8-10). The negative precepts had been imposed on us against the vices and affirmatives on the practice of virtues.

Q: How and when these precepts oblige us?

R: The negative precepts oblige us always and in all circumstances. Never will it be licit to lie, to steal nor to blaspheme.

Q: When do the affirmative precepts oblige us?

R: These do not oblige always, but distinguishes the circumstances.

Q: Is the person obliged to practise all the virtues?

R: There are virtues that are common to all classes, states, conditions and duties, such as: faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; others are proper and characteristic of a state. We are obliged to practise the virtues, each one according to his position, according to his strength, state and duty.

Q: When and on what occasions we have to practice virtues?

R: Not always, but when the circumstances demand them. If a vice attacks a virtue, as impurity to chastity, there is obligation to make acts of it. If there is a danger of falling into a fault, we are obliged to preserve our heart to preserve it from it, which is done with acts of virtue.

SECOND SECTION

THE VIRTUE CONSIDERED IN PARTICULAR

LESSON 12

15. We have spoken already of the virtues in common; let us now proceed to each one of them in particular. We will see first the natural virtues, and then the supernatural virtues. We have already said that natural virtues rectifies a person in an orderly manner his natural end and could be subdivided into intellectual and moral virtues; we will see first the intellectual virtues.

Intellectual virtues

16. Q: What is intellectual virtue?

R: A habit or disposition that perfects and rectifies a person's reasoning and disposes him in an orderly manner to do good for his natural happiness.

Q: How many and which are the intellectual virtues?

R: Five. They are: wisdom, understanding or intelligence, knowledge, prudence and artistry.

Q: What is the object of all these virtues?

R: To rectify the reasoning of the person and to put in order its most noble function, this is to reason.

Q: What is intelligence or understanding?

R: A habit or disposition that rectifies the reasoning of the person in considering all what he knows and understands. What he knows and understands must be regarded as an opening to whatever could be naturally known and understood.

Q: What is wisdom?

R: A habit or disposition that perfects a person in considering the highest, universal and general causes.

Q: What is knowledge?

R: A habit or disposition that rectifies the reasoning of a person in knowing and understanding the fundamental causes of the essentials, universal and general. These three virtues – intelligence, wisdom, knowledge - rectify the speculative reasoning. Prudence and artistry – skill are the practical reasoning.

Q: What is prudence?

R: As an intellectual virtue, it is a disposition that rectifies the practical reasoning of a person in putting everything in order that is feasible, regarding all human acts.

Q: What is artistry - skill?

R: A disposition that rectifies the practical reasoning of the person in putting in order everything that is achievable and workable, such as constructing houses, producing machines, etc.

Q: How many are the artistry – skills?

R: Some are cultural arts and others are mechanical; the cultural arts are those that use and exert more the intellect than the body such as the study of languages, making speeches, surveying, painting, teaching, giving lectures study of topographical features and others. Mechanical arts demand more physical or manual work than the intellect, such as farming, agriculture, industry and others.

Q: Why is artistry – skill a virtue?

R: Because it rectifies the practical reasoning of the person and enables him to do good. Let us put a practical case: to cultivate the land is a thing by its nature good; the norms and practice of farming and agriculture disposes and teaches a person to do everything well that pertains to this skill. Farming and agriculture perfects the person in this aspect and with regard to this object, this art - skill is a natural virtue.

LESSON 13. – *Moral virtues*

18. Q: What is moral virtue?

R: A habit or disposition that rectifies and disposes all the potentials and capabilities of the person to follow the right direction of reasoning. It makes a person to live in conformity to the right direction of reasoning. This is the end and object of all the moral virtues.

Q: How many are the moral virtues?

R: We have already said that there are many, but all could be reduced to four cardinal points or to four main virtues which are: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

Prudence

19. Q: What is prudence?

R: As a moral virtue, it is a disposition that rectifies the direction of reasoning regarding all human acts.

Q: What is the difference between prudence as moral virtue and prudence as an intellectual virtue?

R: As intellectual virtue it rectifies the practical reasoning of a person regarding all human acts. And as moral virtue, it rectifies the insinuation of the same reasoning and makes good use of it putting in order what is to be practiced, how and in what manner, in all particular cases.

Q: What is the object of prudence?

R: To rectify the insinuation of reasoning.

Q: How many and what are its acts?

R: Three: 1st. to think, to meditate, to search, to discover what is convenient to do in all particular cases; 2nd, above all whatever is searched and found, judge what is more useful and apply to circumstances; and 3rd, to put into practice all that what was found more useful, and has been judged and deemed to be convenient to the proposed end.

Q: Which is the main act of prudence?

R: It advises, leads and directs.

Q: If prudence is a main virtue or that as a cardinal object it has many other virtues, what are they?

R: The virtues that are united to the four major ones could be considered as parts of them: some as integral or essential parts, others as potentials, and others as minor virtues subject to the cardinal.

LESSON 14. – *Integral parts of prudence*

20. Q: How many and what are the virtues that are the integral or essential parts of prudence?

R: Eight: Memory, reasoning, intelligence-understanding, docility, solicitude, providence, discretion and vigilance.

Q: These eight virtues being integral parts of prudence, is there any harmony and relation among them?

R: Yes. All are directed only to one goal, which is to rectify the direction of reasoning. We already said that for the right direction of reasoning three acts are necessary: to search for what is convenient to do, to judge what is more useful, and to direct in practice what is deemed to be more convenient for the proposed end.

In order to rectify the first act the following are necessary: 1st the remembrance of all the past; 2nd the knowledge of all the present, that proceed from contingent and necessary causes; 3rd docility to ask advice from others; 4th the solicitude or expertness (*eustoquia*)¹ which consists in finding out quickly and easily the means proportioned to the final aim of reasoning. By the past and present, and by what others had said or advised, we can surmise what is convenient to do in the future and in particular cases.

For the second act reasoning or to make an argument serves. Meditating on all the means that are presented to us and comparing them with others, judge what is evident and apply to particular cases.

In order that the right reasoning may direct in practise the means that is found to be more useful, and had judged to be more convenient three things are necessary; 1st that whatever has been organized must be applied to the proposed goal; 2nd for this providence will serve; 3rd that in practice it will attend to the circumstances of the affairs, this is done by prudence. Lastly, to avoid obstacles, overcome difficulties and win over the impediments that could be presented in the application of the means that it has found, proposed and judged more convenient to the purpose that it intends.

1 Ed. Eustochia from Greek “eustoquia”; to find.

21. Q: Which are and how many are the subjective parts of prudence that the angelic master St. Thomas calls?

R: They are virtues dependent on the major or cardinal, distinct in category one from the other.² Under this consideration the subjective parts of prudence are: 1st individual prudence, which is applied to an individual; 2nd social prudence that applies to a multitude; it is subdivided into military, economics and politics of the ruling government. The military guides an army in the battles, economics put orders in the families, the government in its rulers, and the politics to the alliance in the city, kingdom or empire.

Q: How many and which are the virtues adjunct to the cardinal virtues of prudence that are called potential virtues?

R: They are the virtues that perfect the principal virtues in certain secondary actions, and on matters that do not possess all the essence of virtue. From these, prudence has three, they are: *eubulia*, *sinesis* and *gnome*³

Q: What are these three virtues?

R: *Eubulia* rectifies a person and sees that he may have and give good counsel; *sinesis* helps to rectify his sense of judgement in all that he must do in particular cases; *gnome* is distinguished from *sinesis* in that this judge according to the ordinary and common practice of prudence, and those in certain unexpected particular cases and which are beyond the reach of common practice; judges by high principles and applies the same prudence by superior practices.

LESSON 15. – *Vices opposed to prudence*

22. Q: What are the vices opposed to prudence?

R: To prudence, as in all other moral virtues, some vices are that by excess, others by defect. Those by defect are: imprudence, haste, negligence, inadvertence and inconstancy.

2 *Suma Teológica* 2-2,50.

3 Greek words to know: “eubolia”, or “eubulia” from *eu-boule* = eubolia, means counsel or to speak conveniently; “sinesis” from *synesis*, is equivalent to encounter, and in a figurative sense, a sagacity or keenness: “gnome” from *gnome*, signifies sentence, a sententious saying.

One could be imprudent or by disregarding with malice the norm or practice of prudence, or by negligence, relinquishing the practice of it for certain matter that preoccupies a person. If passed on to the performance of an affair or concern without searching before a good counsel on this, there is haste. If one does not search or despises all that can serve to rectify the judgment on what has to be practiced, then there is negligence. Haste is due to lack of good counsel; negligence lack of right judgement; and inconstancy due to lack of or not practising what is deemed or judged convenient, or in abandoning the act intentionally.

Q: Is negligence a vice that leads to sin against prudence?

R: Yes. Negligence is opposed to prudence by disregarding the prescribed practice of this virtue for the achievement of all affairs and concerns, or lack of proper desire to search for a good counsel and to form a right judgement on what is convenient to do.

Q: What vices are opposed to prudence by excess?

R: Prudence of the flesh, slyness, cheating, fraud, too much desire for temporal goods and vicious worry of the future.

Q: What is prudence of the flesh?

R: The object of true prudence is to direct the actions of the person according to reason. False prudence has other perverse end, which is the comforts of the body; and if a person directs the actions of his life to this object as his ultimate end, this prudence is carnal or sensual.

Q: What is slyness (astuteness)?

R: Just as carnal or sensual prudence directs and leads the life of a person to an evil end, or that is not good but in appearance only as the ultimate end, slyness- astuteness serves insincere, false and dissimulated means to obtain an end, be it good or bad.

Q: What is deceit or cheating?

R: The performance, by words or by deeds or of whatever other way, of these false or dissimulated means that slyness has invented to obtain an end.

Q: What is fraud?

R: The performance of deeds of the same means.

Q: Is exaggerated demand, solicitude and anxiousness for temporal things a vice opposed to prudence?

R: Yes.

Q: In what way?

R: The demand, solicitude and anxiousness with which prudence serves can be vicious in three ways: 1st It could look at and search for temporal things as its ultimate end; this is prohibited by the Gospel. "*Do not be anxious about your life, etc.*" [Mt 6, 25; Ps 55, 23; 1Tim 6, 8]. 2nd. Putting in them interest and such care, that retract and dissuade the spirit of the spiritual things. The care of temporal things must not lead us to forget the eternal, against solicitude and anxiousness it is written: "*The cares of the world choke the word*" [Mk 4, 19]. 3rd. For vain fear of doing what we could, we lack what is necessary. This vain fear is condemned: 1st Because if God does more than taking care of life, will he do less than to conserve it; 2nd. We being nobler than animals and nourished by God, must not fear if we lack what is necessary; 3rd. God being provident, we must not fear for lack of necessities, unlike the gentiles who have no faith; it is good to understand that on our part we are supposed to strive for subsistence.

LESSON 16. – *Justice*

24. Q: What is justice?

R: A habit or dispositions which one gives accordingly with a firm and constant will to everyone what is due.

Q: Is justice a virtue?

R: Yes, because it makes one just who possess it.

Q: Where is the centre of the moral virtue of justice?

R: In certain equality of proportion between the exterior thing and the person; between the more and the less. The centre is the equal.

Q: Which is the principal act of justice?

R: To give to everyone what is due.

Q: Is judgement an act of justice?

R: If it is honest and fair, it is an act of justice. In order that it will be honest and fair it is necessary that it will conform to the nature of the thing. The doubtful is to be interpreted at its good part. By mere suspicions the person must not be judged as bad.

Q: What are the parts of justice?

R: Three: the subjective, the almost integral, and the potentials or adjunct virtues.

Subjective parts

25. Q: What are the subjective parts of justice?

R: Distributive justice and commutative justice.

Q: In what consist the distributive justice?

R: In giving to each one the share according to his merit.

Q: What is commutative or indemnity justice?

R: Giving to a person what is due to him.

Q: Is restitution an act of commutative justice?

R: Yes.

Q: What is restitution?

R: To return to its owner what is stolen from him or what is retained against his will.

Q: Is restitution necessary to be saved?

R: Yes.

26. Q: Which are the opposite vices to this subjective part of justice?

R: The distributive justice is opposed to the partiality of persons.

Q: In what consists this vice?

R: In giving gifts not according to ones merit, but by other considerations such as friends, relatives or recommended.

Q: What are the vices opposed to commutative or indemnity justice?

R: All those by which will cause harm to our neighbours. We could provoke prejudice to our neighbours on their character or to the things that belong to them, with deeds or words.

Homicide, mutilation, verberation [flagellation],⁴ beating, striking, imprisonment, deportation, stealing and robbery are vices opposed to this virtue by excess. There are also vices in the judgement: on the part of the judge in giving the verdict; the accuser in presenting the deeds which are not true; the witnesses in not saying the truth; the culprit in the way of defending himself and the lawyer in his defence. The insults, defamation, calumny, mockery and curse are also vices contrary to commutative justice, and there is an obligation to expiate the damage.

Q: What are the vices that are committed in the contracts?

R: Deceit and fraud are found in the buying and selling.

Q: In which contract usury is charged?

R: In the loan.

Q: In what consists this vice?

R: In demanding and taking some thing for the favours that is done to the one who receives.

Q: Is there any right that authorizes the money-lender to demand something for the loan?

R: Yes. This cannot be done except when there is *lucrum cessans and damnum emergens*⁵ this is, when the loan cause the money-lender some real and true damage or deprives him of the interest or effective gain.

Q: How many and what are the almost integral or essential parts of this cardinal virtue?

R: Two: to avoid evil and to do good.

Q: What are the vices of these two parts?

R: Two: those caused by sins, one is of transgression and the other of omission.

⁴ ed. Verberation equivalent to flagellation.

⁵ *Latin phrase*: emergence of monetary profit that ceased and damaged.

LESSON 17. – *Virtues adjunct to justice*

27. Q: What are and how many are the virtues adjunct to justice?

R: Ten, they are: religion, piety, observance, obedience, gratitude, vengeance, truth, friendship or affability, freedom and moderate interpretation of law.

Religion

28. Whatever we have to say regarding religion as moral virtue, will be reduced to three points: 1st what is religion; 2nd Its acts and 3rd the vices opposed to this virtue. Let us come to the first.

Q: What is religion?

R: A virtue adjunct to justice, by which a person renders to the true God the worship that is due.

Q: In how many ways religion could be considered?

R: Two: The revealed religion and the natural religion.

Q: What is natural religion?

R: A virtue that gives to the true God the worship that is due according to the inspiration of reason.

Q: What is revealed religion?

R: A virtue that renders to the true God the worship that is due according to the manner and inspired form, ordained and revealed by God.

Q: Are the religions of natural law, of the written law and of the law of grace distinct religions?

R: They are one and the same, but considered distinctively in manner and situation.

Q: How many religions are there?

R: Not having more than one God cannot have more than one.

Q: What are the marks of the true religion that distinguishes from the false?

R: The religion that renders worship to the true God in due manner must have these marks: one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

Q: Which is the religion that unites in itself all these marks?

R: The roman founded by Jesus Christ and the apostles and governed by the successors of St. Peter.

Q: Where is it recorded that the catholic, apostolic, roman religion is the one revealed by God and is proposed to the people as the only and true religion?

R: The patriarchs, prophets, Jesus Christ, apostles and the saints have presented to us with marks and characteristics of divinity capable of persuading and of convincing all persons to think, reflect and deliberate as rational being.

Q: In how many ways could we consider the worship that the religion gives to the true God?

R: In two: public and private.

Q: What is private worship?

R: An act of worship with which an individual renders to God as he deserves.

Q: What is public worship?

R: This consists in the functions and ceremonies revealed by God to the Church, instituted and proposed to all believers.

Q: Is public worship necessary?

R: Yes. The reason is the following: It is inherent to a person to know the reality by the figures and shadows, by signs, functions and ceremonies; the invisible cannot be fathomed and comprehended except through the visible; to go to eternal by the temporal; the shadow, figure, signs, functions and ceremonies of public worship of the religion speak to the heart without noise of words and teach the profound mysteries what God has deigned to reveal. The public worship transmitted from one generation to another the religion with great fidelity according to the precision and perfection in how it was done, practised and observed instituted by the Church for this purpose.

Moreover, a person is not only a rational being but also social. With other persons he constitutes a moral body; and, as an individual he ought to render due worship to God; as a social body it also ought to render the same worship which cannot be done in any way other than with the forms and ceremonies ordained by the Church and revealed by God.

LESSON 18. – *Interior and exterior acts of religion*

31. Q: Is religion a virtue?

R: Yes, because it does good to the one who has it.

Q: In what way it does good to the person?

R: By it he renders due worship to the living and true God.

Q: What are acts of this virtue?

R: Some are interior and others exterior.

Q: Which are the interior acts of religion?

R: Those through which we render in the temple of our soul the worship that is due to the true God.

Q: What are they?

R: Devotion and prayer.

Devotion

32. Q: What is devotion?

R: An interior act of religion through which our will disposes itself to do promptly, actively and easily everything that pertains to the service of God.

Q: What is the cause that creates in us devotion?

R: There are two sources from where it spring: one is what is in us, such as meditation, contemplation and the practise of interior virtues; the other is in God, who with his grace, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the infused virtues moves, prepares and opens our heart and makes it agile, ready, and prompt in the things for his service.

Prayer

33. Q: What is prayer?

R: The ascent of our soul to God; or better, an interior act, inspired by religion, through which a person asks God for graces recognizing him as the author of all good.

Q: How many ways prayer could be considered?

R: In two ways: mental and vocal.

Q: What is mental prayer?

R: What is done in the spirit without the use of words.

Q: What is vocal prayer?

R: Asking God verbally for favours.

Q: Prayer being an intimate, friendly and familiar dealing that a person has with God, did ascetic and mystical Doctors teach some methods or rules that can direct us to learn this dealing?

R: Saints left us many good books on prayer, that nothing better could be desired. Prayer being an activity so attractive for the practise of all virtues, uniting ourselves to the norms of catechism, we can briefly say and in summary what is more interesting in this matter.

LESSON 19. – *Parts of prayer*

34. The ascetical and mystical doctors have divided the activity of prayer in seven principal points that are called parts of prayer and are: preparation, reading, meditation or contemplation, petition, offering, thanksgiving and summary or epilogue. Let us examine each part.

Q: What consists in the preparation?

R: There is proximate and remote preparation. The remote preparation consists in not forgetting God in the affairs of the day, by being in continuous vigil on ourselves. The proximate is that which is done in prayer, what includes the following acts: 1st. presence of God; 2nd examination of conscience; 3rd an act of reconciliation with God through an act of contrition.

Q: How do we make meditation?

R: Having reconciled with God through an act of contrition, take the object of meditation. In the morning this can be on the life, passion and death of Jesus and, in the afternoon on the eternal truths. Once the object is chosen for meditation, reflect on it, and the discourses and meditations would lead to make proposals and resolutions to serve God with greater perfection; to fortify and strengthen our heart for the good that is proposed or to attack the

vices, to practise any virtue in this or that manner; to imitate Jesus Christ and any saint who suits to our situation.

Q: Is meditation the same as contemplation?

R: No. Meditation is an act of understanding that reflects on material objects represented in the imagination and with which, comparing one with others and combining some things with others, we make reflections, observations and discourses. Contemplation is a simple act of understanding through which our spirit fixes, without any discourses or any combination, its intellect is fixed on one truth. Contemplation recollects the fruit of meditation, because our understanding tired of thinking stops and takes up from some truth that is more interesting to know.

Q: When do we meditate and when to contemplate?

R: Here it is difficult to give any rule. If understanding cannot think and meditate, it has to propose an object at whose simple sight one can recollect and repose. Such is the presence of God.

36. Q: What, when and how are we to pray to God?

R: Petition is one part of prayer. We ask God, for ourselves or for the common good of the Church, or for the living or for the dead, those graces that we need for our temporal and eternal happiness.

Q: Can we ask for material goods?

R: We can ask for them, but only as secondary or directed towards the eternal.

Q: Which are the conditions necessary for the petition to be meritorious and impetrating act of religion?

R: Four: 1st believe in the promises of God; 2nd trust in his goodness; 3rd not to put hindrance nor obstacle on our part with faults and sins; 4th make ourselves worthy with deeds for what we asked for doing what we know and what we can do to obtain the graces that we asked.

Q: Can one in the state of mortal sin ask for God's graces?

R: Yes, but first has to be help to come out of sin and to do what he can on his part to be reconciled with God.

Q: When can we ask God for favours?

R: In all necessities, especially when we see ourselves in imminent danger of falling into mortal sin.

Q: In how many ways can we direct our supplications to God?

R: In secret, in public, alone or with others, mentally or verbally.

37. Q: What is an offering?

R: It is one part of prayer. Our own faults become obstacles to the supplications that we make, and the public scandals become impediments for those we make for the common good. Against these obstacles we offer to the Father the supplications that Jesus his Son made while he lived on this earth. We offer to his Son in sacrifice to appease him, in the form of pure and immaculate host for the satisfaction of our debts, of inestimable price and of infinite value to redeem us from the slavery of passions, from the world and from the devil. We offer him his merits against our demerits. We can also offer him the prayers of his Blessed Mother and of all the saints and their merits.

38. Q: What is an act of thanksgiving?

R: It is one part of prayer in which after having meditated and recognized God as the author of everything good he had and he has, we give him thanks as a sign of gratitude for having received favours from his hands.

Q: What is an epilogue or conclusion?

R: The summary or conclusion of this important activity. Epilogue includes the examination of conscience on the manner in which the prayer was made. A summary and recapitulation of all the encumbrances that one had, the proposals and resolutions that one has taken up, and having them present among all the affairs of the day, are put into practise at the opportune time.

Q: How much time is to be spent in prayer?

R: This depends on the quality of affairs, of the attitude or situation of the persons and the state and duty that they have.

Q: How could persons of prayer practice the seven parts already mentioned?

R: It is not necessary to follow always this order; sometimes one could spend more in one, other times in others, according to the inspiration of the spirit.

LESSON 20. – *Exterior acts of religion*

39. Q: How many and which are the exterior acts of religion?

R: Three. First, the acts of worship, through which a person with body movements or gestures manifests and give to God the veneration, honour, submission and respect that is due to him. In the second place, those by which we give and offer to God something externally. Lastly, there are other acts by which we take the name of God and use it for some good, holy and praiseworthy end.

Adoration

40. Q: With regard to the first, what is adoration?

R: An external act of religion through which a person renders to God due reverence, respect and signs of submission.

Q: What do you call these signs or corporal acts or ceremonies?

R: The worship of religion.

Q: What do we call the worship that we render to God?

R: Latria. The supreme act of worship rendered only to God.

Q: Can we render worship to the saints?

R: Yes, we venerate them, but only when they are friends of God; our intercessors and under the consideration that in them the glory and the virtue of God is resplendent and glow in them.

Q: What do we call the worship rendered to them publicly?

R: Dulia (worship of the saints and angels). And the one we give to the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary is called hyperdulia (worship of the Virgin).

Q: Coming to the second, what is it that we offer to God externally and for what purpose?

R: Regarding this are: sacrifice, oblation, the first fruits of the earth and tithes.

Q: What is sacrifice?

R: An act of religion through which a victim is offered to the Supreme Being in recognition of the absolute dominion that he has on everything and a sign of our obedience to his will.

Q: What represented the sacrifices of the old law?

R: The true lamb who is Jesus Christ, who immolated himself on the altar of the cross and everyday he offers himself to the Father on our altars.

Q: What is oblation?

R: An offering that is made to God of the temporal goods, a sign of having received everything from his hand.

Q: What are the first fruits?

R: The first fruits of the earth gathered and are offered to God as a sign of gratitude.

Q: What are tithes?

R: The tenth part of what one has produced that is offered to God, for the maintenance of the priests, to sustain the worship in the Churches, and to help in the necessities of the poor.

42. Q: When and for what do we take the name of God?

R: About this there is the vow, oath and the praises of God.

Q: What is a vow?

R: A promise made to God with the obligation of doing or of giving some thing that is pleasing to him.

Q: How many kinds of vows are there?

R: Simple and solemn, conditional and absolute, perpetual and temporal vows.

Q: In what consists the solemnity of vows?

R: In the surrender that a person makes of himself to God and in the acceptance on the part of the Church.

Q: What is an oath?

R: To take God as a witness for some action.

Q: Is it licit to swear?

R: Yes, provided that due conditions are observed, because it is an act of religion.

Q: What is to entreat or to implore?

R: To invoke the holy name of God to oblige him to do what we ask for, desire and want.

Q: Serving in the name of God and to praise him is an act of religion?

R: Yes.

LESSON 21. – *Vices opposed to religion as moral virtue*

43. Q: Religion, being a moral virtue and adjunct to the cardinal virtue of justice, does it have centre and vices by excess and by defect?

R: Yes. Like all others.

Q: What is its centre?

R: The worship due to the Divine.

Q: From where have the vices that oppose it?

R: The superstition opposes it by excess and the irreligiosity by defect.

The superstition and its kinds

44. Q: What is superstition?

R: A vice opposed to religion by which a person gives to the true God an inappropriate worship that is undue to him, or better, renders acts of worship to the creatures that is due only to God.

Q: How many kinds of superstition are there?

R: Four: rendering to the true God act of worship in an undue manner, idolatry, divination-augury, and presumptuous idea.

Q: With regard to the first, where is the superstition?

R: It can be on the part of reality represented in the ceremonies or on the part of the one who renders worship. There is superstition if someone distinguishes himself with weird and unreal ceremonies, as if Christ is coming again to suffer. According to this, the worship rendered to God by the Jews is a superstition. On the part of the ministers of worship there could be superstition, as the mysteries of religion are figured with ceremonies and rites that are not approved by the Church or with other different ways other than the usual ways.

Q: What is idolatry?

R: To render to a creature an act of worship that is only due to God.

Q: What is divination - augury?

R: To announce the future events in an illicit and undue manner.

Q: In what ways divination can be illicit?

R: In four ways: 1st to know something one consults the devil, the dead and the hypnotized persons; 2nd to know the contingent future or works, action and future luck or fortune of the people, one attends to the stars and its movements; 3rd to the dreams and finally, 4th to the chant and other movements of animals.

Q: What is understood by presumptuous idea?

R: The use of certain signs or words to know a contingent future or to obtain an inheritance, fortune or similar things, whose signs have no relation with the signified thing.⁶

Irreligiosity

45. Q: How many and which are the vices opposed by defect to the virtue of religion?

R: Four: To tempt God, perjury, sacrilege and simony.

Q: How and when is it said to tempt God?

R: When one places his confidence in the divine help, yet, on the other hand, ignores, carelessly and negligently in doing all that is within his reach to avoid evil and dangers, to obtain the graces that he asks for.

Q: What is perjury?

R: To attest in the name of God with an oath or swear, a word or deed that is false; or to tell a lie confirmed with an oath or swear.

Q: What is sacrilege?

⁶ Contingent future, in contraposition to absolute or necessary, is the one that is realized not according to its completion or not on certain conditions.

R: The profanation, violation or any irreverence regarding sacred things or consecrated persons. All that is assigned or destined for divine service is sacred be it thing, person or place.

Q: What is simony?

R: A tacit, implied or explicit contract by which a sacred thing is bought or sold or even if it is not in itself sacred, something is attached to it; a buying and selling of ecclesiastical or social promotions or ranks.

Q: Could the Church and its ministers make contract with the people on their suitable and fair sustenance?

R: Yes, because the one who serves the people has the right to demand what is appropriate and necessary for his sustenance.

Q: Can the clergy and the people make a contract agreement for every act of ministry?

R: No, but the clergy can receive alms as a gratitude for the charity they do for the people.

LESSON 22. – *Piety*

46. Q: What is understood here by piety?

R: A virtue adjunct to justice, by which due respect and honour is given to parents and country.

Q: What is understood here by parents?

R: It is understood not only father and mother, but also all other consanguineous relatives. And under the name country, it includes all citizens and friends of same country.

The virtue of piety and that of religion seems to be opposed.

Q: To serve the parents are we to relinquish the acts of religion?

R: If the religion calls for help, and the parents, relatives, citizens and friends put obstacles, yielding to their demands is not piety, but a formal disobedience to God. If piety calls us to help the parents, and making ourselves deaf to its voice, we are moving to non-obligatory acts of religion, and this religion is no longer a virtue, but a vice. In practice we must consult the circumstances and the situations of persons.

Q: What are the vices against this virtue?

R: Words, deeds and signs indicating hatred, enmity and insult to parents are sin against it by excess. And not giving due respect, love and assistance in their necessities at opportune times are sin by defect.

Observance

47. Q: What is observance?

R: A virtue adjunct to justice by which we give due respect and honour to the persons constituted in authority or dignitaries.

Q: What is understood here by persons constituted in authority or dignitaries?

R: Two authorities: ecclesiastical and civil, their governments and all people that they represent.

Q: What vices are opposed to this virtue?

R: By excess, sin against justice who insults a person constituted in authority or dignitaries. By defect, one sin by not giving any sign of honour and respect at appropriate times.

Q: Are dulia and obedience parts of observance?

R: Yes, because dulia gives due honour and respect to the superiors, and obedience gives due submission to their domain.

LESSON 23. – *Obedience*

48. Q: What is obedience?

R: It is a virtue adjunct to religion, through which due submission is given to the Superiors within his jurisdiction.

Q: Is it necessary to obey God in everything?

R: Yes, because he is the Supreme Lord and universal Ruler of all creatures.

Q: Is it necessary to obey a person constituted in dignity and authority?

R: Yes.

Q: In everything, without any restriction?

R: No, this will be a disorder.

Q: In what we have to obey them?

R: To each one of them in the order of their respective authority. Person, as a person, is not subject to anyone but to God alone, the author of creation, and within the order of his natural action he is free. As a Christian he is subject to the prelates of the Church in the territory designated by the ecclesiastical laws. As a citizen he is subject to the civil authority for the term fixed by civil laws; as a servant (if in service) to his master according to contract laws; if he is in military, he is subject to his respective commanding officer within the prescribed ambit of his authority; if he is a son (if still a minor), to his parents in everything concerning domestic life. As a religious (if has made the profession with vows), to the prelates of the order in his jurisdiction that the monastic rules and regulations give; as a convict, at the tribunal of penance, to his confessor in everything necessary for the integrity of confession and validity of sacrament.

49. Q: Is obedience a virtue?

R: Yes, because it makes a person good, that is, obedient to his respective superiors; giving them due obedience makes him just, because obedience is a virtue adjunct to justice.

Q: If obedience is one of the moral virtues, where is its defect, its centre and its excess?

R: By defect in disobedience.

Q: Is disobedience a sin against justice and against religion?

R: Yes, because to give due obedience to the superiors is an act of justice and also of religion, and to deny them is injustice.

Q: What vices obedience has by excess? Is it a sin to be extremely obedient?

R: Could be and it is: 1st when the superior orders against God and his laws, or evil things; 2nd when the command is against the orders of superiors; 3rd if voluntary obedience leads to evil and perverse end.

50. Q: Who obeys walk securely?

R: The obedient as obedient cannot be lost because obedience is a virtue; to obey is to go by a safe path; but this is understood of

the obedience that we give to the superiors as an adjunct virtue to religion and potential of justice. In voluntary obedience we can deceive ourselves and be deceived. Voluntary obedience is what we give to persons outside the order or jurisdiction of superiority. Within this jurisdiction, obedience is an act of religion and of justice, and outside this order or jurisdiction it is nothing but a free act of our will in which we follow the counsel of others with humility. To follow freely the counsel of others is called direction. In matters of our spiritual health, this obedience is called direction of souls. There are various kinds of direction: in a judicial act, a lawyer is the director of the case who defends; a captain directs his troops in the battles; a priest could direct the souls with his counsel and doctrine by the way of perfection.

51. Q: What is the obedience that a person in the way of his perfection ought to give to his director?

R: Not of justice because obedience is voluntary and direction is based on counsels; but if a superior directs his subjects within his jurisdiction, then obedience will be of justice.

Q: Are the confessor and director the same?

R: No. Confessor is superior when he is a judge seated on the chair of conscience to judge the case of the penitent. In matters of conscience that is, of confession, obedience is rigorous and of justice. And the director has no other authority than to give to the one who follows voluntarily his counsel.

Q: Obedience, regarded as a virtue adjunct to justice, what qualities must we have to become perfect?

R: 1st Must be blind with respect to the one who orders; 2nd Prompt in the execution of orders; 3rd humble, submitting his judgment and will to that of the superiors; 4th faithful, not frowning and opposing to the order, interpreting them according to the tacit, implied or presumed will of the superior; 5th voluntary, not bursting out exteriorly with complaints against the superior; 6th joyful, enjoying his glory, delight and happiness in serving God and Lord represented in the superior.

Q: If obedience must be blind, could it be that an insane, lunatic or person with unsound mind person led us to perdition?

R: Obedience as a moral virtue, has no eyes, it is blind; it is not its duty to examine whether one who orders is or not a legitimate superior, if orders are well, it is convenient to obey or not to obey; this concerns prudence. Prudence has eyes; it must see whether to obey or not, but all the other virtues directed by it are blind and must follow its direction and judgment.

LESSON 24. – *Gratitude, vengeance and truth*

52. Q: What is gratitude?

R: It is a virtue adjunct to justice. It is a due recompense we give to our benefactors be it an act of thanksgiving or with deeds or of any other way.

Q: What acts has this virtue?

R: 1st to recognize the benefit received; 2nd to give thanks to the benefactor; and 3rd to compensate according to time, circumstances, place and qualities of the person.

Q: Is ingratitude a sin?

R: It is a vice against justice and religion, and, consequently, a sin.

Q: Is a person obliged to give thanks to God for the benefits received from his hands?

R: Yes, because he is our main Benefactor.

Q: When must a person give thanks to God?

R: Every time that he receives some special benefit. After meals, and every now and then, he must do it for the benefits of the creation, conservation and redemption, which are the principal ones.

Vengeance

53. Q: What is vengeance?

R: It is a virtue adjunct to justice, by which punishment is imposed on the violator of the law, which is due to him with the aim to obtain his indemnity and to save the good of the public.

Q: Is vengeance licit?

R: When it is done by the one who has authority and in due manner, it is a virtue.

Truth

54. Q: In what way truth is a potential virtue of justice?

R: In that a person presents himself as he is in deeds and in words in front of people what he is in himself and before God.

Q: What vices are opposed to truth?

R: Lying, simulation or hypocrisy, and arrogance.

Q: What is lying?

R: The utterance of a word contrary to that one thinks, with the intention and will to deceive.

Q: In how many ways is there of lying?

R: There are pernicious, sarcastic and officious (compliant) lies. The first one is with detrimental, the second in relation to our neighbours, and the last is said to please others and ones' self.

Q: Is lying a sin?

R: It is always a sin and in any case is licit. Truth can be hidden, but to lie will never be licit.

Q: What is simulation or hypocrisy?

R: Simulation is to present oneself exteriorly with deeds or signs different from what one really is. The hypocrisy adds to the simulation the pretension of one person different from what he is; as being bad person presenting himself as just.

Q: Which is worse, to be a hypocrite or scandalous?

R: To be scandalous. The hypocrite lost oneself, and the scandalous lost himself and lost others. There could be a case where the hypocrite is worse; and it is like those who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves [Mt 7, 15]. In this case it is better that the wolf be discovered as such, that nothing will happen to the sheep.

55. Q: Must an unrighteous person present himself as he is to the eyes of others?

R: If he is a hidden sinner he would add to his sin one more scandal. Harmful is to be vicious, but worse is to be declared as such; and it is an intolerable scandal to boast for being so. The hypocrite must present himself before God and in his conscience what he would like to be before others; but not the contrary.

Q: What is arrogance?

R: To present ourselves with words and deeds greater than what one truly is.

Q: What is irony -pessimism?

R: Presenting oneself lower than what one is. This can occur in two ways. 1st To save the truth, to keep quiet and say little, but this is not a sin; 2nd It is a fault and vice of irony - pessimism to say despicable things of oneself, not to recognize or to deny greater things that he knows he has.

LESSON 25. – *The affability, the liberality and the equity or (Impartiality)*

56. Q: What is friendship or affability?

R: A virtue adjunct to justice, by which a person is lead in a decent and convenient manner in the conversation and communication with other people.

Q: What are its vices?

R: Flattery and litigation.

Flattery is a vice in which a person in the conversation delights and likes to flatter to please to whom he must sadden. Affability, even though it leads one in a decent manner while conversing with others, it does not fail to sadden others when it is necessary to evade certain evil things or to promote something good. There is flattery when one says to the other false pleasant things, with fraud and with the intention of hurting be it spiritual or corporal. There is also fault when the praise of flatterer causes damage, not to the flattered person but to the third, and this can be provoked by the flatterer with malice or intention or without intention.

Litigation, on the contrary is a vice by which a man in the conversation saddens others without any necessity.

Liberality

57. Q: What is liberality - generosity?

R: It is a moral virtue adjunct to justice, by which we make good use of the things that the Providence has entrusted to us for the sustenance of life. This virtue has two vices to avoid: extravagance by excess and avarice by defect.

Q: What is avarice - greed?

R: An inordinate appetite to possess earthly goods.

Q: Is it a capital vice?

R: Yes, because many others spring up from it.

Q: Which are they?

R: Disloyalty, cheating, lying, perjury, inequity, violence, oppression of the poor and obstinacy in the works of mercy, etc.

Q: What is extravagance - lavishness?

R: It is a vice by which a person lacks due solicitude and care that demand the administration of goods of fortune that the Providence had given for the proper maintenance of the family or make abuses with a false administration giving them more than what its state permits.

Epiqueia or equity (Impartiality)

58. Q: What is epiqueia?

R: A virtue adjunct to justice in which in uncommon and extraordinary things, the intention of the legislator is followed above the law, provoking a serious prejudgment execution be it to the individual or to the community for which it was given.

Q: Is it a sin to observe the law in cases of serious judgment of the individual or of the community not foreseen by the legislator?

R: Yes. It is against equity- impartiality or epiqueia and against justice.

LESSON 26. – *Fortitude*

59. Fortitude is one of the four cardinal virtues. Whenever we have to speak on this moral virtue it is reduced to three principal points: first let us ask what this virtue is and later let us see what its parts are.

Q: With regard to the first, is fortitude a virtue?

R: Yes, because it does good to the one who possess it and makes his deeds good.

Q: In what way fortitude makes man good?

R: All human virtue consists in that a person lives according to reason. This could be verified in three ways: 1st as much as reason is rectified by prudence and the other intellectual virtues; 2nd as much as this rectitude - fairness is applied in human affairs, and this is done by justice; 3rd. as much as all obstacles are conquered and all impediments that could be presented against this rectitude, fairness and righteousness are avoided, this is done by fortitude and temperance.

To live according to reason a person finds two kinds of impediments. One is on the part of the will and appetite, which is dragged along, impelled and moved by earthly goods, inducing delights and pleasures to the other end contrary to right reasoning. Against this obstacle the will and the appetite are put in order by temperance. Other impediment exists in us to follow the right direction of reason, that is: the most horrible evils that one has to suffer, the trouble one has to bear, obstacles one has to conquer; on this fortitude rectifies and directs the soul, and under this consideration it is a virtue.

Q: According to what was said, what is fortitude?

R: One of the four cardinal virtues that makes a person firm and constant to follow the right direction of reason against all obstacles and impediments that could be presented.

Q: Which are the principal acts of fortitude?

R: To sustain and to undertake. To sustain the direction proposed by reason in the human actions against the obstacles; to break the inconvenient ones. To destroy the impediments that exists against the direction proposed by the right reason in human actions.

Q: Is martyrdom an act of fortitude?

R: Yes. To sustain, even to suffer all the greatest evils like death, the order proposed by the right reason or by faith in human actions.

Q: How many things are necessary for martyrdom?

R: Three. To suffer death; given in hatred of religion, or for sustaining the virtue, and the state of grace on the part of the martyr.

Q: What are the contrary vices of fortitude?

R: By defect it has fear or timidity and by excess audacity and boldness.

Q: What is timidity?

R: A reluctance of spirit at the presence of adversity that the right reason directs to sustain and to suffer.

Q: What is intrepidity?

R: Not to fear where there is danger.

Q: What is audacity - boldness?

R: A passion that attacks sufferings that must be tolerated or in case it must be overcome and destroyed, the battle of undue manner.

LESSON 27. – *Parts of fortitude*

61. We have already said that all cardinal virtues have their integral, potential and subjective parts.⁷

Q: What are the parts of fortitude?

R: The object of fortitude, being a very special subject cannot have different virtues in kind; but it has integral and potential parts that are: magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance. These four virtues if they are considered in respect to their principal object, that is, to sustain the spirit so that it could follow the direction of reason in the face of all evils that could be presented to the person, are the integral parts of fortitude; but if they are seen with regard to other dangers and minor adversities than death which

⁷ On three parts in relation to all and its application to the virtues, S. THOMAS, *Summa Teológica* 1-2, 48, 1.

the person has to suffer in order to live according to reason and faith, these same virtues are potentials or adjunct to the principal virtue of fortitude.

62. Q: Let us consider first the said virtues in the order of their principal object. In this case, as we have already said, are integral parts of fortitude. What are these parts?

R: To know them we have to bear in mind what we have noted, that fortitude had two actions: to undertake and to sustain. In the first act, a person is rectified by the magnanimity and magnificence; and in the second, by patience and perseverance. The explanation of this is very clear. With regard to the act of undertaking so that a person will be persistent, firm, constant in living according to the direction of the reason and consistent to his religious beliefs even at the presence of the most horrible adversities – which could be a cruel and insulting death, a prolonged martyrdom, and all kinds of pains and torments - two things are necessary: first, that his spirit must not dwindle, must not grow weak nor must lack boldness because of the fear caused by the apprehension of the adversity; second, in the presence of torments and afflictions not to go back or retreat. The first is done by the virtue of magnanimity and the second by magnificence. For the second act of fortitude, that is to sustain, two things are also necessary: first, that the spirit will not give up nor weakened when provoked by the distressing adversity of an impending threat. In the second place, that in the midst of continuous and prolonged torment, be it persistent and indefatigable, to remain firm and constant and to suffer until the end of life. For the first, patience is necessary and for the second, perseverance is an indispensable virtue.

63. Q: Which are the potential parts of fortitude or its adjunct virtues?

R: Like the integral parts considered in the order of adversities and minor dangers, other than of death. Such are: prison, exile, confiscation of property, loss of relatives and goods of fortune, sicknesses, privations, oppositions, persecutions and similar pains. The magnanimity and magnificence, patience and perseverance sustains a person to be firm and constant in living according to the right direction of reason and to conform to one's beliefs in the

presence of all these adversities and dangers. And concerning this there are auxiliary and adjunct virtues to the principal of fortitude or potentials.

LESSON 28. – *The magnanimity and magnificence*

64. Q: What is magnanimity?

R: Magnanimity is an integral virtue of fortitude that makes our heart strong and firm to follow the right direction of reason, in spite of the most serious dangers that could offer us.

Q: Is magnanimity a virtue?

R: Yes, it is.

Q: If it is a virtue, where is its centre, its excess and its defect?

R: By excess it has the presumption, the ambition and the vanity; and by defect the cowardice. To know these vices one has to observe that a person, on his way to virtue, has to avoid and fear grave dangers. These are: honour, dignities and the riches of this world which drag our hearts behind them; and death, pains, torments, exile, prison, hunger, misery, etc. disturb and weaken our spirit and fall on the way.

Presumption is a vice by which a person undertakes objects beyond his capacity and strengths. The magnanimous, even if he conduces towards greater things, arduous and difficult to obtain, notwithstanding, he does not go beyond the centre that is adopted for the attainment of his end.

Q: What is ambition?

R: A vice opposed by excess to magnanimity by which a person places all his affection and attaches himself inordinately to honours. The magnanimous does not desire for honours that he doesn't have; and if given, he offers and refers to God, to whom all honour and glory is due, and does not put in them his affection.

Q: What is vainglory?

R: A vice opposed by excess to magnanimity by which a person places all his affection and happiness in his own glory, or in a disordered appetite of glory in the things that are not worth. The

magnanimous does not desire what he does not have, and is not affected by what others have, but refers to his God.

Q: Is vainglory a capital vice?

R: Yes, because from it gives birth to many other vices, which are –according to St. Thomas - Disobedience, arrogance, hypocrisy, conflict, stubbornness, discord and the presumptuous invention of novelties.⁸

66. Q: What is cowardice?

R: A vice opposed to magnanimity by defect, by which a person collapses and faints at the sight of dangers that he has to undertake in order to obtain the good proposed by the right reason.

A presumptuous, sin in undertaking the arduous virtue using resources that is beyond his capacity and strength. The coward sins in believing that he is incapable and unworthy or undeserving of what is proportionate to his strengths or gives up the search, which he could obtain with effort. The magnanimous believes that he can do everything with God and nothing without Him. With his strengths and help of God he believes capable to obtain his ultimate end and through proportionate means to go to him without terrifying dangers or any obstacles.

Magnificence

67. Q: What is magnificence?

R: A moral virtue of fortitude, by which a person puts into practice with great amplitude and splendour of soul everything that he has proposed to do from the greatest, the most sublime and excellent.

Q: What is the difference between magnanimity and magnificence?

R: Magnanimity strengthens the soul in everything that is there from the greatest in the moral order; and the magnificence, in where there in beauty, quantity and dignity from the greatest in the order of feasible things.

⁸ *Suma Teológica* 2-2, 132, 5

Q: What are the vices opposed to this virtue?

R: Parsimony and consumption.

Q: What are these vices?

R: By *parsimony* a person undertakes and does less things than what he could and ought to do. And by *consumption*, a person makes disproportioned and inconvenient expenses to the work that he intends to undertake or that he has on hand.

LESSON 29. – *Patience and perseverance*

68. Q: What is patience?

R: A moral integral virtue of fortitude, which strengthens the spirit to support with tranquillity and without any disturbance of adversity, pains and contradictions that arise in the practice of the virtue.

Q: What are the actions of patience?

R: 1st Sustain the disturbed spirit that suffers in the presence of adversity. 2nd not to be violent neither with words nor with gestures against the adversities that one suffers; 3rd save the heart against those sadness regarding what is written that destroys the soul; 4th suffer the adversities not only with harmony, quietness and tranquillity of spirit, but with joy, taking delight in being worthy to suffer some thing according to and in the name of God.

Q: What are the vices opposed to patience?

R: Restlessness, sadness, impatience and anger or wrath.

Perseverance

69. Q: What is perseverance?

R: A moral virtue of fortitude by which we endure with constancy, firmness and peaceful spirit all adversities which are presented to us due to the virtue, even though it will last until the end of life.

Q: Is constancy a virtue of fortitude?

R: Yes. It belongs to perseverance and it is a virtue that makes the spirit strong and firm in the good that we have proposed.

Q: What are the vices opposed to perseverance?

R: Changeableness, frailty, sluggishness and obstinacy, stubbornness.

Q: What is changeableness, frailty, sluggishness?

R: A vice opposed to perseverance, in which a person yields easily to evil and resists to do good that had been proposed. Changeableness, frailty, sluggishness could be provoked by the sadness caused by the lack of pleasures, also by the difficulties that could be presented against the virtue.

Q: What is obstinacy, stubbornness?

R: A vice by which a person persists in his resolutions, undertakings and does works much beyond than what the right reason dictates to persists. The changeable, frail and sluggish person yields faster to what is convenient; and the constant, persistent and patient remain in the good things and sustains evil the whole time that the reason dictates to sustain.

LESSON 30. – *The Temperance*

70. Q: What is temperance?

R: It is one of the four cardinal virtues, which strengthens a person and disposes him to follow the inspiration of right reasoning against the concupiscence of the flesh.

Q: What is the object of this virtue?

R: To moderate the pleasures of the flesh, especially that of touch and taste which are the principal ones.

Q: Where is its centre, its defect and its excess?

R: Its centre consists in using the pleasures according to the necessities of life, and they are: with regard to touch, propagation of species; with regard to taste; and conservation of individual.

It has insensibility by defect and intemperance by excess.

Q: In what consists the insensibility?

R: In rejecting those pleasures that are necessary for the propagation of its species and conservation of the individual.

71. Q: What is intemperance?

R: A disordered appetite of pleasure, or a vice by which a person desires and craves for those pleasures that are less conformable, contrary and prohibited by reason and by law.

Q: Temperance, being a cardinal virtue, no doubt has many more adherent moral virtues. Let us see what they are.

R: Temperance, like all other cardinal virtues, has integral, subjective and potential parts. The integrals are: shyness or bashfulness and honesty.

The subjective are: abstinence and sobriety, chastity and modesty.

The adjunct virtues to the principal are: continence, humility, meekness or clemency, modesty, good order, sumptuously adorned, austerity, frugality and simplicity.

Almost integral parts

72. Q: What is honesty?

R: A virtue almost integral of temperance by which a person loves all that is worthy of honour.

Shyness or modesty is a virtue by which we hate, detest, escape and fear all those that is worthy of shame, of disgrace or of dishonour.

LESSON 31. – *The abstinence and sobriety- soberness*

73. Q: What is abstinence?

R: A moral virtue of temperance that moderates a person in the pleasures of taste of food.

Q: What is fasting?

R: The voluntary privation of a part of nourishment that is not necessary for the conservation of life.

Q: What is fasting of the Church?

R: The privation of a part of food that is not necessary for the conservation of individual, according to the precepts prescribed by the Church.

- Q: Is fasting an act of abstinence?
 R: Yes, and is, for the reason that it moderates or rectifies the disordered appetite for foods.
- Q: What are the vices opposed to abstinence?
 R: Gluttony.
- Q: What is gluttony?
 R: A disordered appetite of eating and drinking.
- Q: In how many ways one sin by gluttony?
 R: Five: eating out of time, splendidly in large quantity, with rage of appetite, and searching with anxiety, solicitude and survey of delicate and delicious things.
- Q: Is it one of the seven capital vices?
 R: Yes, because this is the furtherance, cause and beginning of many others.
- Q: What are they?
 R: Gluttony, according to St. Thomas Aquinas Q. CXLVIII, art. VI, has five daughters called: the joy of the stupid or insensitive, jesting, impurity, talkativeness and stupidity of mind.⁹

Sobriety or soberness

74. Q: What is soberness- sobriety?
 R: A moral virtue of temperance that moderates the appetite and desire of a person in drinking.
- Q: Which vice is opposed to sobriety - soberness?
 R: Intoxication or drunkenness.
- Q: What is this vice?
 R: A disordered desire or appetite of drinking.
- Q: In how many ways a person could exceed in this vice?
 R: In the same way as the food: drinking out of time, splendidly in large quantity, with rage until losing the senses and searching intensely and with anxiety the best and the exquisite.

⁹ The verse corresponds to *Suma Teológica*, 2-2, 148, 6.

LESSON 32. – *Chastity and Virginity*

75. Q: What is chastity?
 R: It is a subjective virtue of temperance that moderates and regulates the sexual pleasures.
- Q: How many kinds of chastity are there?
 R: Three: Conjugal, widowhood and virginal. The conjugal chastity is the one the married should keep. The chastity of widowhood obliges the widows; and the virginal to the virgins.
- Q: What is to be chaste?
 R: It is a virtue that moderates and regulates a person's touch, sight, and sexual acts.

The Virginity

76. Q: What is virginity?
 R: It is a subjective virtue of temperance and adjunct to chastity, by which a person keeps, consecrates and vows to his Creator his entire body and soul against all sexual acts, be it licit or illicit. Or rather, a firm proposal to keep the body and the soul pure from all sexual acts, be it licit or illicit.
- Q: Which are the vices contrary to chastity?
 R: Lust and its kinds.
- Q: Is lust a capital vice?
 R: Yes, because it is the beginning of many others.
- Q: What are the effects of lust?
 R: Ignorance-insensibility, indifference, haste, inconstancy, selfishness, conceit, hatred of God, attachment to the present age and horror of the future.
- Q: How many kinds of lust are there?
 R: Nine: the simple fornication, rape, abduction, adultery, incest, sacrilege, desecration, sexual delinquency, and brutality.

LESSON 33. – *Potential parts of temperance*

77. Q: How many are the potential parts of temperance?

R: Three: continence, clemency, and purity - modesty.

Q: What is continence?

R: A potential virtue of temperance, by which a person refrains from passions and moderates them according to the direction of reason.

Q: What is the difference between continence and temperance?

R: Continence restrains and keeps within bounds the more intense passions that are in us, and temperance moderates the concupiscence and pleasures of touch and taste.

Q: What are the vices opposed to continence?

R: The incontinence that consists in following the impulse of the passion against the direction of the reason.

Q: What is clemency - mercy?

R: It is a potential virtue of temperance, by which a person moderates the due penalty to others that must be imposed by justice.

Q: What is meekness- gentleness?

R: Meekness- gentleness moderates the passion of anger-wrath.

Q: What are the vices opposed to these two virtues?

R: Against meekness there is irascibility, and against clemency-mercy, cruelty.

Q: What is irascibility or anger?

R: A disordered desire or appetite of vengeance.

Q: Is it a capital vice?

R: Yes, because it drags along with it many others, which are: quarrels, talking big- showy, affront-insult, shouting and screaming, insolence and blasphemy.

Q: What is inclemency or cruelty?

R: An atrocious or brutal spirit in imposing punishment; joined to this are tyranny and fierceness.

Q: What is modesty-decency?

R: A moral virtue adjunct to temperance that moderates the external actions of a person.

Modesty-decency moderates four things that are: the inclination or movement of the spirit to some superiority; this is done by humility. The desire to know; this is moderated through diligence-studiousness, that is opposed to curiosity. All that pertains to the external actions and body movements that will make decency as its end is done with seriousness as well as in the practice of sports; and lastly, everything that pertains to the exterior signs, such as body gestures, dressing and similar things. According to this, modesty-decency is a virtue that includes others such as, humility, studiousness and (*eutropelia*) moderation in pleasures.

LESSON 34. – *Humility, studiousness and (Eutropelia) moderation in pleasures*

78. Q: What is humility?

R: A moral potential virtue of temperance and adjunct to modesty-decency which moderates and rectifies the disordered desire for personal excellence.

Q: What are the actions of this virtue?

R: St. Anselm (book of Sim. In chap. XCIX ad CVIII)¹⁰ remarked as follows: 1st. to consider oneself as despicable, worthless; 2nd. to suffer for being so; 3rd. to own it as such, 4th. to convince others that they may believe, 5th. to suffer with patience what others may say, 6th. to suffer to be treated as such, 7th. to love the despised or to be despised; and to rejoice to be despised for the sake of virtue. This will be the ultimate degree of humility.

¹⁰ The citation of St. Anselm of Canterbury is taken, no doubt from *Summa Teológica* of St. Thomas 2-2, 161, 6 obj, 3 or at least inspired from this. The work mentioned carries the title *De Similitudinibus* (of the similarities) but is not really of St. Anselm, even though for him it is attributed. It is of his companion and disciple Eadmero the English Benedictine monk (1064-1124). He treats of humility and its degrees (recorded here in Chap. 100-109; in the ed. of ML 159, 665-668).

Q: Is the virtue of magnanimity opposed to humility?

R: No. A person by whatever he has from God, raises it, makes him magnanimous and aspires to obtain everything by which with his virtues and with the gifts of God he believes capable of obtaining and possessing; this is magnanimity. What he has of himself, he feels humble and believing that he is incapable of doing good things and capable of committing any evil, despises and esteems himself as nothing. This is humility.

79. Q: Which vice has humility?

R: Pride.

Q: What is pride?

R: A disordered love for excellence or for higher and greater things of which one is not capable.

Q: In how many ways one sin by pride?

R: 1st to believe that the gifts one has are his own. 2nd if he possesses more, he thinks that they are given for his merits. 3rd exalting self of having that one doesn't have. 4th despising others, by thinking that he alone possess what he has.

Q: Is it a capital vice?

R: Not only a capital vice, but the principal of all. She is the queen (says St. Gregory in XXXI *Moralium*)¹¹ of all the vices. After taking entirely the heart of a person, it entrusts to the other six as the six masters, by which with all other vices they end up ruining, devastating and confusing him. From these it gives birth to the immensity of all others that corrupts him until obstinacy.

80. Q: What is studiousness?

R: A potential virtue of temperance and adjunct to modesty-decency that moderates the inclination and the desire of all that pertains to the knowledge of truth.

Q: What is its vice?

¹¹ Reference to the text alludes to the work of St. Gregorio Magno known as *Morals* on the *book of Job*, is to say commentary to this book of the Bible. Referred place is found in the book 31, chap. 45, corresponding to the commentary of chap. 39 of Job. In the edition of ML 76, 620.

R: It has the vice opposed to curiosity that is a disordered desire to know or to learn and acquire.

Q: What is moderation (eutropelia)?

R: A virtue that moderates a person in diversions, games or gambling.

Q: Are there other virtues adjunct to modesty-decency that moderates a person in his gestures and the exterior movements, and in clothing and in adorning or embellishing the body?

R: There are two: the adorning of the body, and the decency and good order of all the movements and exterior acts. These virtues moderate a person in dances and in dancing.

LESSON 35. – *Precepts given to persons on the practice of moral virtues*

82. Q: The whole law is explicitly and implicitly contained in the precepts of the Decalogue. Where are those that pertain to prudence?

R: In all the precepts of the Decalogue, whatever is directive of all virtuous actions demanded by the law. If the precepts are given on virtuous actions, how much more prudence that directs them!

Q: Where are those that pertain to justice?

R: The ten precepts speak explicitly on justice. The first three commands us the acts of religion; the fourth, piety, and the other six commands or prohibit acts concerning justice considered in common.

Justice imposes on us duties that the law commands us to fulfil. They are with God, with other persons and with ourselves. The first three precepts command us to fulfil and to comply the duties that we have with God; to Him we must love, and for this he tells us: "*love God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.*" [Dt 6,5; 10, 12; Mt 22,37]. In the second it prohibits us to take his holy name in vain with oaths and blasphemies and curses. In the third it commands us that on feast days, to render and offer public and private worship that is due only to the living and true God. In the fourth it tells us to give due respect, honour and attention to the

parents, relatives and co-citizens. And in the other six it commands us to fulfil other duties in relation to our fellow creatures; and it prohibits us robbery, deceit, fraud, cheating, homicide, lie, usury, rape and other vices that cause damage to the third person.

83. Q: Where are the precepts pertaining to Fortitude?

R: These are implicitly contained in the entire Decalogue. This commands us the virtuous acts and prohibits the vices. To practice virtue and avoid vices fortitude is necessary. Its acts are given to us in all the precepts that are given to us on virtue. As such, the law as the Gospel has given explanations on this: “Don’t be afraid – we read in Deuteronomy- *because the Lord our God is among us* [Dt 7,21]. *Put on the armour of God* – writes the Apostle to the faithful of Ephesus - *and remain firm and strong against devil’s evil tricks*” [Eph 6,11].

Q: Is there any explicit precept in the Decalogue on temperance and all other virtues that are adjunct to it?

R: In the sixth it prohibits all kinds of lust, which is one of the seven capital vices contrary to temperance. The acts of this virtue and all others that go together with it are implicitly commanded in all the precepts of the Decalogue, and the motive is: in the law it commands us to practice all the virtues, which could not be done without duly resisting and refraining from all the suggestions of the concupiscence, temperance and other adjunct virtues.

[SECOND SECTION B]

SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES

LESSON 36

1. We have already known the natural virtues; now let us speak on the supernatural virtues.

Q: What is supernatural virtue?

R: A habit or disposition infused in the soul that perfects a person in the order of his ultimate end.

Q: What is the ultimate end of a person?

R: We have already said in the first lesson that God alone is the object of a person’s happiness and consequently his ultimate end.

Q: According to this, the supernatural virtues perfect a person in all his relationships that he has or could or must have with God?

R: No doubt.

Q: How many are the supernatural virtues, divine or theological?

R: We have already mentioned in the other part that there are three: faith, hope and charity.

Q: Why are they called theological or divine and supernatural?

R: They are theological because they are directed towards God and according to God all actions and interests, either interior or exterior of a person directs to Him and according to Him, everything even the secrets in our heart. They are called divine because only God infuses them. They are supernatural, because we could not know them with our own light and power and, even though we would know them, we could not possess them with our own efforts.

Let us see what they are.

Faith

2. Q: What is faith?

R: A habit or disposition infused in the soul through which we believe in the revealed truths that the Church proposes to us as such. Or better: it is a habit or disposition infused in the soul which is the beginning of everything of what we are hoping for and through our understanding we are convinced and believed in what we do not see.

Q: What is the object faith?

R: The revealed truth.

Q: The truths that we naturally know are they the object of our faith?

R: What we naturally know we see, and what we see we do not need to believe.

According to this, it could not be the object of our faith but a revealed thing.

3. Q: What is revelation?

R: The knowledge of all those that we do not know but because God has told us.

Q: Is revelation possible?

R: Yes, because it would be an insensible and lack of common sense to think that God cannot speak to all persons.

Q: Is revelation a positive deed? Did God speak to persons?

R: Yes.

Q: To whom, how and when?

R: A person must not only consider himself as an isolated, private individual, but as a member of a community; it is his right to be social; associated with his fellowmen he forms a perfect moral body. If we contemplate persons as individual and private, God, as author of humankind speaks to his heart from the throne of his conscience. He inspires on what to do and what to avoid in the order of his natural happiness, the natural law speaks to him at the depth of his heart: *Do good and do not do evil. Do for others just what you want them to do for you. Do not kill. Do not steal. Worship your God*, etc. [Tb 4,15; Mt 7,12; Lk 6,31; Ps 34, 15]. God, author of natural order, seated on the throne of his heart, speaks to him continuously. A person responds to God, accuses, excuses and defends and condemns himself. To deny this would be stupidity.

Considering a person in his moral body, he hears the voice of God by the ministry of all those who are constituted in the political and religious government. God, as author of natural order, inspire the social body to know what is necessary for his temporal and eternal happiness.

4. Q: I believe this, because there is no need of great proofs. What I ask is: if God has revealed to persons things that are beyond his reach, and what is the people or nation to whom did he direct his word?

R: The Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church is the depository of the Word of God; and for this we have said that faith was to believe

the truths revealed by God proposed as such by the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church.

Q: I wish to know what Church is, how and when God spoke to her, what is it that he said, and if the Church is, or not, infallible in what does it proposes to us to believe?

R: Let us keep this for the following lesson.

LESSON 37. - *The Church of God*

5. Q: What is the Church?

R: Church signifies assemblage. If this assemblage is of bad persons, the Church is malignant; if the spirits of those united is to give to the living and true God the worship due to him, it is the Church of God. In this sense there is triumphant, purgative and militant Church.

Q: What is triumphant Church?

R: An assemblage of predestined that give glory to God render the worship that is due to him and in due manner.

Q: What is purgative Church?

R: An assemblage of souls that render to God in the purgatory the worship that is due to him.

Q: Do the souls in purgatory adore God?

R: No doubt. They are God's friends and they adore him, glorify him and respect him in a way that permits his punishable condition.

Q: What is militant Church?

R: An assemblage of persons on earth who render to the living and true God the worship that is due to him and in due manner.

Q: Tell me something about the Catholicism of the roman Church and about the revelation that she proposes to us.

R: All people who render due worship to the true God belong to her. These people were born in Adam and with Adam. In the paradise God spoke to our first parents and after they sinned he promised them a Redeemer. He spoke to all the patriarchs, who with their families gave due worship according to the peculiar solemnity that were inspired to them. The sons of Adam were forsaken because of

the disorder of passions; a deluge covered the whole earth, and only Noah and his family were saved in his ark, the symbol of the true Church. Then the sons of Noah had been corrupted by the curse of idolatry; God chose among the special people, Abraham and all his posterity. God spoke to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. He spoke to the twelve tribes of Jacob; gave them his word in writing. This written word is the Sacred Scripture, conserved with fidelity until the coming of the promised Messiah. The Roman Church, founded by Jesus Christ and his apostles, received some of these Writings intact, uncorrupted and without alteration, and preserved them as the most precious of all treasures. God spoke to persons through his own Son. He spoke to them through the Apostles. The Holy Spirit has spoken to them and speaks through the Fathers and holy Doctors.

Q: How could it be proven that this Sacred Scripture is a true Word of God?

R: Those who have announced it had proven in their mission with all those marks and signs of divinity that were necessary to convince persons who can reason out and who do not want to be blind at the sight of truth. The divinity of the Sacred Scriptures that is presented to us by the Roman Catholic Church is confirmed in a manner capable of convincing and persuading sensible persons and with sound judgment.

Q: How could you prove the existence of the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, that of a Messiah and all their works recounted to us in these divine books?

R: By tradition. How do we know that Alexander the great, Aristotle, Cicero, and Napoleon Bonaparte existed? Who has transmitted to us their works? The tradition.

Therefore, the tradition proves us the existence of the Patriarchs, of Moses, of the Prophets, of Jesus Christ, of the Apostles, of the Fathers and the Doctors of the Church, and the truth of all their deeds.

Q: Is the Roman Catholic Church infallible in proposing to us what God has revealed or not, what is to be believed or not?

R: Yes, it is. It will not be the people of God and his true Church if this would err.

8. Q: Who is in charge to examine if a truth is revealed or not?

R: This examination, even if it could be done by any particular individual, it pertains by right to the Church.

Q: Who has the obligation to define, decide and resolve that a truth is revealed by God or not?

R: This is a prerogative of the true Church.

Q: To whom does it pertain to propose what is to be believed and what is not to be believed?

R: To the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church.

Q: Are we obliged to believe all that God has revealed?

R: Yes, because God is truly infallible that cannot be deceived and cannot deceive.

Q: Are we obliged to believe as a matter of faith everything that the Church proposes as revealed matter?

R: Yes, the contrary is a heresy.

Q: When there is no sufficient evidence that a thing is or not revealed, what should we do?

R: We will be informed on this if the Church has defined it or not as a matter of faith.

Q: Doubt in this case is a sin?

R: No, because it is not against faith.

Q: Once we are sure that the Church has defined one thing as of faith, is it licit to doubt whether it is or not a revealed truth?

R: No. In this case the doubt is a heresy.

LESSON 38

9. We have already seen what is to be Church and its infallibility, we are interested to know what is it that we have to believe and what is that we do not have to believe; what God said and revealed to all persons.

Q: All that are comprised in the books that formed the Sacred Bible can be believed as revelation?

R: Not only this, but all that the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church has defined as a matter of faith.

Q: Could our beliefs be reduced to a compendium or summary?

R: Yes. The apostles redacted everything in the Creed.¹² The Catechisms of the Christian Doctrine are a compendium [summary] of all that a good catholic is obliged to believe.

Q: I wish to have on hand a redaction that was more explicit than the Creed. Could everything be reduced to some points or articles?

R: Yes. There go the articles of faith to which we add all those that the incredulous attack in our days.

Articles of faith

10. 1st To Believe in only one God, all-powerful, creator of heaven and of earth.

2nd. Believe that he is Father.

3rd. That he is Son.

4th. That he is Holy Spirit.

5th. That the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons and only one true God.

6th. That he is Redeemer.

7th. That he rewards the good and punishes the evil.

These appertain to the divinity. Those that concern the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ are the following:

1st. To believe that the second person of the Holy Trinity, that is, the Son, took flesh in the pure womb of the Virgin Mary, legitimate

¹² It is not to understand literally that the Apostles summarized the Creed. It was done in the Church from the time of its preaching. The creed that is proposed here corresponds to the traditional formula of the catechisms, called Nicene-Constantinople Creed for being redacted or summarized in the ecumenical councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381).

spouse of Joseph, descendant of the royal family of David, from the tribe of Judah.

2nd. That he was born of the Virgin Mary who remained a Virgin at the childbirth, before the childbirth and after the childbirth.

3rd. That he was imprisoned, judged and condemned to death under the power of Pontius Pilate and Caiphas being the High Priest.

4th. That he was crucified and suffered voluntarily the most horrible and ignominious or disgraceful death to save the world and was buried.

5th. That he rose from among the dead on the third day after being crucified.

6th. That he ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

7th. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead, giving each one according to his deeds.

11. With regard to the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church:

1st That it is a visible moral body.

2nd That in her there is a legislative power to direct all living beings on earth, all people, nations, kingdoms and dominions to eternal happiness.

3rd. That in her there is judicial jurisdiction in the external and public forum, and authority to punish with spiritual and corporal penalties all the transgressions of the laws of the Church.

4th. That all Bishops in their respective dioceses are ecclesiastical judges *ex iure*, and could establish and form their respective tribunals to judge the cause of their competence according to the formalities of Canon Law. The Holy Father could do the same in view of the whole Church, and other subaltern prelates within the ambit of their jurisdiction.

5th. That she has the authority to direct the ceremonies and rites of public worship of religion; and on this matter, not even a least be submitted to the temporal secular authorities.

6th. That the Church has the power to pardon the sins of those who are truly contrite and repentant of them.

7th. That she is the only legislator and judge to decide and propose all the questions concerning the dogma, faith and other customs.

8th. That she is infallible in her judgements, decisions and definitions in those that concerns the dogma and the customs.

9th. That our Lord Jesus Christ is in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar under the species of bread and wine.

LESSON 39. – *Internal and external acts of faith*

12. Q: Is faith a virtue?

R: Yes, because it does good to the person who possess it. It makes him good believer, faithful to the revealed truth, member of the body of the Church, and participant of the Kingdom of heaven. It infuses in him the knowledge of those truths, which are the substance, foundation, and beginning of all that we hope from God.

Q: What acts has this virtue?

R: Some are interior and others are exterior.

Q: Which are the interior virtues?

R: To believe the truth in the same way that revelation has presented to us. We have to believe in what is revealed, and in the one who revealed. To the first, as truly revealed; to the second, as eternal truth that cannot deceive nor be deceived, and to the third, as the ultimate end and the happiness of a person.

Q: What are the external acts of faith?

R: One is to confess to God and to acknowledge and recognize him before the people, all the time that circumstances would demand.

13. Q: Is there any obligation to make public confession of our faith?

R: Yes. 1st If we were asked or interrogated about faith by those who have authority. 2nd When a person reached the age of reason. 3rd Always and whenever the temptations will be very strong that puts a person in imminent danger to succumb. 4th If the holy name of God is despised by Christians by blaspheming and practicing

acts of impiety, those who are strong must make confession of their faith so that the fragile, weak and ignorant may not fall. 5th Always and whenever the honour due to God demands and for the necessity and the benefit of the faithful.

The other act of faith is never to deny it, and this, at the cost of our life and of whatever other sacrifice.

14. Q: What are the effects that faith produces in true believers?

R: 1st Faith directs our intellectual eye to the contemplation of its own object, which is God, the eternal truth, and assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, purifies the understanding of all the errors that it has regarding Divinity, its ultimate end and to all that leads to him; 2nd It infuses the holy fear, because it presents God as the highest good and as rewarder of all good and chastiser of evil.

Q: In what is faith an infused supernatural virtue?

R: 1st Because the truths that it proposes to us surpass totally all the faculties of the natural light. 2nd Is infused by the Holy Spirit because without its gifts the heart of a person will not yield to believe, and the understanding will not be able to grasp its natural reasoning nor will it allow to be conquered and to be convinced.

Q: Are the mysteries of our holy faith contrary to reason?

R: No. On the contrary, they are very much conformed to her.

In what a person's one's own light can not grasp to penetrate the mysteries that faith proposes, this is not against reason; nor is it against its inability to fathom the mysteries.

15. Q: How could a person believe for certain in things that are neither known to him nor could be known and are obscure to him?

R: Darkness is propriety of faith, because we do not believe except what we see or what we know. If we had seen, we would have believed. Faith supposes the existence of a supreme intelligence whose sight extends to infinitely cognizable objects, whose understanding, being an infinite virtue, knows truths, which are mysterious, and unintelligible for all the other inferior intelligences. If we believed only what we see and know with our own lights, we would deny the existence of other Superior Intelligences of the persons. If they exist and by which for them is clear and for us is obscure, what they see and know, we believe because they told us. This is faith.

LESSON 40. – *Vices against faith*

16. Q: Faith consists in a just centre?

R: On the part of its object it does not have excess and consequently, it does not have centre; but yes, there is on our part. And under this consideration the centre consists in being neither too credulous nor incredulous but in believing what God has revealed to us, and proposed as such by Mother the Church.

Q: Where is its defect and where is its excess?

R: To deny God for what is convenient is to sin by defect. To attribute to God what is not convenient is to sin by excess. To believe as revelation what is not, and to believe as revealed which does not have all the marks of a true revelation, is the excess of an unsound credulity. To believe easily without examining if what is proposed has all the characters of the divine revelation, is exposing to illusions and deceit.

17. Q: What vices faith has by defect?

R: Only one that comprises many others and this is incredulity; which consists in not believing anymore what is proposed to us as revealed by those who are authorized to propose them.

Q: How many vices comprise incredulity?

R: They are almost innumerable, but could be reduced to a determined number, that are atheism, deism, paganism, Judaism, Protestantism, heresy, apostasy and blasphemy.

Q: What is atheism?

R: To deny the existence of God, and attribute everything to reason and by chance.

Q: Who are the deists?

R: Those who concede or acknowledge the existence of one God, recognizing him as the author of the universe, but deny the revelation.

Q: In what consists paganism?

R: Among these there are some to whom the Gospel has never been proclaimed, and their infidelity is a material paganism. Some others have heard the voice of preaching but they resist it; this is a formal infidelity.

Q: What is Judaism?

R: This error consists in denying the coming of the Messiah, and in believing that the one who is promised by the prophets is yet to come.

Q: What is the principal error of the Protestants?

R: Not accepting or recognizing the Church of God as a visible moral body. From here spring up neither accepting nor recognizing the Roman Pontiff as Vicar of Christ and head of the Church. They deny the entire jurisdiction of prelates, except what their arbitrariness dictate them; they create arbitrators to define the things of faith, interpret Sacred Scriptures according to their complacency and believe what they like and deny what is not convenient.

18. Q: What is heresy?

R: To deny with obstinacy some of the articles of faith that the Catholic Church commands us to believe.

Q: In how many ways could heresy be?

R: There are internal and external heresies; and mixed, internal and external.

Q: What is internal heresy?

R: To consent to an error contrary to our holy faith.

Q: What is external heresy?

R: To manifest with words or marks and indication some error contrary to our holy catholic faith.

Q: What is mixed heresy?

R: To consent to an error and to manifest it with words and external marks and indications.

There are also material and formal heresies.

Q: What is material heresy?

R: To fall in an error contrary to faith not knowing that it could be a revealed truth, or doubting if it is or not proposed by the Church as revealed.

Q: What is formal heresy?

R: What we have already defined: a voluntary error contrary to the sustained faith with obstinacy and determination.

Q: Is doubt a heresy?

R: It could be. To doubt if it is true or not what is presented to us with all the marks and indications of a true revelation, is a heresy. To doubt whether it is true or not which the Church proposed to us as revelation is also heresy.

Q: If one will doubt whether the Church is infallible or not, would it be heresy?

R: Could be or may not be. If the doubt proceeds from obstinate and insuperable ignorance, it could not be; but yes, if the ignorance is vincible or superable. The same thing I say if one will doubt whether a truth is revealed or not.

19. Q: In what consists the apostasy?

R: To retreat from being a believer from what he was; separating from the catholic religion having been related to her before.

Q: Is blasphemy a vice contrary to faith?

R: Yes, it is. It is opposed to the acknowledgement and recognition of faith.

Q: What is blasphemy?

R: An expression through which we deny with contempt and detestation what corresponds only to God, or attributes to God what is not proper.

Q: Can blasphemy become a heresy?

R: If we deny the article of faith with obstinacy and persistence, it is a heresy.

Q: Why is blasphemy said to be a sin against the Holy Spirit?

R: For the reason that the Holy Spirit is love, and the formal blasphemy proceeds from malice and hatred against God.

LESSON 41. – *Hope*

20. Q: What is hope?

R: A supernatural virtue, infused in the soul, by which we hope to obtain the blissfulness of the beatitude with the assistance of the omnipotent God and our good works.

Q: What is the object of our hope?

R: There are primary and secondary objects. Beholding God as the supreme goodness possible to obtain, is the principal object of our hope. The accidental or accessory goodness to the essential glory are also object of our hope.

Q: Could a person in his defiled or perverted nature grow to possess God with his own strength?

R: This is impossible. God is a person's highest good, he alone is capable of making him happy; but arduous, difficult and impossible to be able to obtain with one's own strengths; it is a supernatural end that cannot be fathomed by all human capacities; it surpasses totally man's natural virtues, and under this consideration it is impossible to obtain.

Q: In what then can we anchor our hopes?

R: In the assistance and succour of the omnipotent God and in our good works. God, in his infinite goodness will give us in this life the assistance of his grace, through it we practice virtue and avoid vice. With the practice of all the virtues we will make ourselves worthy of eternal glory; and being worthy of this, God, the just judge, will give it to us after this life.

Q: According to this, we hope for God in this life with the help of his grace to serve him, and in the other, the eternal glory. What motives do we have for hoping in his life the help of grace in order to be able to work well, to practice virtue and to shun from vice?

R: Already we have said that faith is the foundation and the principle of all that we hope to receive from God. Therefore, faith, presents us to God, the Redeemer of all mankind, and in his infinite goodness, offers his friendship, his grace, his mercy and pardon to all contrite and humble sinner. It is true that we lost the help of grace by our original sin, but Jesus merited it for us through his life, passion and death. God promised this help to us. These promises are given to us written in the sacred books. These Scriptures are signed with the finger of God and sealed with the blood of his only begotten Son. Our hopes are consequently founded in the omnipotence, goodness, wisdom and fidelity of God, and in our good works.

21. Q: Is hope a virtue?

R: Yes. Because it presents God as the object, although arduous and difficult to possess, but possible; with this we move towards him.

Q: Why is a virtue supernatural?

R: Because only God can inspire in the soul. It is a theological virtue because it beholds God as the goodness possible to obtain.

Q: Do the condemned have hope?

R: They cannot have this virtue, because they look at God as an impossible object to possess. It is impossible, because they lack the means that are good deeds and the help of grace.

Q: Do the souls of Purgatory have this virtue?

R: Yes they have, because for them God is the highest good, possible to possess in time. It is possible through the satisfaction of the chastisement due to their sins.

Q: Do the blessed have this virtue?

R: No. Because they already possess the virtue.

Q: Could the hope of a pilgrim reach with metaphysical certainty the object that he aspires?

R: No. *As long as man lives in the mortal flesh neither he should nor he can be certain, but with fear and trembling he should work out for one's salvation* [Phil 2,12].

Q: Could there be some signs to know if a pilgrim will be saved or not?

R: Sure signs nobody could have. If some could be and would be certain it is a virtue; but we see the virtuous converted in vicious and vice versa. Nevertheless, we can guess that the virtuous, if they persevere in their journey in life and practice the means, they will obtain their end. The just can be sure of the eternal life if they do not deviate from the way of virtue.

LESSON 42. – *Vices opposed to hope*

22. Q: Hope consists in a just centre?

R: On the part of the object that we look at, it does not have excess, nor centre. The more supported is the object of our hope in

the help of the Omnipotent God and in our good deeds, the better. Here there can be no excess. But there can be defect and excess under other considerations.

23. Q: What are the vices opposed to hope?

R: Despair and presumption.

Q: What is despair?

R: A vice opposed to hope by defect, by which a pilgrim considers God as the good arduous, difficult and impossible to obtain.

Q: From where this vice spring out?

R: It could spring out from some error contrary to faith, or from a false notion about the goodness, mercy and justice of God. If the attributes of God that corresponds to him, like goodness and mercy are denied; if there is no belief in the help of his grace and the remission of sins, this despair is an effect produced by one's infidelity. In this case the desperate is culpable of the sin of infidelity. The person must rectify his judgment by faith with regard to the goodness and mercy of God; once the cause is removed, the effect is removed. What is error in understanding is a sin in the will. To yield to a heresy that denies the mercy of God is a sin that leads to the abyss of the desperate. We cannot hope except those we believe possible to obtain. If a person does not believe in the mercy of God he cannot hope in her.

Not only the speculative error can produce despair but also the experience. A pilgrim can believe all that our Holy Mother Church proposes and yet, makes a vicious application of the general principles of faith. He can have pure principles but corrupt in practice and application of them. The person could believe that God offers the help of his grace, mercy and forgiveness to all pilgrims, and to give up believing that God gives them to him. To yield to this practical error is a sin of despair. This sin can proceed from merely a practical error; and this is found with much frequency in erroneous and scrupulous consciences. If the persons who fall in this error do all in the service of God that the human weakness permits them, they must discard this error, and once the cause is removed, the effect is restrained. Neither one's own faults and miseries nor the multitude of sins are sufficient motive to be desperate of the mercy of God. It is

precisely because we are what we are, fragile, weak, miserable, sinners, that God offers his grace, forgiveness and mercy. Our miseries are the stairway which leads us to God, the supreme goodness. This error could also come from a vicious, intemperate and disordered life. In this case despair is also an effect of an adverse life; but, even if the life of the person be it vicious, he could and must hope: 1st that God will give him his grace and forgiveness if he repents of his sins; 2nd should and must hope that, doing what the human weakness permits him, God will give his hand to overcome the passions and come out of the abyss of his sins and guilt; 3rd should and must hope that, getting out of his sins and guilt with the help of the omnipotent God, serving him in this life, he will possess him in the next life. A person could sin against all moral virtues, and will not fall in the sin of despair. Even though one has committed the most heinous sins, there is no founded motive to put a seal on his disgrace committing another serious one, which is despair.

24. Q: What is presumption?

R: A vice opposed to hope by excess, by which a person hopes for the eternal life only through the help of God without doing good deeds, or with his own strengths and deeds without the help of the omnipotent God.

Q: Persons are obliged to make acts of hope?

R: Being one of the most noble and principal virtues, it cannot be acquired and be perfect in it without acts of good deeds; we must love this virtue in order not to fall in the abyss of the desperate, and be preserved from a false and dangerous presumption.

LESSON 43. – *Charity*

25. Q: What is charity?

R: A supernatural virtue infused in the soul, through which we love God for being infinitely good, and to our neighbours as ourselves.

Q: Is charity a virtue?

R: It is not only a virtue, but the queen of all virtues.

Q: What is the object of this virtue?

R: God, as the highest and infinite goodness, is the primary object. We and our neighbours are the secondary object.

Q: Who are our neighbours?

R: All those who enjoy the glory of God, or those who are in the possibility and capacity of possessing him.

Q: Which order must be kept in charity?

R: To love God primarily.

Q: What are the degrees in the love of God?

R: 1st to love him for fear of being punished by his justice; 2nd as much as he is the object of our happiness, with the hope of possessing him in glory. The first is servile love, the second is selfish love. 3rd to love him for being infinitely good and loving in himself. This is pure and filial love.

Q: Is the servile and interested love bad?

R: No, because it is love of God.

26. Q: After God to whom and with which order do we have to love?

R: First ourselves.

Q: How do we understand this love of ourselves?

R: God is the highest good, universal and the beginning from where proceeds everything good. We have to love God for being the highest good. We have to love ourselves for what we are and have from God, and to love our neighbours for the same reason, for what they are and have from God.

Q: We have to love our body?

R: Yes, because it is created to participate according to his capacity with the soul in glory.

Q: We have to love it as much as our soul?

R: No. Our soul is much more noble and excellent. It has more of God and for this we have to love it more than the body.

Q: In what consists the true love of soul?

R: In beautifying it, enriching it and embellishing it with all the virtues; and to save it and to cleanse it from the hideousness of vice.

Q: In what consists the love to our body?

R: In subjugating it to the spirit, rectifying and moderating the passions, and serving it as means for the practice of all the virtues.

Q: The maceration of the flesh, disciplines, vigils, abstinences, mortification of senses, fasting and many other things disgruntling the body are against charity?

R: If all of these are regulated by prudence, it is true love. On the contrary, leaving the reins of a bridle that it may run like the untamed horse towards its own likes and pleasures, this is to hate it and to prepare wood to blaze eternally in the eternal fire.

27. Q: What do we understand by self-love or egoism?

R: All forms of love that is not regulated by the laws of charity.

Q: Do we have to love our neighbours more than ourselves?

R: No. *“You will love – says the law - your neighbours as yourselves.* [Lev 19, 18; Gal 5,14]. The love of self is the rule and model for the love of neighbour. We love ourselves for what we are and what we have from God, and for the same reason we have to love our neighbours.

Q: Is there any order in the love of our neighbours?

R: Yes. The more they have from God, the more they are lovable. From here is the basic motive we have to love the saints more than the pilgrims and among them those who are more holy.

Q: Are there other special motives that oblige us to love some more than the others?

R: Yes. Such as: affinity - relationship with the kindred, friendship, benefactors and many more.

Q: The husband must love more his wife, and wife to her husband more than the children and parents?

R: Yes, because they are of the same flesh.

Q: The husband and wife must love more their children more than their parents?

R: Yes, because the children come from them.

Q: A son must love his father more than his mother?

R: According to the laws of affinity there must be no predilection or preference; but under other concerns can love one more than the other.

Q: We have to love other relatives according to the degrees of affinity?

R: Yes.

Q: We have to love friends?

R: Yes. The laws of friendship prescribe them.

Q: Must we love the benefactors with preference to the strangers?

R: Charity or beneficence is a motive of special love.

28. Q: To be a fellow-citizen and well-known is a motive of special love?

R: Yes, because they are more neighbours than the others.

Q: We have to love enemies?

R: In the same way as to love oneself, because they are our neighbours. We have to hate what is adverse in them and to love what they have from God; they have a soul and a body capable of rejoicing one day with us in glory.

Q: To what are we obliged the love of our enemies?

R: Not to do or wish bad to anyone; to show them signs of kindness that we manifest to all others. To do them those favours that we do not deny to other fellow-citizens.

LESSON 44. – *Acts and effects of charity*

29. Q: Which are the acts of charity?

R: 1st to love God for being infinitely good and lovable; 2nd. to love our neighbours as ourselves; 3rd to be happy for what God is, being, an infinitely loving, and good to our neighbours. Joy, peace and mercy are the interior effects of charity. Charity, kindness, almsgiving and the fraternal correction are its exterior acts.

Q: What is joy?

R: An act of charity by which we are happy that God is infinitely lovable and for that we delight of the good of our neighbours.

Q: What is understood here by peace?

R: The union of all our affections and desires and appetites leading, moving and directing towards the object, which is God, the infinitely good and lovable.

30. Q: Is peace the same as harmony?

R: No. Harmony is the union of different wills and persons on the same object. Where there is peace there is harmony, but not always where there is harmony there is peace.

Q: What is mercy?

R: A virtue of charity by which a person is compassionate of the miseries of others with the intention of helping him in his necessities according to his possibilities.

Q: What is beneficence or kindness?

R: An act of charity by which we desire and do well to our neighbours according to our possibilities.

Q: What must be kept in mind in the act of beneficence or kindness?

R: The same that we have already proposed speaking of charity, because beneficence or kindness is an act of charity.

Q: What is almsgiving?

R: It is an act of charity by which a person, motivated by God's compassion, gives to the poor- needy something in assistance to his necessity.

Q: Is almsgiving related to mercy?

R: Yes. It is commanded by mercy as an interior act and by beneficence or kindness as an exterior act.

Q: Almsgiving according to this will it be a command of charity through mercy and beneficence?

R: There is no doubt.

Q: How many kinds of almsgiving are there?

R: Two: corporal and spiritual.

Q: What and how many are the corporal acts of mercy?

R: Seven: 1st To give food to the hungry; 2nd To give drink to the thirsty; 3rd To clothe the naked; 4th To visit the sick and imprisoned; 5th To receive the pilgrims; 6th To rescue the captives 7th To bury the dead.

Q: How many and what are the spiritual acts of mercy?

R: Also seven and are: 1st To teach the ignorant; 2nd To give good counsel to those in need; 3rd To console the sorrowful; 4th To admonish those who erred; 5th To forgive the offenses of our neighbours; 6th To suffer with patience the adversities and the weaknesses of others; 7th To pray for the living and the dead.

Q: Which are more important, the corporal or spiritual acts of mercy?

R: The spiritual, because they help the person in his most important and noblest part that is his soul.

LESSON 45. – *Precepts of charity imposed on persons*

31. Q: Did God give some precept on charity?

R: There is one that contains everything. The entire law of the Gospel is embodied in the precept of love: *Love God, and your neighbour as yourself.* [Lev 19, 18; Mt 22,39; Gal 5,14; Rom 13,9]; and here is the entire perfection of persons.

Q: How and when are we obliged to give alms?

R: For this we have to heed to the circumstances. The neighbour could be a stranger, or relative or benefactor. He could be in an extreme and severe necessity, or could simply be poor-needy. The one who gives alms can be in a better or lesser possibility. He could have only the necessary, or, more than what is necessary, or something superfluous and frugal. All these circumstances, will resolve the case, and it is prudence that will inspire what could or must be done in order to practise this virtue.

Fraternal correction

32. Q: Is fraternal correction an almsgiving?

R: Yes. We have counted it among the spiritual acts of mercy.

Q: Which is the order that must be kept in mind in fraternal correction so that it would be an act of true charity?

R: The following: See if the offence is public or private. If it is private, it must be kept private and to correct it privately. As charity

does the corrections and that it may be true alms, the interest of the person and the welfare of the public must be observed. Love searches and speculate for the right means to obtain the correction of the neighbour. If he cannot profit from it, it will serve other friends; if the fault is private that will not permit anybody to discover. If the correction will lead to greater evil, it must be deferred, tolerated and to use prayer. If there is hope of correction or profiting it, apply those means that are mellow and moderate that charity inspires. If the offense is public, corrections must be done publicly; being given advices once, twice or three times by this or by others with much love and benignity. If he will not listen and the scandal can be tolerated, use prayer, patience and endurance. There are faults that a person cannot be corrected except by time, because of the change of circumstances that surround him, and getting out of this situation he corrects himself. If the offense is scandalous, see if the scandal is tolerable or not. If it does not cause serious damage or grievances to the public, religion or state, it must be tolerated, for the intention in the correction of a sinner is not to use force of authority but only after charity as been exhausted, and applying all the means of mercy, love and benignity that inspires. If the scandal is intolerable, and after applying all the means that charity inspires, then the offense must be restrained by justice. In this case it must be denounced first by the prelate. He must give him all the warnings and advices that love inspires as a father and good pastor. If the scandal does not demand a prompt remedy, the prelate must act as a representative of the most tender and affectionate of all mothers, the Church, and does all that spring from charity. If the scandal is tolerable he must be given sufficient time and wait with patience that God may open some means to convert him. If the admonishes are not useful, the power of justice must be used and to judge him according to the legitimate formalities, at least those that are essential to the judicial jurisdiction. This order is essentially necessary so that the paternal and fraternal correction will be true spiritual alms and consequently an act of beneficence and of charity.

Q: Is fraternal correction the duty only of the prelates and priests?

R: It obliges all, with the difference that the priests do it as a duty of their ministry and the faithful, as a strict precept of charity.

Q: Are the prelates, the civil and judiciary authorities obliged to correct public scandals?

R: Yes. It is their function. And the parents have the same obligation for with their children.

Q: The subjects could and must correct their prelates?

R: Yes, but with respect and reverence, observing the circumstances, the matter and the individuals.

LESSON 46. – *Vices opposed to charity*

33. Q: How many and which are the vices opposed to charity?

R: The capital among them is hatred, which opposes love. Jealousy is against happiness. Dissension, division, dispute, quarrel, tumult, commotion, sedition, war and schism are opposed to peace. And the scandal is opposed to beneficence or kindness.

Q: In how many ways hatred can be considered?

R: Against God and against the neighbours. A person could fall in the sin of hatred against God, regarding him as legislator and universal governor who punishes the criminal and culpable.

Q: Where is the fault in hatred against neighbours?

R: In hating those for what they have from God, as to their existence and all the gifts of nature and the graces that are in them. To hate the fault, sins, adversities and defects of the persons is not sin.

Q: Is hatred the major of all sins?

R: Yes, because it opposes to the most noble, to the most excellent and to the queen of all virtues.

34. Q: What is laziness or sloth?

R: A wearing-off of enthusiasm and intention in doing good, or sadness that aggravates and overwhelms a person and prevents and dissuades him from doing good work.

Q: To what is laziness opposed to?

R: Under the same sense that we had explained, it goes against charity, because joy is an effect of this virtue.

Q: Is it a capital vice?

R: Yes, because it is the root and the cause of many others.

Q: What is jealousy?

R: A disordered unhappiness towards the good of neighbour.

This vice consists in which a person becomes unhappy to the prosperity and happiness of his neighbour; he becomes sad instead of being glad.

Q: Is it a capital vice?

R: Yes. It generates other vices that are: grumbling, calumny and defamation, the joy of seeing the neighbour oppressed and sadness of knowing his prosperity.

35. Q: What is schism?

R: A vice opposed to charity, by which a person separates from the moral body of the Church. This could confirmed him or hinder him from submitting to the head, or not willing to communicate with his members.

Q: Is war a vice or sin?

R: It can be lawful, and it is when the public good demands it.

Q: What is scandal?

R: It is an unrighteous saying or deed that gives the neighbour an occasion to fall and to be ruined.

36. Q: How many kinds of scandal are there?

R: Two kinds: Pharisaic scandal and the scandal of the weak. The first comes from malice, and the second from ignorance or weakness. There are active and passive scandals. The first consists in that which gives an occasion to fall; and the other is to fall in the knothole or in the precipice that the other has prepared.

Q: To avoid scandal, is it to leave the works that are naturally good?

R: If the scandal is pharisaic, no; but if it comes from ignorance or weakness, it could be hidden or deferred until explanations are given to take him out from ignorance. If done and these are scandalized, already the scandal is considered pharisaic. In this case prudence must heed to the circumstances of the persons and of their affairs; it must consider if the good works are of obligation, if it is for the common and public good, if the good are of supererogation, i.e., to do more than duty requires, etc.

Q: Is scandal a sin?

R: Yes. It goes against love of neighbour and attacks the beneficence.

LESSON 47. – *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

37. Having seen what virtues are, let us say something about each particular gift.

Q: What do we mean by the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

R: A quality infused in the soul that disposes all the strengths of a person to follow the movements of the Holy Spirit.

Q: How many are they?

R: Seven: Wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety and fear of God.

Q: What is the gift of understanding?

R: An infused quality through which the understanding of a person is comforted and fortified to see, to contemplate and to meditate the objects proposed by faith.

Q: What is the gift of wisdom?

R: An infused quality through which a person forms a right and just judgment of God and divine matters.

Q: What is the gift of knowledge?

R: An infused quality by which a person from the human and created things forms a right and just judgement, distinguishing what is to be believed and what is not to be believed.

Q: What is the gift of counsel?

R: A quality infused in the soul by which reason is strengthened, comforted and prompted by the Holy Spirit to acquire, to search, and to inspire whatever is convenient to do that is directed to the ultimate end.

38. Q: What faculty is made perfect by these four gifts?

R: The intellectual faculties.

Q: To what virtues does it belong?

R: The gift of understanding and the gift of knowledge to faith; the gift of wisdom to charity, and the gift of counsel to prudence.

Q: What is the gift of piety?

R: A quality infused in the soul through which a person is disposed and inspired by the Holy Spirit to give God the love, affection, respect that is due to him as the universal Father of all humankind.

Q: To which virtue does this gift belong?

R: To justice.

Q: What is the gift of fortitude?

R: An infused quality in the soul through which a person is inspired, strengthened and disposed by the Holy Spirit to go towards his ultimate end in spite of all dangers, evils, pains and torments that could occur in his life journey.

Q: To which virtue does this gift belong?

R: To fortitude.

Q: What is the gift of fear of God?

R: A quality infused in the soul through which a person is inspired by the Holy Spirit, to submit to God, respecting him as his superior and fearing him as a Father.

Q: In how many ways fear can be considered?

R: There are chaste and filial fear, servile fear, perverse and worldly fear. Only filial fear is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Q: To which virtue does this gift belong?

R: To hope as well as to temperance.

Excellence of virtues and gifts

39. Q: Are the virtues more excellent than the gifts?

R: The supernatural or theological virtues are nobler than the gifts, because they are given as assistance and for the perfection of the virtues. The gifts are more excellent than the natural or inherent.

Q: Among the virtues are there some more excellent than the others?

R: Yes. The intellectual virtues are more than the moral virtues. Among the moral virtues there are four, which are more important than others and are: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. The theological virtues surpass in dignity to the moral and intellectual virtues.

Q: What is the principal of all the virtues?

R: Charity is the queen. She gives shape to all virtues. Helped by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, like an agent, it inspires, directs, and builds up all the strengths, actions and the life of a person toward his ultimate end that is, God.

SECTION THREE

THE VIRTUES DISTINGUISHED IN THE INDIVIDUALS

LESSON 48

40. We have already defined what the distinguished virtues in themselves are. We have contemplated all the different kinds in which it is divided. We have spoken of them in common and of each one in particular. Now it lacks only to see them in its theme. Let us now contemplate them in its degree of perfection, and in all states, classes and duties of the society.

Q: In how many ways a person could be considered?

R: In two: as an individual and as member of a family and part of the social body.

Looking at a person constituted in the society with other persons, he is obliged to practice certain virtues that will not be necessary if he was a solitary. Let us see which these are. The perfection of the social body demands that each member occupies his own place, and practices the activities and duties that are peculiar to him.

The end of knowing the virtues that a person is obliged to acquire as a member of a social body, we will examine in the lessons that will follow these three points: 1st the distinct duties and activities of this body; 2nd its states; 3rd its various degrees of perfection. Seeing this, we are convinced that a person in the practise of these virtues has to observe not only to what he ought to practice as an individual, but to all that are proper of his duty, of his state and of its degree of perfection. Let us go to the first.

Q: How many are the ways of life?

R: Three: Active life, contemplative life and the one mixed with action and contemplation.

DUTIES

Active life

41. Q: In what consists the active life?

R: This is found practically in all the members of a social body who have their duties and activities regulated by the work of skills in trades. To see this with more clarity, one must keep in mind that this body has infinite necessities that needs assistance, and to this end its author creates, organizes, places its members, and classify their duties and activities. This moral body has to eat and drink. Farming with agricultural skills presents on the table the fruits of a person's work; and here infinite members are destined to this end. One has to dress up; and here comes so many factories, industries and machineries that are dedicated to weave silk, cotton, linen, hemp, wool. Here the work is classified as: weavers, shoemakers, manufacturers of hats and many other tradesmen. To save the social body against the harshness of times structure is necessary; and to this are disposed the work of plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers, manufacturer of iron, steel, lead and other metals. These must be directed to man's happiness. The political and civil governments have organized the persons' works, ministries and activities for their temporal and material needs. Likewise, the ecclesiastical governments attend to their eternal and spiritual needs. For their health care they have doctors, medicines, surgery, and pharmacists. For the practise of these duties education is necessary. Here comes many schools, institutes, seminaries, etc.

The active life consists, then, in the fulfilment of duties, activities or work that each one practices in the social body.

42. Q: Which are the virtues that must be practised by active life?

R: Each member practice his functions according to the object to which they are directed. The members of active life must direct

their life, actions and virtues, at the fulfilment of their duties and status. They must practice those virtues that correspond to their state, and leave others that are incompatible with theirs.

Q: Let us put a practical case.

R: A farmer and a gardener have to sanctify themselves working on the land. To pass long hours in the church, to assist the activities of public worship of religion, are acts of virtue. If this is not an obligation for him, and to do this during working days, may cause damage to his work. And under this consideration, those acts of virtue that are for some praiseworthy, may be for others condemnable.

Q: Is active life necessary for the social body?

R: Yes. One has to eat, drink, dress up and sustain ones corporal and spiritual necessities, and without active life it will perish of misery. To put in order the life, actions and the virtues to the assistance of the corporal necessities of the society, is to serve the public and common good; and if this is done for God, this active life is a continuous practice of beneficence. We have already said that beneficence is a virtue that belongs to charity that disposes the active life for the good of neighbours.

LESSON 49. – *Contemplative life*

43. Q: In what consists the contemplative life?

R: If the social body has multitude members established in their duties to the assistance of their corporal necessities, being formed of spiritual substances and has to continue its existence, it is necessary to have many more members disposed in their activities for the assistance of the soul. What is bread for the body is truth for the soul, because it lives and is nourished by it. If a farmer before he could offer on the table the bread, wine, oil and other fruits for the nourishment of social body, has to work, cultivate, and learn the trade; in the same way persons destined by the providence to give nourishment to the soul need to read, meditate, contemplate the eternal truths. Here is the contemplative life.

Q: The contemplative life is necessary for the social body?

R: Yes, and of absolute necessity, as we have just said. Truth is life and the nourishment of the soul, in the same way that bread is the nourishment and life of the body. It is of absolute necessity to have a portion of members in the social body, intrinsically chosen, organized, ready and willing to read, meditate and contemplate the eternal truths with the capacity to teach and share as bread of life to all other classes of the society.

Solitary life

44. Q: The solitary life that Jesus Christ and his saints have given so admirable examples, is it contemplative life?

R: If the solitary separates himself from the society with the end of studying meditating and searching for truth, his life belongs to contemplation.

Q: A solitary man is a dead and useless member to the social body?

R: If he lives a solitary life in hatred to the social life, or if he separates himself from other people because he does not have those social and civic virtues that are necessary for living with them, in this case the solitary life is malevolent. But if the solitary person resolves to contemplate the eternal virtues in the solitude, his life is of greater merit than the active life. 1st The solitary life, considered in itself is a political and moral death that consists in being separated from business and acquaintances of friends and other members. This voluntary sacrifice is of great merit because by it a person triumphs and wins himself. 2nd. He is subjugated to the sufferings of this mode of living, which are many and very serious, already of body and of soul. 3rd The object that the solitary proposes is in itself noble and grandiose, which is, contemplation and meditation of certain truths, that in the bustle and noise of social life, cannot be seen or examined, but very slowly and imperfectly, the reason of the digressions and distractions that the world brings with it. It could do well all the services better than living in the society, and could be in a manner more secure and certain to deal with God the material and spiritual interests of the society in prayer. It could also be for her intermediator, lawyer, intercessor before the throne of God. This

duty and these activities are absolutely necessary for the motive that, God desiring to be acknowledged as the source of all goodness, wants that we ask him. To obtain from God the corporal and spiritual salvation of all persons is a very remarkable ministry, necessary and advantageous, but the way is very laborious and painful, because it demands great sacrifice from a person. To ascend in spirit of prayer to the throne of God is not the same to prostrate with the body before the throne of earthly king. For this duty, solitude, silence, detachment from creatures, fasting, mortification of senses, deceleration of passions, are virtues that a contemplative must have or acquire in a heroic degree.

Under this point of view a solitary can truly make in his solitude one of the activities and duties of the most necessary and laborious, but meritorious and advantageous for the social body.

45. Q: To live a solitary and contemplative life, is it necessary to be confined in the monasteries and to go to the deserts?

R: No. A person could very well live a contemplative life in the midst of the people; but we have already said that, as the virtues of contemplatives are silence, solitude, detachment from creatures and other resemblances, these could be practiced better out of the society than in the midst of the world.

Contemplative and active life

46. Q: According to what is still to be said, the contemplative life is of more value than the active life?

R: Distinguishing the active, the solitary and the contemplative life in themselves with respect to their objects and actions, there is no doubt that the contemplative is more advantageous, necessary and meritorious.

Q: And the mixed of action and contemplation?

R: It is of greater merit than the two distinguished as separated; because in this case the mixed life is the same contemplative that shares the doctrine of truth that has been acquired in solitude. Notwithstanding, the solitary can practice this mixed life of solitary without leaving his solitude. He could do the duty of a lawyer, me-

diator and intercessor between God and people. This life will be established in this case for the common good of the society.

LESSON 50. – *Ecclesiastical and civil, economic and monastic government*

47. Q: The social body needs governments?

R: Yes. In the manner that a big machine where there are innumerable parts could not move, nor could serve its purpose for which it was constituted if it is not set in order; neither can the social body if it is not directed and well disposed to go towards its natural and supernatural happiness. It will be inactive and static. It needs resources and to be impelled that it may move and this impeller and resources are the governments.

48. Q: For what is the ecclesiastical government or the hierarchy of priests?

R: To lead, to direct and to guide the social body to its eternal happiness.

Q: And the political or civil government?

R: This impels, lead and guide the society towards the natural and temporal happiness.

Q: I wish to see with more clarity the need of these governments. What is it that makes them necessary in the social body?

R: God brought forth the natural and supernatural order in the universe. So there will be an order in a multitude, there must be means more or less: superiors, subordinates and inferiors; lower classes, higher and medium classes. The lowermost is governed by the subordinates and these by the most noble. This is in the good order of things. According to the natural order, the angels are the most noble among the creatures, the people are to be led and directed to their happiness; deficient of means and subordinates are: with regard to the temporal happiness, the political government, civil, military and economic; and those concerned with the eternal happiness, the ecclesiastical, monastic and religious.

49. Q: Which are the peculiar virtues and characteristics of the governing body?

R: Since the common good is the object where all actions, duties and activities are directed, prudence, justice and other acts of beneficence are the virtues that must excel in them.

Q: The administration of the authorities belongs to active, contemplative and mixed life?

R: They are agents whose actions are directed to the government of the society. This pertains to active life. They could be agents of mixed life if the administrator shares and gives what has been received in the contemplation.

50. Q: What are the virtues that a father of a family must have?

R: Prudence, charity and other virtues of a good house master or administrator.

Q: Are the virtues of those who govern the same as that of the subjects?

R: No. In a way that the leader must be disposed and organized it is very different to lead and to be led. There is great difference in being an active impeller or to be a machine. Obedience, humility, submission are the virtues necessary for the subjects. The fidelity to the orders of the superiors, accuracy, precision and the promptitude in executing the commands of those who govern, are the virtues that distinguish the governance.

LESSON 51. – *The states of life in the social body*

51. Q: What is a state of life?

R: It is a lifestyle or manner of living that brings with it stability, firmness, constancy and immovability or non-transferability.

Q: How can the state of life be distinguished from a duty?

R: Duty is not permanent and the state of life is, as the name says.

Q: Are there different states of life in the social body?

R: Yes. There are.

Q: What are they?

R: The state of marriage, the state of clergy and the religious state.

Q: Why and in what are these states?

R: A person is bound to marriage by the laws of contract and of the Church; the clergy is also by the sacred orders; and the religious by the solemn vows.

Q: All other individuals who are not bound neither by matrimonial laws nor by sacred orders nor by solemn vows, how are they designated?

R: Single or free.

The state of Vocation

52. Q: To whom we have to consult to know the vocation?

R: Primarily to God. He is the author of the social body; he created the members and organized it. He alone knows the place that correspond to the members in the social body and the duty that they must practice in it. God alone inspires and directs the state of life and duty that we have to take.

Q: Is a person free to make a choice of the state of life or not?

R: In this a person is perfectly free, and is not subject to anybody, nor the sons to their parents, neither the servants to their employers, nor the subjects to their superiors. Any maltreatment, abuse and oppression is inhuman and cruelty. The parents to their children, superiors to their subjects cannot under any pretext dispute the minimum of this freedom.

53. Q: Could a person guess in the choice of his state of life?

R: If a person wishes to work as rational and sensible, God, the author of natural and supernatural order of social body, will give so many signs to know it, if he does not achieve it will be his own fault. There is the tendency, the natural inclinations and many special interior calls, by which a person could heed to. Just like the vineyard, because it is created to produce grapes, it has its natural tendencies and go towards a natural order necessary to this end; in the same way each plant from the day it was planted or sown naturally tends towards producing leaves, branches and fruits according to its kind; in the same way in the natural body each member gives signs from the creation for its function for what it was

created, organized and disposed, of the same manner a person, heeds to his inclinations and natural and supernatural tendencies, he could very well know the state of life and the duty that has been created, organized, disposed and prepared by the Author of the same body. When God calls a member of the body for an activity, he gives all the necessary dispositions, all the graces and natural and supernatural gifts which that state of life or duty demands.

Moreover, God makes known his will, and the unfolding or discovery by his actions and deeds. He who was born poor and in simple humble condition must not presume to be called to become king, and in case God wants that he would be, he will discover his will by the actions and deeds.

54. Q: Are the virtues of the single, married, clergy and religious the same?

R: Considering in common, all must have all the virtues; but each state of life and duty has its own, without which they will fail in their duties and responsibilities.

Q: Which are the virtues proper for the single, the married, the clergy and the religious?

R: The compendium or summary that we have redacted does not permit us to extend more on this lesson. Consult the ascetical Doctors who have written very extensively on this.

LESSON 52. – *The virtues in various and different degrees of perfection in the same state of life and duty*

55. Q: We have already seen that in the social body there are different duties, activities and states of life; we agreed that a person in the practice of virtues must consider his state of life and duty, and must apply to his position in the practice of these, searching for and acquiring what are his own to be perfect. We desire to know how we can find virtues, in some more, in various individuals of same state of life and duty; or to explain myself better, I would like to know if some of these same virtues are found in the social body in diverse and different degrees of perfection.

R: There is no doubt. The virtues in the social body are in different degrees of perfection. We see this in the human body; its faculty, capacity and senses could be seen very weak, feeble and imperfect at the first moment of its formation. At birth, the body is becoming healthy; it grows and increases in strength and vigour in the natural virtues until thirty years of age. The vigour and strength of the natural virtue found in different bodies varies in different degrees of perfection. Charity and all the virtues that accompany these natural virtues are seen in different degrees of perfection in different states of life and duties in the social body.

56. Q: Must one practice the virtues according to the degree of perfection in what he has?

R: Yes. And this is so interesting to know that ignorance and confusion could cause grave adversities to the soul. If a child would wish to lift up a heavy thing, that a strong and robust person could move, the child will faint and will fret and will grievously vex. If a beginner practices virtue or presumes to practice the deeds of a perfect person, relying on his own strengths, would fall in the same desperation. In a way the child works, and the youth in the other. *When I was a child – said St. Paul the apostle – I used to talk like a child, think like a child, reason like a child. When I became man I put childish ways aside* [1 Cor 13, 11].

57. Q: Which are these degrees of perfection?

R: Already we have spoken on this briefly in lesson 7.

Q: As I see, a person in the practice of virtues must bear in mind his state of life, duty and strength?

R: Certainly he must do so, and if not he will be exposed to commit thousands of excesses. The virtues do not destroy the social body, be this - political and civil, moral and religious, - but that it perfects them in all their activities, duties, ministries, actions and deeds. The virtue perfects a person little by little, with time, through the practice of virtues, each one according to his state of life, duty and vocation.

58. Q: The miracles, prophecies, gift of tongues and other similar graces, are these virtues?

R: No. they are graces given free.¹ God gives them to whom he wants and when he wants.

Q: Does God give them to the saints and the virtuous?

R: Not to all, nor always to the virtuous.

Q: Are means necessary for perfection?

R: Not in themselves, but it could serve for self-perfection and for the perfection of others. It is useful to perfection if one makes good use of them.

Q: I have heard and read of some saints who had ecstasies, raptures, visions, apparitions, locutions, rising in high. Is this necessary for perfection?

R: It is not. If it was, God would lead everyone through this way.

Q: Does this mean at least great sanctity and perfection?

R: Nothing of this. Graces being given free, God can give them to the perfect and to the imperfect, to the weak and to the strong; and it cannot be taken as sure and infallible sign of sanctity and perfection of a person, because the virtues perfects a person, and all these graces are not virtues, but means to acquire the virtue, to enable it, to sustain it and to conserve it. See what St. John of the Cross has written on this.²

¹ On the graces freely given or charisms in relation to the grace that makes one pleasing to God. St. Thomas, *Suma Teológica*, 2, 111,1

² Does not remit to one concrete text of St. John of the Cross; in general to the doctrine of same exposed, above all, in *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk 2, chap. 17-32.

APPENDIX
SCHOOL OF VIRTUE
JOYS

In praise and glory of our Lady of Virtues, who is venerated in the church of St. Augustine, and in those who gloss the theological, cardinal virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

For the student who implores
Be teacher, be health.
Be Mary, Protector
Of this School of Virtue.

The Faith has to save us,
That is the very sublime virtue,
Do that she incites us
To believe without doubt:
Everything could be obtained,
Being you the mediator.
Be, etc.

Lasting hope
We will have until death;
All we want to follow
The holy and true law;
And, the world waits for
To be saved by you, Lady.
Be, etc.

Charity orders me
To help the destitute
Even to assist the suffering
With diligent goodness;
From the soul the sickness
Heal wise teacher
Be, etc.

To work well the prudence
Is infallible way:
Be our divine north
And continue providence;
From the soul all sickness
Heal for us now onwards.
Be, etc.

Oh great celestial Queen!
Be always favourable
We long for, and justice
To give to each one;
From vile mortal sin
Free us Divine Pastor.
Be, etc.

Infuse in us Fortitude
To work according we should
And so finally we may reach
The total beauty of God
If the purity of our soul
May adorn for ever.
Be, etc.

Are the ardent passions
The cruel enemy of the soul
The temperance its punishment
The remedy your gifts

Lighten the hearts
In your love that seduce
Be, etc.

The gift of wisdom
Of uncreated Spirit
May be sent by you
To all this company,
Being our north and guide
Shining and celestial dawn.
Be, etc.

Separate my understanding
From all that is worldly
And only in the celestial
Find our souls be content;
Keep for us a place
Where the Supreme Being dwells.
Be, etc.

How happy creature
Who takes the good counsel!
And who sees in the mirror
Your, divine beauty!
Such secure salvation
Will obtain at the last hour.
Be, etc.

Fortitude until overcoming
The dangers of this world,
Where everything is unclean
Always we have to
Liberate us from Lucifer

Your generous grace
Be, etc.

Give us pure Virgin, Knowledge
To follow what is true
And separate us from the uncertain.
Without doubt will have indulgence
If always in your obedience
Remains the one who prays to you.
Be, etc.

God is my loving Father
The piety disposes to love him,
Above all to venerate him
In a way most respectful:
An adventurous reward
Will have one who cries for his
faults.
Be, etc.

To hate the sin
Prescribes the fear of God;
So I wait in you
Oh! Immaculate lamb
My soul should be a model
And possessor of virtue
Be, etc.

Be our great defender
Now and in the old age
Be, Mary, protector
of this School of Virtue.

OREMUS

V. Ora pro nobis, Sancta Dei Genitrix

R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail our life, our sweetness and our hope. To you do we cry poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us. And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of they womb Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

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COMPLEMENTARY TEXTS

School of Virtue. Second Section*Preliminaries*

1st Proposition: The method is one of the laws inherent to all plan of teaching. –Development of our philosophic-religious plan of teaching. –Refutation of Philosophical theory –Bases of this teaching.

2nd Proposition: Existing criteria that show the existence of a certitude. –Refutation of Skepticism.

3rd Proposition: Evidenced the existence of this certitude, is person's right to inquire where he exists. –Refutation of Indifferentism.

Theories deduced from these preliminaries

4th Proposition: The inquisition of this certitude will give us the first results the existence and unity of the first principle. –Refutation of Atheism and Manichæism.

5th Proposition: The analysis of Nature has given us by the certitude that, besides the order of the cosmological phenomena, the order of the psychological phenomena also exists. –Refutation of Materialism.

6th Proposition: This analysis had demonstrated to us also having the existence appertaining to the psychological order and independent of the cosmological order. Such is the first principle. –Refutation of Pantheism.

7th Proposition: This analysis has demonstrated to us having the existence appertaining to the cosmological order and independent of the psychological order. –Refutation of Spiritualism.

8th Proposition: This same analysis has demonstrated to us having the existence appertaining to the psychological and cosmological order, such is a person. –Refutation of Organism and Philosophical Unitarianism.

Analysis of some existence appertaining to the psychological order

9th Proposition: Since everything came from the first principle, the First Principle must be Omnipotent. –Refutation of Theism.

10th Proposition: Providence is one of the properties inherent in the idea of the first principle. –Refutation of Deism.

11th Proposition: Justice is another property inherent in the idea of the first principle. –Refutation of Protestantism in its relation to this theory.

12th Proposition: The sound philosophy of all the centuries had agreed that the first principle was the Truth. –Refutation of Skepticism in its relation to this principle.

13th Proposition: All existence appertaining to the psychological order has as property inherent in its own activity, the principle of responsibility and, consequently, that of freedom. –Refutation of Fatalism and Determinism. –Examination of Phrenology.

14th Proposition: Immortality is another principle inherent in all existence gifted with proper activity, according to this principle: God and the soul are immortal. –Refutation of Materialism.

Application of these theories to religious principles

15th Proposition: Relations between persons and the first Principle exist. –Refutation of Theism.

16th Proposition: These relations are based on the principles of Reason on the part of a person and in that of Revelation on the part of God. –Refutation of Naturalism.

17th Proposition: Revelation is an act. –Refutation of Deism.

18th Proposition: This Revelation was communicated to us first by the Mosaic Law in ancient times and by the Evangelical Law in modern times. First part: –Refutation of Naturalism. –Second part: Refutation of Judaism.

19th Proposition: The miracles done in favor of the Mosaic doctrine are proofs of his divinity; those worked in favor of the evangelical doctrine are also proofs of his divinity; the work done in favor of the Evangelical doctrine are also one proof of his divinity. –Refutation of Naturalism.

20th Proposition: The fulfillment of the prophecies in the Mosaic doctrine is another proof of his divinity; the sanctity of the evangelical doctrine is also another proof of his divinity. –Refutation of anti-religion.

21st Proposition: A complete harmony exists between Reason and Revelation. –Refutation of Philosophism.

Corollary - adjunct of this proposition

22nd Proposition: The theories inscribed in the books of the Mosaic Law and the true principles of the modern sciences are in complete harmony. –Refutation of some false assertions of modern philosophy.

Application of our theory to Catholicism

23rd Proposition: A Church, depository of the evangelical doctrine is necessary. –Refutation of free examine.

24th Proposition: The Church, as depository of the evangelical doctrine, must be justified by the testimonies of Revelation and supported by the criteria of Reason. –Refutation of Socinianism [rejection of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ and original sin].

25th Proposition: Only the Church, justified by these testimonies and supported by these criteria, could show to us the relations of persons with the first principle; this must be sustained as a consequence of the Principle of religious intolerance. –Refutation of Tolerantism [freedom of worship].

26th Proposition: This Church must be a perfect moral body. –Refutation of Protestantism.

27th Proposition: In this Church the principle of authority is a necessity. –Refutation of Liberalism and against Anglicanism.

28th Proposition: Accepting these last two theories, the legislative power must be accepted in the Church, and, as a consequence, the compulsory power. –Refutation of some modern assertions and affirmations.

29th Proposition: As consequence of the legislative power, the judiciary jurisdiction must also reside in the Church and, therefore, the power of requiring ecclesiastical tribunals. –Against some modern theories.

30th Proposition: The inquisition, according to these principles, is the use of one of the rights of the Church. –Against Puigblanc in his Inquisition without mask.

Examination of some Catholic doctrines

31st Proposition: The Pope, speaking ex cathedra, is an infallible judge in matters of faith and of customs.

32nd Proposition: Catholicism, with the dogma of original sin, explains the true cause of the actual degeneration. –Against Phalansterianism.

33rd Proposition: The penitentiary system, adapted by the Church and authorized by Jesus Christ, is highly rational and is in conformity with the principles of humanity. –Against Protestantism.

Application of these Philosophic-Catholic theories: General thesis

34th Proposition: The established principles, with all their consequences, influence the material, intellectual and moral progress of humanity. –Vindication of the dictate of retrogradism, applied to the Church.

Particular theses: The Catholic theories in their relations to material progress

35th Proposition: The Catholic theories prescribe the more explicit way the conservation and perfection, even physical of the individual. –Refutation of suicide and of duel.

36th Proposition: The Catholic theories cooperate in and even prescribe the more perfect organization and the higher conservation of the societies. –Refutation of Socialism and of Communism.

Theories that cooperate in the social perfection sanctioned by Catholicism

37th Proposition: The right of association is guaranteed in its Nature. Juan Jacobo Rousseau in his Social Contract.

38th Proposition: The right of family is guaranteed in the right of association. –Against the revolutionary principles.

39th Proposition: The religious communities are also guaranteed by the right of association. –Against the anti-Monastic ideas

40th Proposition: The Christian principles that are the fundamental truths of perfectibility raised to the highest degree; the attractiveness of its cult-worship; all Catholic history demonstrates how much the artistic advancement and all material progress to this Religion, the most encourager of human activity. –Vindication of the dictate of obscurantism applied to the Church.

The Catholic theories in their relation to intellectual progress

41st Proposition: The Catholic theories, uniting the psychological order with the cosmological order and intertwining the phenomena known by reason with the unknown phenomena but assured of Revelation, is the beginning of sound philosophy. –Refutation of Kantianism [German Philosopher-Kant] and of Rationalism.

42nd Proposition: History demonstrates to us also the Catholic principles being the encouragers and promoters of intellectual progress. –Refutation of some assertions of Charles Villiers.

43rd Proposition: The principle of authority, established by the Church as such, also encourages and promotes intellectual progress. –Against the disciples of free discussion.

44th Proposition: Freedom that promotes the Catholic principles is one of the guarantees that offered Catholicism to intellectual progress. –Against the assertions of the disciples of free examine.

45th Proposition: The Catholic doctrine is eminently civilizing. –Refutation of some modern theories.

Application of this thesis

46th Proposition: The principle of authority has taught the way to modern civilization. –Refutation of some assertions of Mr. Guizot.

47th Proposition: The doctrines of Catholic intolerance have been the balancing pole of barbarity. –Refutation of some theories of the above-mentioned Mr. Guizot.

48th Proposition: The Inquisition which, according to Balmes, is no other than the application of the doctrine of intolerance to a particular case has also impeded heresy and impiety from hindering the civilizing march of the Catholic Church. –Refutation of Mr. Jercal in his mysteries of the Inquisition.

49th Proposition: The priest is the perceiver of civilization. –Against the detractors of the priesthood.

50th Proposition: The convents, focus of instruction and morality, have been as a consequence the focus of civilization. –Against the detractors of the friars.

51st Proposition: The Jesuit Colleges, so famous for their instruction, the basis of which is morality, were and are also the focus of civilization. –Against anti-Jesuitism.

52nd Proposition: The practices of the religious confraternities, far from fomenting fanaticism, promote morality. –Against the detractors of religious associations.

Synthesis

The Catholic theories are the intellectual, material and moral life of humanity. Refutation of some modern theories and vindication of Catholicism.

II

School of Virtue

A constant tradition in all the centuries, authorized by God with authentic testimony of his divinity, teaches us the following articles:

ARTICLES

1st That the Church of God is One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman.

2nd That it is a moral, visible and perfect body composed by the Pope and the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and believers.

3rd That it has the mission of leading the social body of persons toward its eternal happiness.

4th That in order to fulfill this mission, God, the sovereign Legislator, vested it with supreme legislative power.

5th That in virtue of this supreme power it can dictate laws, order their observance and punish with penalty every infraction.

6th That it has judicial jurisdiction in the external forum inherent to the supremacy of its legislative power.

7th That in virtue of this judicial jurisdiction it can establish ecclesiastical tribunals; convoke, form reason and judge all its subjects, be they priests or faithful, emperors, kings, rulers or citizens.

This is with regard to its discipline.

8th With regard to the Dogma.

That she is exclusively the chair where she teaches the truth without a mixture of error.

9th That she is gifted with infallibility in order to teach, define and resolve all questions pertaining to Dogma and Moral.

10th With regard to the worship

That it is her duty to put in order all the ceremonies and rites of public worship of the religion.

11th That it is her exclusive responsibility to put in order processions and other acts of public worship, as well as reform, suspend, authorize, prohibit and modify them.

12th That she is free, absolute, sovereign, Queen, Lady, Mother, independent of all human and earthly powers:

1st In preaching the Gospel: in teaching.

2nd In the exercise of her legislative power.

3rd In the acts of judicial jurisdiction.

4th In the functions of public worship of Religion.

5th In organizing, forming and presenting herself as a visible moral body.

13th Freedom, independence and sovereignty are an essential property of the Spouse of the Lamb.

14th That neither the Pope nor the other Prelates can nor must do anything that may be damaging to this freedom, sovereignty or independence.

15th Everything that is ordered and established, whether by particular Churches or by secular authorities, if it is damaging to her independence, sovereignty and freedom, is null and has no effect.

16th In the circle of authority that she legitimately possesses and exercises, emperors, kings, princes, and rulers are her vassals and subjects as are the simple, faithful believers.

17th The Church of God has been, is and will be free, sovereign and independent in the circle of her authority.

18th She is free, sovereign and independent in peace as in war, in calm weather as in tempest.

19th All her children, whether faithful or priests, citizens or kings, and all the baptized are obliged to proclaim, support and defend her freedom, independence and sovereignty.

20th We proclaim this freedom, sovereignty and independence because it is an indispensable quality for moving on with all the tongues, tribes, people and nations toward the directed end.

Printing press of the Torras Brothers, Sta. Ana Street, no. 18.

SCHOOL OF VIRTUE VINDICATED