Bl. Antoine Chevrier

# The True Disciple

*The Priest according to the Gospel, or The True Disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

Introductions and notes by Pierre Berthelon (Lyon, 1968)

English translation, private-study draft, 2026
Fr. Frederick Gruber

Private study only: not for publication or redistribution.

# Contents


Letter of His Eminence Cardinal Garrone 5

**General Introduction** 11

The True Disciple and the Life of Father Chevrier 11

Portrait of Father Chevrier 46

The Composition of the True Disciple 68

Our Edition 88

Advice for the Study of Father Chevrier and of the True Disciple 92

**Opening [Italian edition: "Prologo" (Prologue)]** 107

**Part One: Knowledge of Jesus Christ** 109

I. The Trinity 109

II. What Is Jesus Christ 114

III. The Divinity of Jesus Christ 124

IV. Titles of Jesus Christ 152

1° Our Wisdom 156

2° Our Justice 160

3° Our Sanctification 161

4° Our Redemption 162

5° He is our king. 163

6° He is our Master, our only Master 170

7° He is our head. 179

8° He is our model. 181

9° He is the principle and Creator of all things. 186

10° He is the foundation of all things. 187

11° He is the root from which we must draw the sap that is to give us life 191

12° He is the centre towards which everything must converge 192

13° He is the end towards which everything must tend. 194

14° He is the resurrection and the life. 196

Summary of the titles and greatnesses of Our Lord Jesus Christ 197

O Word! O Christ! 199

V. Attachment to Jesus Christ 201

**Part Two: The Five Conditions to Be Fulfilled in Order to Become a True Disciple of Jesus** 239

1st condition: one must renounce one's family and the world 246

Second condition: One must renounce oneself 283

To renounce oneself is 295

1° to renounce one's body 295

To renounce oneself, one must 2° renounce one's mind 367

Renunciation of oneself — 3°) of one's heart. 427

Renunciation of oneself — 4°) of one's will 440

(Conclusion of renunciation of oneself) 466

Third condition: Renounce the goods of the earth 485

Fourth condition: carry one's cross 587

Fifth condition: follow Jesus Christ 603

1°) Follow me in my fasting. 617

2°) Follow me in my prayer 627

3°) Follow me in my gentleness 644

4°) Follow me in my humility 663

5°) Follow me in my poverty. 701

6) Follow me in my charity 718

7) Follow me in my preachings. 756

8°) Follow me in my struggles against the world. 788

9°) Follow me in my persecutions. 809

10°) Follow me in my sufferings. 818

11°) Follow me in my death. 842

12°) You will follow me in my glory. 844

**Annexes** 850

ANNEX I – MANUSCRIPT Ms XI 543–550 850

DISCIPLE 851

ANNEX II – MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 2–26 861

ANNEX III – MANUSCRIPT Ms X 653–661 866

ANNEX IV – MANUSCRIPT Ms X 150–156 879

To my brother François Duret, Superior of the Providence of the Prado. 882

ANNEX V – The Picture of Saint-Fons 892

The Picture of Saint-Fons 897

*Introductions and notes by Pierre Berthelon*

*(P.E.L., 75 rue Sébastien Gryphe, Lyon, 1968; Italian edition: Il Vero Discepolo di Gesù Cristo, Prado italiano, 1985)*

**Translator's note (private-study draft, 2026).** English translation of Bl. Antoine Chevrier's *The Priest according to the Gospel, or The True Disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, made from Chevrier's French (Berthelon edition, 1968) and checked against the Italian edition of the Prado italiano (1985). Chevrier's own text (from "Opening" to the end of Annex V) is public domain. **Pierre Berthelon's introduction, his notes (all the footnotes), and Cardinal Garrone's letter are modern copyrighted material; they are translated here for private study only and are not to be published or redistributed.** Parts of this translation are labelled accordingly. Square brackets [ ] are the translator's. Footnote numbers are those of the French digital copy.

## Letter of His Eminence Cardinal Garrone

↑ Contents

*[BERTHELON EDITION — Cardinal Garrone's letter, Rome, 1968. Modern copyrighted text; translated for private study only.]*

Rome, 3 September 1968

Father,

The Prado was almost bound to undertake this edition.

First, because your spiritual family, which grows without ceasing, must be able to have at its disposal, in the best form, the instrument that its holy Founder himself prepared for it. Next, because the success of the earlier editions says clearly enough that the Christian conscience has recognized in it one of those spiritual documents that belong to its permanent heritage and to which it must be able to have constant recourse.

The Prado therefore also had to guarantee for this edition all the assurances and qualities of authenticity, fidelity and clarity that our generation can expect from a text of this kind, and which in fact it demands with such rigour.

You have brought this work to a good end, Father, in the Prado manner — I was almost going to say in Father Chevrier's manner: he would have loved your preface, he would have loved the introductory notes. Everything in them is frank, direct, unstudied: you want to see clearly, to say what is so, without fine phrases, without pretension, without concern to please, trusting in the truth and sincerity of your judgments so that they will be accepted and lead into the text itself. This self-effacement — I was going to say this unintended "poverty" — creates a striking harmony between the Father's pages and your own. I am sure he would have recognized himself in his disciple.

For Father Chevrier's book did not set out to be easy or pleasant.

The Father found in his faith and in his love for Jesus Christ the strength to believe that Our Lord needed no other presentation than Himself. So he confined himself — as, elsewhere and in a scarcely different way, a Brother Charles de Foucauld did — to looking, to showing, rather than to speaking. "The True Disciple" is Jesus Christ as He offers Himself in the Gospel, as He expresses Himself, as He acts, as He teaches, simply stripped

of everything that habit and heedlessness prevent us from recognizing, hearing, accepting. It seems to me that all the rest is only the echo — hardly perceptible, always almost veiled — of this discovery, in the soul and mind of one who knew so well how to see and to hear his Master. Father Chevrier can hardly be heard crying out in admiration and joy before Him whom he contemplates while making others contemplate Him. One feels very well that the Father is present everywhere — a word, a brief remark signals this presence — but one senses it as involuntary, and it never turns attention away.

The power of this book lies in the very bareness with which Christ presents Himself to us. We feel that He really is so, that He really demands this. We knew it, but we did not have the courage to say it to ourselves. Someone who had this courage helps us to follow him in this consent — at last sincere — of faith. At bottom, for the Father it is always that light of Christmas in which everything began for him: a grace of extraordinary power made him realize that his "God" and "this poor one" were one and the same, that the "Word of God" was really one with that "little child" lying on the straw of a stable. One under-

stands that this light, accompanying his whole life, produced such a Saint and that this Saint produced such a book. All the rest, beside this, proves to be mere accompaniment, preparation, development, almost secondary. No doubt Father Chevrier would never have been Father Chevrier without the family and social setting in which he was born, and against which he often reacted, but all that only enveloped an event of another order, an absolutely original light, that wholly supernatural ray which, by lighting up a crib, enabled him to make an act of faith in the Incarnation…

I am sure, my dear Father, that thanks to the Prado and to yourself, the benefit of this discovery of Jesus Christ will continue to spread. For the Prado, for which the Father intended his work. For all priests, who have such need to draw from this source — and of whom the Father never ceased to think; it is the "priest according to Jesus Christ" whom he wanted to form by this book. And finally for so many others who need to believe, and to find in Jesus Christ alone the source and the goal of their faith.

"How beautiful Jesus Christ is!"

It will be your reward, dear Father, to have certainly brought forth, in the footsteps of Father Chevrier, these same saving words on other lips. Thank you.

Gabriel-Marie Cardinal Garrone

↑ Contents

# General Introduction

↑ Contents

*[Pierre Berthelon's introduction (1968) — translated for private study only; not to be published or redistributed.]*

↑ Contents

## The True Disciple and the Life of Father Chevrier

↑ Contents

Why a new edition of Father Chevrier's book, the True Disciple?

To put the authentic text of this work at the disposal of those who desire it.

On several occasions, in oral or written comments, the texts published up to now have been accused of infidelity, and it has been remarked that the original version was sometimes more expressive, more vigorous. Hence the wish for a new edition that would reproduce Father Chevrier's manuscript exactly.

One may always fear, indeed, that whoever transforms a text also transforms the thought found in it, despite a sincere will to be faithful. And even if

we are sure of having a man's thought through an adaptation of his writings, we prefer, at the present time, to have the writings in their authentic substance. This is a legitimate demand of scientific exactness.

Yet we must not, in order to commend our attempt, simply belittle the work of the earlier editors. That would be unjust.

Unjust, first, because every piece of work on the writings of Antoine Chevrier necessarily profits from the considerable labour accomplished by those who were the first to gather and classify these writings. The volume printed in 1923 and reprinted in 1942 and then in 1948 bears witness to this work. It is a compilation, it will be said, perhaps with a shade of contempt. It is a compilation, true, but it was guided by the concern to lose nothing of Antoine Chevrier's writings. This accumulation of materials testifies, in its own way, to a concern for fidelity.

It would be unjust to belittle the work of our predecessors as regards exactness. It is true that many pages of the 1923 edition are veritable mosaics whose fragments come from various sources, but,

in general, each fragment is reproduced exactly, with rare exceptions.

Finally, we must recognize yet another concern for fidelity in the first editors of the True Disciple. They knew that Father Chevrier wanted to make a book and that he had died without being able to gather into a single work the various notes, fragments and notebooks prepared for it. So the very idea of composing a book from the documents the Father left answered his own intentions.

He wanted a book in order to bequeath his mission, in a way, to his heirs. They acted legitimately in wishing to complete the work begun. We have wished to place ourselves in the same direction, but our method has been different. It seemed to us that Father Chevrier's plan for a book would stand out better if we gave up the method of compilation.

We thought that, above all, the essential architecture must be allowed to appear, and that we should be content to indicate the framework of the building in the parts where the architect did not have time to put up the walls.[1]

To help the reader find his way in the rest of this introduction, here first are the essential features of the life of Antoine Chevrier:

1826, 16 April: birth at Lyon. His father is a toll-office clerk; his mother, a silk-worker, heads a small workshop. The family is still close to its rural origins, especially through the mother, who came from the Dauphiné.

18 April: baptism at the parish church, Saint François de Sales.

1840: Antoine Chevrier had until then been studying with the Brothers of the Christian Schools. At the October term he becomes a pupil of the parish clerical school.

1843, October: he enters the boarding seminary of L'Argentière (diocese of Lyon).

1846, October: entry into the theology seminary at Lyon.

1850, 25 May: Antoine Chevrier is ordained priest.

28 May: he is appointed curate at Saint-André de la Guillotière, a populous suburb of Lyon. He spends himself without counting the cost in this ministry. (In December 1855, exhausted, he has to

be away for four months' rest.) From this period he has a privileged attention for the poor and suffers to see that his ministry does not bear enough fruit.

1856, 31 May: catastrophic floods on the left bank of the Rhône, where La Guillotière is situated. The clergy of the parish of Saint-André are in the front rank of the rescuers, and Abbé Chevrier's reputation for devotedness grows.

June: Antoine Chevrier has the opportunity to meet Camille Rambaud. He is a young Lyon bourgeois who has been converted and has put himself at the service of the poor, living as they do and with them. Camille Rambaud is in the process of founding the City of the Child Jesus. It is an undertaking at once religious and social. Housing for workers is built there and catechism is taught to poor children. Abbé Chevrier is greatly struck by Rambaud's example.

Christmas: the "conversion" of Antoine Chevrier. Before the crib he meditates the Gospel word: "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"; he then understands the special call that Christ addresses to him to a more perfect, more evangelical, more apostolic life; he resolves to follow Je-

sus Christ in his infinite charity for men, in his abasements, his humility and his love of poverty.

1857: various consultations, notably with the Curé of Ars. He is encouraged in his plans. However, his parish priest and the clergy round about do not approve of his ideas.

August: he leaves the parish and becomes chaplain of the City of the Child Jesus. It is there that people get into the habit of calling him Father Chevrier. His mother, very authoritarian, is much displeased with this course; she will scarcely lay down her arms until her son's death. Persons called sisters devote themselves to the service of the City. That year Marie Boisson enters, a young woman of 22, a silk-worker, who will become the first superior of the Sisters of the Prado, Sister Marie. At the City, Father Chevrier also meets Pierre Louat, called Brother Pierre, who will be co-founder of the Prado but will not stay there.

1859, January: first stay in Rome.

In the following months Father Chevrier clearly grasps the divergence of orientation between Rambaud and himself. They will have to separate, but Father Chevrier stays at the City while wait-

ing for Camille Rambaud to receive orders and be able to ensure priestly ministry there.

1860, 10 December: Father Chevrier takes possession of premises situated at La Guillotière. It had been, until then, an ill-famed dance hall which was called the Prado ball. The name of the Prado will remain with the house and with Father Chevrier's spiritual family. In this building the Father sets up a catechism work for poor children. In the following years various collaborators present themselves. The most convinced is Abbé Jaricot, who will be ordained in 1869, but he will not have a head steady enough, and the Father will hardly be able to lean on him.

1864, September: second journey to Rome. Father Chevrier wants to present a petition to the Pope. He has given us its text in the True Disciple.[2]

1865: birth of the clerical school of the Prado. In fact, the pupils have to be sent to the right bank of the Rhône.

1866, October: Father Chevrier has found a teacher for his pupils; the clerical school operates at the Prado.

1867: Father Chevrier is appointed parish priest of the parish of Moulin-à-Vent. This parish of the

diocese of Grenoble was close to the diocese of Lyon and to the Lyon conurbation. It was understood that the Father would reside at the Prado and have himself replaced at the parish by the priests who lived with him. It is chiefly Abbé Martinet who will take care of this parish. For Father Chevrier it is a precious field of experiment for his principal aim, the work of Poor Priests for parishes;[3] but in June 1871 he learns that Abbé Martinet has been appointed parish priest in his place.

1874, end of March: serious illness requiring rest until May.

November, in the countryside near Lyon, at Limonest, a small community is set up: Father Jaricot, 4 sisters and some twenty catechism children.

1875, May: third journey to Rome. At this time Father Chevrier is advised to organize his house as a religious congregation. The archbishopric of Lyon is opposed to this plan, and Father Chevrier does not insist.

1876: the Father is in very poor health and the doctor orders him a stay at Vichy (25 July – 4 August).

October: the archbishop has authorized the sending of four seminarians of the Prado to Rome. They are deacons and will form a small autonomous community to live, as far as possible, according to Father Chevrier's directives.

1877, 14 March: fourth journey of Father Chevrier to Rome. For two months he lives with the four seminarians, explaining the True Disciple to them.

26 May: priestly ordination at Saint John Lateran.

20 June: return to Lyon. The archbishop has promised the Father to leave him these four new priests.

1878, in spring: Father Jaricot leaves for the monastery and two of the new priests also speak of going away, while Father Chevrier is more and more ill.[4] Father Jaricot nevertheless returns to the Prado in June.

On 31 October Father Chevrier celebrates Mass for the last time. From then on he will be bedridden until the end.

1879, 6 January: Father Chevrier hands in his resignation and Father Duret, one of the four priests of 1877, becomes superior of the Prado.[5]

On 2 October, at the Prado, death of Father Chevrier. He will be buried in the chapel of the Prado on 6 October.

Let us now return to the True Disciple.

Father Chevrier wanted to make a book. The testimonies on this point are clear, and among them the Father's own testimony.[6]

However, the precise form of this project needs to be explained.

When we are told of a book, we at once picture a printed work, delivered to the public through the bookseller. The author certainly has some idea of those who will read him, but often he has no direct contact with them.

As for Father Chevrier, we do not know whether he thought that one day his book would be printed. It is not excluded, but it seems certain that the thing was not envisaged for the immediate future. For in fact Father Chevrier wrote first of all for the priests and seminarians who lived with him. Moreover, he wrote in the same conditions other works — catechisms, commentaries on the Gospel, and so on.

He never wrote except for his spiritual family and, at that time, given the small number of Pradosians and the poverty of their resources, the only method used was the handwritten copy.[7]

[8]Yet behind his first companions Father Chevrier glimpses all those who will join them, and he does not think that their number will necessarily remain small; but he also senses that the growth will be long awaited.

He sees far and great; that is why he undertakes to write a book. Something must be built that is sufficiently solid to last and to reach those who will come later when the Father is gone. This is all the more necessary since the first disciples are young and he himself knows well that he will not remain long with them.

But at the same time as he sees far and great, he remains the modest and realistic man, full of common sense, that he always was. He does not imagine that his book could interest anyone outside the Prado in his own day, and doubtless he is not mistaken. So the question of a printed edition does not arise. Besides, Father Chevrier knows that he has no special aptitude for making a book[9]

and that is one more reason to limit himself to the quickly counted public of the Prado.

His book project is, moreover, essentially linked to another project, the one he calls the work of poor priests for parishes.[10]

Antoine Chevrier, ordained priest in 1850, spent six years at the parish of Saint-André de la Guillotière. At that time La Guillotière is a working-class suburb.

During this period a hidden maturing takes place in the young curate. He has only to walk across the territory of the parish to see the material and moral misery of a people sociologically cut off from the core formed by the regulars of the parish church. The floods of May 1856 and the meeting with Camille Rambaud in June no doubt give a new impulse to this inner evolution, which ends in the night of Christmas 1856. It is what he will call his conversion.[11]

Enlightened by the example of Him who, being rich, made himself poor in order to enrich us by his poverty,[12] he understands the grace that is given him: to become a poor priest in order to announce the Gospel to the poor. "I said to myself: the Son of God came down upon the earth to save

men and convert sinners. And yet, what do we see? How many sinners there are in the world: men continue to damn themselves. So I resolved to follow Jesus Christ more closely, to make myself more capable of working effectively for the salvation of souls."[13]

Antoine Chevrier's first impulse is to put himself in the school of those who had helped him to discover the poverty of Jesus Christ and of the poor. He had discovered Camille Rambaud, that young Lyon bourgeois who, by founding the City of the Child Jesus, had made himself poor with the poor. He hopes to find in him a leader to follow, and it is perhaps with this idea that he persuades him to turn towards the priesthood. At all events Father Chevrier succeeds the Capuchins as chaplain of the City of the Child Jesus, where he is specially occupied with preparing the children for First Communion.

But he gradually discerns that his personal orientation does not coincide with Camille Rambaud's. So, after much hesitation, in December 1860 he agrees to take over on his own account the First Communion work by installing it in the premises of the Prado. He will be able to devote himself entirely to bringing the Good News to the poor, and

he hopes that priests animated by the same intentions will join him. For he knows, from the beginning, that his plan will not succeed if he remains alone. He had written, in May 1858, during a retreat: "I promise Jesus to look for confrères of good will to associate with me…[14]"

From 1860 to 1866, a new period of maturing for Antoine Chevrier. One thing becomes more and more clear: he will have fellow-workers only if he forms them himself.

A certain number of priests turned towards the Prado during these six years, but none understood what it was about. Perhaps one or another could have understood, but then the diocesan authority prevents their coming together. Yet, at the same time, disciples to be formed present themselves.[15]

So Father Chevrier decides to found a clerical school. It took him ten years to accept being a leader himself, ten years to resign himself to being, on his own, a trainer of poor priests for the poor.

When it was a matter of becoming poor with the poor, he had gone to consult the Curé of Ars, he had reflected with his confessor, with his former

spiritual director, the one at the Grand Seminary. Such consultations were enough for him to go, with the permission of the archbishopric, and live at the City of the Child Jesus.

On the contrary, when it was a matter of founding the Prado, he hesitates quite a long time. He writes on 17 October 1860: "What is good Brother Pierre doing! He always worries me, that poor young man. I would like very much to be useful to him, he is so generous towards the good God; but he has too much confidence in me, he is always waiting for me, he always hopes I will undertake something, but I have not enough confidence in myself to dare to do things that the good God would perhaps not approve. Yet it must not be that, to get him out of his difficulty, I set about it on my own. I do not much like what draws opposition, vexations from authority; I do not really feel my shoulders strong enough to carry so great a weight. Events, moreover, look so bad; my health is not very robust and above all I have not a mind enlightened and ingenious enough to take on myself such cares. My vocation is rather to be in a little unknown corner, unnoticed, and to do the work that comes along without going too far forward.[16]"

After the installation at the Prado, Father Chevrier nevertheless remains in anxiety and, it seems, the deep cause of this anxiety gradually shows itself. The plan of a clerical school imposes itself on him more and more. Here are some expressions of his state of mind.

"I feel my powerlessness, my incapacity, so much that I often say to the good God: My God, have you not made a mistake in putting at the head of a great Work so puny a creature as I? I am so poor, such a sinner, so ignorant, that truly, if the good God does not send someone to do his work, it can only perish. What qualities, what virtues are needed to establish something, to do God's work properly as it should be done. I know well that God chooses whom he wills, and often the smallest and the poorest, to manifest his glory and his power, so that everyone may truly say: it is really God who has done all this; but this poor creature must also correspond well to grace; he must be a man of prayer and sacrifice, and I feel that I always resist the holy will of God, that I delay his Work. I would need someone there, constantly beside me, to push me and remind me what I must do. How unhappy I am! how pitiable! If I do not do what the good God wants, what re-

sponsibility, what judgment, what condemnation for me! For many years I said to the good God: My God, if you have need of a poor man, here I am; if you have need of a madman, here I am; and I felt I had the grace to do all that the good God would ask of me, and now that I should act, I am lazy, I am cowardly. Oh! if there are not souls who pray for me, who push me, I am lost. If the good God sent me a good confrère, who understood well the work of God, then I would feel more courage, more strength; but alone, always alone, I feel I have not the strength, or else an extraordinary grace would be needed that I have not yet merited, for the graces of God must be bought, and to buy the graces of God one cannot do too much, above all when they are to contribute to the salvation of souls and the glory of the Church.

"Forgive me, dear child, if I speak to you so openly and unveil to you a little the sadness of my soul, but it is so that I may find in you a soul that prays and helps me to accomplish the holy will of God; for if God made the Prado, it is certainly not to give me a property worth a hundred thousand francs — what have I to do with it? I have given everything to God and I asked of him only Holy

Poverty as my inheritance; there is therefore something else. Well then! help me to do what the good God asks, above all this work of Poor Priests for parishes. The priest, oh! only the priest can do something. The Priest is everything… He is Jesus Christ on earth. I must be another Jesus Christ on earth so that those who will come here may themselves also be other living Jesus Christs; only that can convert souls.[17]"

---

**Notes**

1. To give references we use the following signs or abbreviations:

   LP: Letters of Father Chevrier. We give the number and date of the letter, which makes it possible to refer equally to the manuscript reproductions in the archives (volume XIII) and to the edition duplicated by the Prado in 1960, and even, thanks to the date, to the old printed edition.

   Ms: Manuscript reproduction of Father Chevrier's writings. This collection, made with a view to the beatification process, is divided into 13 volumes, I to XIII.

   PB: Collection of the testimonies given with a view to the beatification process, divided into four volumes (I to IV; each page number covers the recto –r– and verso –v– of a sheet).

   Six: Jean-François Six, *Un prêtre, Antoine Chevrier, fondateur du Prado* [A Priest, Antoine Chevrier, Founder of the Prado], Paris, éd. du Seuil, 1965.

VD: *Le prêtre selon l'Évangile ou le Véritable Disciple de Jésus-Christ* [The Priest according to the Gospel, or the True Disciple of Jesus Christ].↩

2. P. 305.↩
3. Cf. pp. 12–13.↩
4. Cf. pp. 17–18.↩
5. Cf. Annex IV, p. 525.↩
6. "This is how I think of doing it: finish my little work on the True Disciple and have it examined by serious priests, and proceed with their approval. If Monseigneur comes to Rome, I shall show it to him and we shall follow this rule." (LP 83, April 1877)↩
7. In 1889, when it was a matter of reproducing the True Disciple in a more practical way, the lithographic process was chosen. It was Mademoiselle de Marguerye who covered the expense. The same lithographic process was used for other writings of Father Chevrier. The idea was doubtless to limit it to the Prado family and thereby to meet an intention of Father Chevrier. In 1910, a new lithographed edition, this time with the imprimatur. A printed edition was not made until 1923.↩
8. (End of note 4 of the preceding page.) In 1923 it was known that the figure of Father Chevrier would interest a wide public. The elders of the Prado also gave another reason. They wondered what reception would be given, in the clergy, to Father Chevrier's conceptions of priestly life, and they did not dare to spread them widely. It may be noted in this connection that even in 1939 an Italian translation had some difficulty in obtaining the imprimatur.↩

9. "I have read little, I do not know the authors who have treated the great questions of religious and priestly life. You could not form an idea of my ignorance as to all that concerns me and regards me, but with the Holy Gospel it seems to me I am stronger, that I can hope, for after all it is not I, it is Jesus Christ, and with him one is not mistaken, with him one has authority, with him one is stronger and nobody has anything to say. It is on him then that I shall lean and in him that I shall hope. Pray then that I may use well all the time the good God gives me, to work well. That is how I have understood the matter, for I have often asked the good God to force me to work for him by withdrawing me from all this bustle which, after all, does not advance me towards the end I have set myself." (LP 291, 3 May 1869)↩
10. Cf. Letter of 1865, quoted p. 13.↩
11. One may think that this word *conversion* is understood by analogy with the conversion of Saint Paul (cf. Gal 1:15–16).↩
12. 2 Corinthians 8:9.↩
13. J.-M. Laffay, PB 2, 409 v.↩
14. Ms X 20.↩
15. Letter to Abbé Gourdon, quoted p. 15.↩
16. LP no. 256, 17 October 1860.↩
17. LP no. 277, 1865. It seems to me that to grasp the sense of this letter well, one should read it again after becoming familiar with the life and thought of Father Chevrier.↩

↑ Contents

The witnesses have reported, each in his own way, what they perceived of this affair. Camille de

Marguerye, impulsive, inclined to take her imaginings for realities, affirms without nuance:

"He told me one day that the work of First Communion had not been his principal aim but a means of preparing and covering the principal work he had in view, which was the training of clerics. This work would have met too many obstacles if he had announced it at the outset.[1]

Father Chevrier's confessor, Father Bruno, a Capuchin, prudently makes a declaration in the opposite sense:

"I do not believe that Father Chevrier at first had the idea of founding a school for clerics or a congregation of priests. His spirit of faith waited for Providence to show him and supply him with the means of providing for the needs of his work; it was little by little, under a supernatural inspiration, that this idea germinated in him. The existence Providence gave him as regards material needs gave him confidence that he would not be abandoned for spiritual needs. The work did not receive canonical approval from Rome, but he never did anything without the assent and approval of the Ordinary.[2]"

Should we not prefer the testimony of Sister Marie, who lived the whole history of the Prado, from the time she entered the City of the Child Jesus in 1857?

"Father Chevrier's first thought was always the training of priests; only the carrying out came afterwards… As I have already said, the creation of a school for the training of priests was Father Chevrier's first thought, but he could carry it out only from 1865. My part in this foundation was to look after making up the provision baskets of those little children who were then sent to the choir school of Saint-Bonaventure and who dined there on the food they had brought. They were then only three or four. These relations of our children with the choir school of Saint-Bonaventure were the reason why Father Jacquier later withdrew to the Prado.[3]"

Françoise Chapuis, with picturesque simplicity, confirms what Sister Marie says:

"Father Chevrier often spoke to me of the clerical school, a very long time before founding it. He was already thinking of it, even before he had taken his first helpers, and he prayed much for this intention. He said to me one day:

– Françoise, I have a mind to make a nursery of priests. I have a mind to have priests who are brought up with my children, so that they will understand them well.

– But, Father, how will you manage to feed them? You already have a great deal to do with the subscriptions.[4]

– It is true, these subscriptions don't pay; but I have an idea, an idea that will humble me well, for I am proud. God wants it, I believe, that I humble myself. My idea is to go and beg at the door of the church of La Charité. I shall hold out my hat or my cap to the passers-by and I shall say my beads for those who put something in it.

– Father, they will only put sous in it… there won't be enough to do anything.

– No, he said to me, they will put coins and banknotes in it too.

In our conversations on this subject, he insisted much on the necessity of having pious, simple priests; and as I mentioned to him the names of his collaborators, he answered me: 'It is not yet that; they are not simple enough.'"[5]

Could it be the same affair in what Sister Marie-Antoinette Laffaye, cook at the Prado, reported?

"When Father Chevrier had the plan of founding the work of the Prado, he was much urged to it by Brother Pierre. Telling us of it later, he said to us: 'I did all I could to drive away this idea, but everywhere the good God pursued me, and in spite of all my efforts I came back to it.' One day, pursued by his thoughts, he withdrew into a wood and stayed there a whole day and prayed: 'It was at that moment,' he told us, 'that, overcome by this inner voice, he said to God:

If you have need of a poor man, here I am; if you have need of a madman, here I am.' From that day he struggled no more and resolutely continued what God wanted of him, his work, which was only just beginning and was meeting so many contradictions. He himself told us this several times. 'At that moment,' he said to us, 'I saw all the pains I should have to suffer.'[6]"

Sister Antoinette seems to have been a sort of gossip, rather talkative and curious; so we are not very sure of her objectivity. However that may be, it seems likely that the decision finally took shape rather suddenly after a long and painful

period of uncertainty. That would be entirely in keeping with what we shall say of Father Chevrier's character.

At all events, from 1866 on, if the Father is still keenly persuaded of the disproportion between his person and the work to be done, he never calls the decision taken into question again. This time, to be sure of God's will, he was more demanding than ten years earlier. He wanted particular signs. He explains himself in a letter of 7 November 1865 addressed to Abbé Gourdon. The latter had expressed the desire to join Father Chevrier, which in fact could not be realized.

"May God's will be accomplished in all things, in us as in all the men on earth. If the good God permits, come; I shall be happy to be able to contribute to a work that I cherish and that I have desired for many years.

Providence seems to facilitate this union and even to ask for it. I have at the Prado a place to lodge those who would like to work at the work, and it will be with all the more pleasure that I have four pupils whom I am obliged to send to the clerical school of Lyon, having no teacher here, and how happy I should be to have them

continually at home to give them that spirit of simplicity and poverty which must be our principal aim.

If you have pupils, you can bring them; I can offer you lodging for 8 or 10 pupils.

What makes me desire it is that Monsieur Magand has just written to me, a few hours before receiving yours, that he could not continue this work of poor students because his resources did not allow it, that he had only 4 and that these 4 were paying board. It does not seem to me that Our Lord wishes to let perish so agreeable a work which he had begun. He wants perhaps that poor priests should do it. For my part, I feel quite ready to pursue it with the help of a good confrère. We have here the beginning: the pupils and the premises, and the resources of Providence already visible enough not to let us doubt. So, then, confidence: the blessing of His Holiness, who blessed us and you too, since he gave it to all the priests who would accept the holy poverty of Jesus Christ. Come, I shall be very happy to receive you; obtain His Eminence's permission and we shall begin. As for the persons whom you have formed to poverty, continue to guide them in this way of Our Lord, and later they will be very use-

ful to us when we are given some poor parishes to serve, if the good God wills.

Oh! I was very happy reading your letter; I saw that I was not alone either. I do have two or three confrères who have the same views, but, you know, there are some towards whom the Holy Spirit seems to draw us more. Let us pray God well during these days, let us ask that his holy will be accomplished and that obstacles be smoothed. I promise to recommend this affair to the Holy Sacrifice throughout these days…[7]"

The signs that convinced Father Chevrier can be reduced to four: the Pope's blessing, the archbishop's authorization, the protection of Providence over the house of the Prado, the meeting of priests oriented in the same direction.

As early as 1864 the Father sought a pontifical approval. He had to be content with a blessing. Yet it was a blessing in the true sense of the word. The Pope had spoken well of the project and hoped good of it. "The work is good," he had declared.[8]

The Pope, moreover, referred the matter to the bishops. They were to bear witness to the opportuneness and success of the undertaking. Father

Chevrier follows this instruction, interpreting it in his own way.[9]

He of course asked his archbishop for the permissions he needed, and when the stake seemed to him grave he knew how to insist in order to obtain what had at first been refused him.

Thus he obtained to organize himself the last year of formation of the seminarians Broche, Delorme, Duret and Farissier. Having entered the Grand Seminary of Lyon, they were deacons in June 1876. It is to them that at Rome, in the spring of 1877, Father Chevrier devotes all his time and his last strength, explaining the True Disciple.

But in another affair, grave in its consequences, where he does not clearly see God's will, the archbishop's opposition is a sufficient sign to him. This is the plan of organizing the Prado as a religious congregation. In 1875, doubtless advised by a missionary bishop, Bishop Dubuis, and by the Capuchin Fathers, Father Chevrier had undertaken at least a certain number of consultations, but the archbishopric of Lyon did not show itself favourable to this plan. The Father could, without disobeying, have shown insistence and

renewed certain steps, but he gives up following the advice of those who would push him to found a religious congregation and decides to remain secular. Finally, at the moment of death, he bequeaths to his spiritual family a clear and plain instruction: "We shall regard Monseigneur the Archbishop as our immediate superior."[10]

The reference to the third sign we have read from Father Chevrier's own pen. It is "the resources of Providence already visible enough not to let us doubt."

This is not a simple passing remark. We know otherwise the attention he gave to it.[11]

As for the fourth sign, one may say that Father Chevrier was not very demanding. He was content with the strict necessary in this domain. He writes to Abbé Gourdon: "I saw that I was not alone," but all his life he will be able only to greet the Promised Land from afar, for it is to the same priest that he has to write a little later:

"If we are obliged to remain apart in body, let us remain united in spirit and let each of us practise, as far as in his power, the holy poverty of Our Lord. This decision of the council, though it should not astonish us, we must respect and sub-

mit to very humbly. These gentlemen cannot guess the motive that makes us act and do not see either the necessity of a new priest at the Prado."[12]

If we now wished to sketch a spiritual itinerary of Antoine Chevrier, we could see him fully conscious of his personal vocation in 1856, after six years of ordinary parish ministry. He is resolved to follow Jesus Christ more closely.

In 1860, with the foundation of the Prado, he is firmly established in this way discovered four years earlier, but at the same time he anxiously senses a new dimension of his mission. God wants to raise up through him similar vocations, and from 1866 he has no more doubt about the extent of this mission. He walks henceforth humbly but firmly. He knows, in particular, that he cannot and must not leave to others the care of instructing his own in the way of the Gospel.

But to accomplish his destiny, Antoine Chevrier must cross a new threshold. He must consent to the destruction of the work to which he has given himself completely. He had, however, greatly dreaded this work and had undertaken it only by divine command, he thought.

In this circumstance one is astonished to see how he accepts the failure in all humility, without losing anything of the certainties acquired in 1856 and 1866. The work is God's. It is in 1878 that the trial comes, when Father Jaricot has left for the Trappist abbey of Aiguebelle.

"Your example produces admirable effects! Abbé Duret, for several days, tells me that he is not capable of teaching catechism, that one must first of all make one's salvation, that one man is not necessary to so beautiful a work, that God will know well how to replace him, that God will not abandon me; that he feels the need of retreat and of work, that he must go to the Grande Chartreuse; that he would have done better to remain a brother and devote himself to the work without taking the responsibility of the Priest, that this responsibility frightens him and that he is afraid of God's judgment; that when he has spent some years at the Grande Chartreuse he will return stronger and surer of his vocation; that yet the vocation of the Prado is very beautiful, that he will choose no other, but that he must go away… I do not know whether, after this Series,[13] he will not go away.

Abbé Farissier still has the wish to be a missionary and lets his desire to go to China show through from time to time.

Abbé Broche much prefers Limonest to the Prado and will stay, I think, with Monsieur Jaillet.

Abbé Delorme has no health and will not be able to manage alone, in spite of his courage; he would need to spend some months in the country and the departure of his companions will hardly encourage him.

If things turn out thus, I shall ask the gentlemen Latin students to go to the seminary and I shall not be able to take children again for First Communion. I feel neither the health nor the courage to do now as formerly. The good God had given me helpers, good coadjutors; he takes them back from me: blessed be his holy name. The good God proves to me in an evident manner that he has need of no one to do his work. You all say that the good God has need of nobody, that he will do well without you; it is evident; I think that after us the good God will send others who will do better than we; that is my only consolation and my only hope, for I should still feel a certain pain at seeing the Prado deserted and

without a child when for eighteen years it has been the place of so many sweats and labours of conversions.

Go, all of you, to pray and do penance in the cloister. I regret not being able to go myself, for I need it much more than you, being older and consequently having many more sins than you. But if I do not go there, I shall perhaps go to Saint-Fons and I shall have the consolation of having made Trappists and Carthusians and missionaries, if I have not succeeded in making catechists; although, it seems to me, that must be, today, the need of the age and of the Church.

Farewell, my dear friend, pray for us and for me above all, who thought I had done something, a work, and I see that I have done nothing. May this humiliation instruct me and expiate all my sins of pride and others of my life.

Your brother in Jesus Christ forsaken on the cross.[14]"

Let us note Father Chevrier's exact thought. He declares himself pained if the work that is done at the Prado is interrupted, but he sees clearly that the failure bears upon the work of apostolic formation begun with the clerical school. "I thought I

had made catechists and I see that I have done nothing." And this happens at a moment when it is no longer possible for him to begin again. Indeed, the letter to Father Jaricot is of 9 April 1878 [sic: note 31 says 5 April 1878 — the French is inconsistent]. Father Chevrier has already been ill for a long time. He will not witness the destruction of his work, but he will have to go away on 2 October 1879, leaving to God the care of consolidating what had only begun.

It is very hard for us to assess the import of Father Chevrier's final trial. God alone knows its effects. But in the light of divine Wisdom, is not this trial for us a sign; is it not the seal set by God upon the life of Antoine Chevrier, raised up to evangelize the poor and above all to form others for this mission?

This trial is also a seal set upon the True Disciple. This book comes out of the experience of Christ that Antoine Chevrier had at Christmas 1856.

It comes out of his experience as a poor priest for the poor, at the City of the Child Jesus, at the Prado, at the parish of Moulin-à-Vent.

It comes out of his consent to the task asked by God: to form catechists.[15]

And it remained unfinished. Those who would like a work of spiritual literature or a treatise of pastoral theology can only be disappointed. To the one who feels called in the same way as Antoine Chevrier it is enough to say: take and read. If the work seems to you unfinished from the very first pages, that is providential. In reading it you will not be able to forget how God asked the author to put the finishing hand to his work, not by completing a book, but by uniting himself to Jesus Christ forsaken on the cross.

---

**Notes**

1. Camille de Marguerye, PB I, 73 r–v. This penitent of Father Chevrier certainly helped him much, notably financially, but she was rather invasive, so the Father kept her at a distance from his work.↩
2. Father Bruno, PB I, 24 r.↩
3. Sister Marie, PB I, 218 r–v.↩
4. Father Chevrier had seen how Camille Rambaud operated at the City of the Child Jesus. In the early days of the Prado he sought, it seems, to procure somewhat regular resources from benefactors by a system of subscriptions.↩
5. Françoise Chapuis, PB I, 105 v. She was a penitent of Father Chevrier. A generous soul, a little naive, but whose evangelical simplicity the Father appreciated.↩
6. Sister Antoinette Laffaye, PB 3, 660 v.↩

7. LP no. 51, 7 November 1865. Abbé Gourdon was then curate at Millery, a commune near Lyon.↩
8. Pp. 305–306.↩
9. Ms X 253.↩
10. Ms X 253.↩
11. See p. 13, the testimony of Father Bruno.↩
12. LP no. 54, 3 June 1866.↩
13. At the Prado there was, every six months, a First Communion ceremony. The preparatory catechism lasted five to six months and this period of preparation was called a Series [*Série*]. In Father Chevrier's time this does not evoke the idea of work in series, as one might think today.↩
14. LP no. 88, 5 April 1878. Abbés Farissier and Delorme will leave the Prado after Father Chevrier's death. Abbé Broche will succeed Abbé Duret and will thus be the third superior of the Prado.↩
15. That is why Sister Marie can say in all truth: "Father Chevrier painted himself in his True Disciple of Jesus Christ." Pierre Boisnard I, 220 v.↩

↑ Contents

## Portrait of Father Chevrier

↑ Contents

We must now attempt a portrait of Father Chevrier. It is necessary in order to be able to understand him while reading him.

It is necessary but very hard to do.

We can never succeed in saying a man perfectly, whoever he may be, and we always remain very far from expressing the deep mystery of his being. But by living with someone one acquires, through familiarity, a certain perception of his mystery, and one can invite others to enter into this familiarity too.

Only a knowledge of this kind makes it possible to interpret correctly an author's thought through a book. I do not claim that it suffices to have read these pages of introduction to read Father Chevrier correctly; I only wish to indicate the way to get there.

To become familiar with Antoine Chevrier takes time. That is true, by the way, of everyone. It is especially true of the Father. A vigorous personality, as we shall see, but hidden under a self-effacing manner — people have even said insignificant[1] — it takes time to reveal itself. He is not brilliant and he has a horror of what is merely brilliant. He prefers the true, the solid, the great, even if they are not so in appearance, and he noticed that ostentation is very often a temptation to conceal from others and from oneself an indigence in what is essential. "Poor, simple and clean; nothing that appears, that is tinsel, elegant,

that excites curiosity; everything must be grave, modest, solid. The beautiful and the great can be very simple: thus a gold chalice can be very simple and yet it will be beautiful and great."[2]

Father Chevrier wrote this about the objects of worship. Without thinking of it, he drew his own portrait. Should we see in this the Lyon character of Antoine Chevrier and a mark of Dauphiné ancestry? He would have transposed to the spiritual plane a well-known tendency to reduce the outward signs of one's wealth in order to preserve it better. It is possible.

Antoine Chevrier is certainly from Lyon, very much from Lyon; but in what exactly is he so? Such things are keenly felt but always hard to pin down.

Those who are not from Lyon seem to recognize, without fail, Antoine Chevrier's Lyon traits. His Lyon friends are more circumspect.

The Lyon poverty of Father Chevrier, for example. But his economic conceptions are at the antipodes of those of his fellow citizens; he does not want to have any income and has no religion of work. He wants everything in his room to speak of the poverty of Bethlehem, whereas his

fellow citizens preferred to find, in houses without outward show, a comfortable and aesthetic interior. He does not want to launch into building large and rich churches, while his confrères, with their parishioners, did not hesitate to make a show of wealth to manifest their piety.

Yet it is true that Father Chevrier's life bears the imprint of the world in which he was born and which formed him.

He is the only son of ordinary folk, hard-working people, desirous of climbing the social ladder. A milieu inclined to side with the authority that maintains the order favourable to its ambitions rather than to make common cause with revolutionaries, but a popular milieu; and Antoine Chevrier will keep all his life a foundation of popular mentality.

Now, at the age of fourteen, he enters the clerical milieu.

At that time, even more than today, this milieu wanted to form future priests not only to the spiritual life, to Greco-Latin humanist culture, to theological science, to the practice of ministry, but also to a style of human relations called "ecclesiastical proprieties" [*convenances ecclésiastiques*].

Antoine Chevrier accepted the priestly ideal presented to him and never repudiated it. This is something we must be careful not to forget. Father Chevrier received much from all those who contributed to his formation, and the doubtless decisive influence of the Superior of the Grand Seminary on his future has been pointed out.[3]

At the same time he let himself be docilely instructed in the ecclesiastical proprieties and, on leaving the seminary, he knows how to speak of the Mass by saying "the august sacrifice."[4]

His passion for the Gospel and his love of the poor will crack the coat of varnish, and Father Chevrier will be given back to his original popular sense. This is seen in his language.

After 1856, when he had found daily contact with the people again, his style quickly evolves and his letters from then on have a simplicity that contrasts with those of the preceding period.

"I am sending, by Monsieur Broche, who was kind enough to take charge of it, a little bottle of calf's-lung syrup and some marshmallow lozenges for good friend Delorme. Take great care of him and neglect nothing to cure him. Buy from the sisters what is necessary. If it were possible to

make him swallow every morning two fresh eggs and a little wine, that might do good to his delicate chest.

Speak of it to the Director, to whom I have already said a word.

Our feasts went off happily.

We are always praying for you. Be always very good.

Till soon, a longer letter. It is late at night. Greetings.[5]"

How at ease Antoine Chevrier is with this folk therapeutics of the good people of La Guillotière!

Yet the varnish of ecclesiastical proprieties holds firm and, even when put to a rough test, something of it always remains. Father Chevrier does not hesitate to say "Dear and venerated confrère" to his priest correspondents, and when he stigmatizes slippers as a sign of becoming bourgeois he writes, without thinking to joke, that "this footwear breathes delicacy."[6]

Nor should we be too astonished to find in him traces of a romantic emphasis that was in the spirit of the time. This spirit had its share of influence in ecclesiastical language. We must not let

ourselves be frightened by expressions that are brought back to their true dimensions by putting them back in the romantic context of the age.

Father Chevrier speaks of the body as a quagmire, a foul marsh, or of the food necessary to the body as putting us on a level with the beasts. Instead of seeing in these expressions a persisting influence of Jansenism,[7] it suffices to transpose them in order simply to recognize that we do not always easily have mastery over our body and that, moreover, the nutritive functions in us are quite analogous to those of animals.

The value of the whole is too well affirmed to be called into question by these details.

That the Gospel gave Antoine Chevrier back to his popular origin is good. But the most remarkable thing is not there. Rather we must admire how the Gospel enabled him to give his full measure. The seeds of greatness deposited in every child of the people germinated and flowered in Antoine Chevrier under the effect of the Gospel. Neither servile nor aggressive towards other social milieux, without ceasing to be himself, he could command respect from certain women who thought themselves great ladies.

Camille de Marguerye [the French digital copy has "Margency"] had noticed that he showed no eagerness towards the rich, while being very polite with them, as with everyone else.[8]

It seems to me that his sense of dignity is a very characteristic aspect of what I would like to make understood here. He has the dignity of a man of the people who has no feeling of inferiority before the other social classes, who lets himself be dazzled neither by fortune, nor by power, nor even by the education others may possess: "Reason for reason, I like mine as much as yours."[9] This is seen particularly in Father Chevrier's independence of judgment: he does not let himself be shut up in a mentality.

And this popular sense of human dignity was quickened by his awareness of the greatness of the priestly mission. His independence of judgment is dictated by his evangelical fidelity, and he saw clearly that, to be truly a priest, he must submit his mission only to Christ, to Christ's envoys and to no one else.

This human development under the influence of the Gospel shows again in his manner of writing. More than once, under the sway of conviction

and wholly steeped in the texts of the Gospel and of Saint Paul, he expresses himself with a true eloquence that bears the mark of his deep personality. We hope that the typographical arrangement adopted for this edition of the True Disciple will make it easier to perceive the passages where Father Chevrier's own style appears. Here is an example from his letters, particularly striking.

"Courage then, dear children, do not be bored by the little vexations that may come; one must get used to them. It is sufferings and humiliations that make true men; a man who has suffered nothing and endured nothing knows nothing and is good for nothing. Those who are always flattered, caressed and honoured are only wet paws [*pattes mouillées*].[10]" In contrast with the true man, one sees the poor fellow, limp as a rag. [The closing quotation mark is missing in the French copy; this last sentence reads like an editorial gloss.]

Father Chevrier does not write all the time in his personal style; he does as most of us do. But it was necessary to bring this style to light, for it is in these moments of personal eloquence that the mouth reveals the treasure hidden in the depth of the heart.[11]

Two aspects of Father Chevrier's character stand out more through his writings, his letters in particular, and are useful to know in order to read him: a passionate underlying temperament, and a realistic intelligence.

He has a passionate underlying temperament. I do not think one can imagine him as a vehement, authoritarian man, obstinate in getting his ends. He is not a man carried away by sentimental passion. He is quite naturally gentle and self-effacing and he is a realist who does not like sentimentality. But he is only the more deeply passionate. This passionate character is expressed in the absolute expressions that he uses rather often to convey his spiritual experience. Like all those whose life is unified by a passion, he has recourse to all and nothing in order to express himself, like Saint John of the Cross.[12]

However that may be, one can say that assiduous meditation on the Gospel and on Saint Paul furnished Father Chevrier with means of expression well adapted to his temperament.

He has a realistic intelligence. That does not mean a down-to-earth man, but a penetrating mind that knows how to reflect on what it has

lived. As J.-F. Six has well shown, he is, in other words, an experiential man [*un expérimental*].[13]

He seems to have little imagination, which explains why his expression generally lacks brilliance. It also explains why he hardly knows how to find attractive titles. His manner is at the antipodes of the journalists'. These, in wanting to attract the public's attention, risk doing so at the expense of truth and of respect for readers. Newspaper headlines are all too often misleading. Father Chevrier also ends up putting misleading titles, but by an opposite excess. Under a dull appearance riches are hidden. He announces, for example: Renunciation of one's mind [*esprit*], and he does treat of that, but it is also a matter of telling us how the Spirit blows where he wills and makes the saints do admirable things and makes them draw all their inspirations and thoughts from God's infinite love.[14]

One may further note on this subject that he rarely uses imagined, invented comparisons. One finds, for example, in the True Disciple the comparison of the artificial tree. If Father Chevrier does manage to make himself understood in this passage, from the literary point of view it is not of the best vintage.[15]

On the contrary, he knows very well how to exploit everything he has observed, and, using his experience, he manages to express in a brief and striking way what he wants to say. For example, if we have observed the eloquence with which a workman who loves his work can speak of it, we understand the import of this simple remark: "Let the mysteries of Our Lord be so familiar to you that you can speak of them as of something that is your own, familiar, as people know how to speak of their trade, their clothing, their affairs."[16]

This natural gift, transformed by grace, was exercised especially in the understanding of God's work, an understanding that became more penetrating as his spiritual[17] and apostolic experience widened and was enriched.

[18]This personal characteristic of Father Chevrier helps us to understand several things.

First, his slowness in making a decision, then his firmness in keeping the decisions made, finally his persevering strength in carrying them out. Slowness in deciding — perhaps this is where one sees the plainest gap in his temperament. He weighs the pros and cons at length and seems not to dare to launch out.

This prudence is perhaps the trace of a rural Dauphiné ancestry. Without doubt it also manifests a desire to do only what God wants. But, unlike others who were just as much men of God as he, he is not the man who imagines the future and who, carried away by his inner vision, tries to realize it. He needs to lean, let us say it once more, on experience, on the real. That is why he needs signs, when it is a question of realities that cannot be perceived directly.

But decisions taken in this way, founded on a human and spiritual experience, are not called into question by daily difficulties; these are not on the same plane and cannot contradict the certainties acquired.

So Father Chevrier remains perplexed for a long time, above all if it is an affair in which one has to go groping. But he is not a waverer and, without being obstinate, he carries out with perseverance what he has found by experience to be God's will. Revealing his own personality, these lines written about Paul du Bourg, companion of Camille Rambaud: "He does not count enough on the Providence of God who has always led you; he does not dare, he does not believe enough, he has not that faith in the work which makes the

strength of a man who begins, undertakes and pursues with vigour."[19]

We shall see a little further on Father Chevrier's laborious search for a plan of composition for his book. One may say that his lack of imagination and his spontaneous desire to follow experience did not make his task easy. He is the exact opposite of the novelist.

This realistic intelligence also explains his way of loving the truth. He is not a speculative thinker and, if he loves the truth, it is as a man of action. What there may be of the timorous in his character is compensated by his realistic sense of the truth. Truth is for him something to be done, because one has tasted its strength. He does it patiently, like a hard-working labourer.

This sense of the truth that must be done is clearly marked, in Father Chevrier, by the use he makes of the word *véritable* ["true, genuine, real"] (which he uses more often than the word *vrai*). The genuine is recognized by a certain efficacy that comes from love: the true disciple follows his Master, true men are not good-for-nothings,[20] the spiritual family is true when it renders the

services its members need,[21] the true poor man really lives poverty, and so on.

Even if this corresponds to new dispositions, one also sees how it is inspired by the Gospel of Saint John, where truth is so often in question.

Father Chevrier's realism leads him to a sort of evangelical humanism. His sense of poverty, for example, makes him understand that only one reality imposes itself on us in this world, and that is man. He is wholly in the line of the Gospel: life, the body — that is, man — are more than food and clothing.[22] In the line of Saint Paul too.[23]

For him, what counts is the God-Man and the transformation of man into the image of the God-Man, it is the use of the means that God willed to take for it and, before all, it is finding the men whom God wants to send for this work of restoring man.

And he is attentive, in man, to what is most human. That is why he spontaneously has the sense of the incomparable greatness of all, particularly of the little ones whom one is tempted to despise. What makes the great man is, in fact, very little in comparison with what makes the worth of

every human person. And this way of paying homage to man is still wholly evangelical.[24]

Father Chevrier an experiential man? It is not exaggerated to say that behind each indication, orientation or comment given by Father Chevrier there is an experience. He hands on to us the reflection aroused by his own life. It is this life, this experience, that must be grasped behind the sentences of his book:

"Knowledge of Jesus Christ necessarily produces love!"[25]

"Devout women especially invite priests a great deal to come and see them, especially those who have nothing to do."[26]

"There are, unfortunately, some who think that, because they are doing a work, because they have such or such a charge, everybody must help them, receive them well, give to them."[27]

Sometimes Father Chevrier simply hands on the observations he has made, but often these observations provoke somewhat ironic reflections, a sort of tendency to social satire of which many examples will be found in the True Disciple. At other times it is a penetrating and lucid psychological intuition. Finally, it is also his personal spir-

itual experience and his apostolic experience, notably the experience of apostolic collaboration.

This openness of Father Chevrier to experience was further facilitated by his openness to others. He was not sentimental, but he was certainly very sensitive. This sensitivity made him share the joys and sufferings of others. This sensitivity will be found again in the importance he gives to gentleness and compassion in the apostolic man,[28] in the importance given to family spirit, to affection in the spiritual family.[29]

To end this portrait of Father Chevrier, I must say that he was a personality deeply unified and pacified in faith in Christ. This faith was truly for him the proof of things that are not seen,[30] and these realities were for him the most fundamental, the most attractive. When he speaks of them, he likes to use the adjective *beautiful*.

How beautiful Jesus Christ is! How beautiful faith is! The words of Christ, what beautiful words! The poor priest, how beautiful this man is! Such expressions were frequent on Father Chevrier's lips and from his pen. So Father Duret, his first successor, bears witness, reporting his words:

"…O my children, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is the living letter that God sent to the world, and the world does not know it. Oh! it must be read on one's knees, with great respect. You must study Jesus Christ and love him, attach yourselves to him and follow him." And Father Duret continues:

He wanted great stress to be laid in catechism on the divinity of Jesus Christ. He often exhorted us to it: "It is the basis of Christian life," he would add; "we do not know him enough [the digital text has "nos", presumably "nous"]; people do not believe, or believe only very superficially, very vaguely, in his divinity. We must absolutely bring the world to believe in Jesus-Christ-God; it is the fundamental truth that must be put in the soul of our children. Jesus Christ is our Master, Jesus Christ is our Model, Jesus Christ is our way, our life." These words were constantly on his lips; the study of Jesus Christ ravished his soul, and when he spoke to us of Our Lord I heard him more than once cry out with enthusiasm and with the accent of strong conviction: "How beautiful Jesus Christ is, my children, how beautiful he is!"[31]

As has been seen, this portrait of Father Chevrier has not pretended to delimit what would be of

nature and what would be of grace. Such an undertaking would moreover be, for many reasons, open to dispute.

Perhaps it will be thought that the portrait is too flattering. Had he no defect? He certainly had deficiencies. I have pointed out his little imagination, his slowness in deciding. I have also noted how he felt the limits of his milieu and of his age. That he too had to fight, like each of us, against pride and selfishness is beyond doubt.

But it is hard to form an exact idea of the limits of remarkable men. On the one hand, those who give testimony, especially if a reputation for holiness is at stake, are spontaneously inclined, not to embellish but to say conventional things. Listen to funeral eulogies and other speeches in every milieu, religious, rationalist, academic! So it is very hard to obtain information.

On the other hand, when a type of man has turned out well, one cannot reproach him for having limits. One only wishes that many men had as few deficiencies.

It is my conviction that Antoine Chevrier turned out very well in his humanity. After having been put off by certain aspects of his person, I must

sincerely admit that the more I came to know him, the more I became attached to him and the better I understood what human worth evangelical grace had developed in him. It has been said that he was an ordinary man. I would rather say that he had everything to remain a very ordinary man but that his attachment to Christ and his will to follow him revealed the true potentialities of his nature.

On the contrary, more brilliant men, apparently more humanist, among his contemporaries, did not know how to free themselves from their time and build a lasting work for the future.

This destiny is even a lesson: a man's worth is outlined only under God's gaze.[32]

---

**Notes**

1. Six, p. 12.↩
2. P. 298.↩
3. Six, pp. 63–71.↩
4. LP no. 2, 22 May 1850.↩
5. LP no. 90, May 1872.↩
6. P. 294.↩
7. Pp. 176, 184; cf. Introduction to renunciation of oneself, p. 162.↩
8. PB I, 75 v.↩

9. Ms VIII 34.↩
10. LP no. 143, 25 April 1877. The expression *patte mouillée* [wet paw] means, in popular speech, a person limp as a wet rag.↩
11. Cf. Luke 6:46.↩
12. We know that on 20 March 1868 Father Chevrier was with the Carmelite Fathers to pray a little to the good God and to study the poverty of Our Lord (LP no. 67, 20 March 1868). He could have come to know the works of Saint John of the Cross at these Carmelites'. (Translation by Father Cyprien de la Nativité in the 18th century or by Abbé Gilly in 1865.)↩
13. Six, p. 86, for example.↩
14. P. 228.↩
15. Pp. 220–221.↩
16. LP no. 67, 20 March 1868.↩
17. Spiritual experience. We shall meet this expression several times. It is good to explain what is meant by it.

    One speaks of experience to signify that it is a direct knowledge in some way, an encounter from person to person. This encounter is said to be spiritual, that is, it is the work of the Holy Spirit in us and he manifests his presence.

    Consequently *spiritual* does not designate, in this case, what would remain purely and simply on the level of ideas. Spiritual means real, more real than everything. But it is a matter of the mysterious reality of God, who can be met only in faith.

    Every believer makes a spiritual experience in the very fact of believing. But, to go to the end of this experience, it is not enough to affirm: God exists, there is one

God in three persons. I must become aware that in saying Father or in addressing Christ I am truly on intimate terms ["on first-name terms," *à tu et à toi*] with the Father, with the Son, in the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Without me you can do nothing." (Jn 15:5)

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from ourselves; no, it is God who has made us sufficient, who has qualified us as ministers of a new covenant." (2 Cor 3:5–6)↩

18. (Technical layout problem: here follows the end of note 5 of page 24. Note 1 of page 25 of the VD becomes note 2.)

    Father Chevrier comments: "To know that every good feeling, every good thought of faith and love comes from God himself, and to thank him for it." (p. 118)↩
19. LP no. 19, 15 April 1859. Another well-turned sentence.↩
20. Cf. letter quoted p. 23.↩
21. Cf. p. 152.↩
22. Mt 6:25.↩
23. Cf. Eph 4:24.↩
24. Cf. Mt 18:10.↩
25. P. 115.↩
26. P. 178.↩
27. Pp. 310–311.↩
28. Pp. 371–379; 434–435.↩
29. P. 152.↩
30. Cf. Heb 11:1.↩
31. Pierre Boisnard 4, 1065 v–1066 r.↩

32. Cf. 1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:10; 20:12.↩

↑ Contents

## The Composition of the True Disciple

↑ Contents

Having traced the history within which the True Disciple was born, we may attempt a history of the book itself, starting from Father Chevrier's various essays.[1]

We know with certainty that we must begin with a rule of life written in December 1857.

The continuity of orientation between the rule of 1857 and the text on which Father Chevrier is working twenty years later, at Rome, is striking. It is no less striking to see that the first writings tackle at once the theme of the imitation of Jesus Christ our model.

"To study Jesus Christ in his mortal life, in his eucharistic life, will be all my study.

To imitate Jesus will be all my desire, the sole aim of all my thoughts, the end of all my actions.

I want to resemble you, O my Divine Saviour; what surer model could I take? Make me so like, so conformed to you, that I be one with you, that

I be truly and worthily your representative on earth, both as to powers and as to virtues.

I take you for my master and my model; I shall be your disciple and your image; enlighten me and strengthen me.

The priest is the most perfect image of Jesus on earth; he is the priest of the God of the crib, of the God who humbles himself to the point of taking what is most infirm, most abject, and of mingling among his creatures degraded by sin. He is priest of the God of the crib, of the God of the cross, of the God who gave his blood for his executioners, who was patient in sufferings and contempt.

The priest is established to make all the virtues, all the examples of Jesus Christ live again; he must be the most perfect image of Jesus Christ on earth.[2]

To imitate Jesus: that, then, is my sole aim, the end of all my thoughts and actions, the object of all my wishes and desires. Without that, I shall never make a good priest and never work effectively for the salvation of souls.

To study Jesus: that is my study.

To imitate Jesus — O my God, how much meaning this word contains![3]"

Later, the stress falls on *following* Jesus Christ: an imitation that is the fruit of knowledge and union. Father Chevrier has become more consciously mystical in the apostolate, and it is this way that he wants to teach.

In what order should the various essays be arranged? That is not our aim. We have rather sought to designate the most elaborated text. But across the whole, Father Chevrier's manner in the development of his thought is drawn quite well.

He always starts from his essential intuition, which he makes more and more explicit by constantly taking up the work again.

Father Chevrier's way of proceeding in composing moreover joins the one he uses to instruct. Whether it is a matter of preaching to the faithful, of catechism to children or of priestly formation, he employs what one might call a global method.

To justify this method, Father Chevrier can place himself on various levels.

When it is a question of catechism, thinking of the often uneducated children for whom the Prado was made, he writes: "One must always go from the coarse to the fine. People always want to go to the fine. One must keep to the coarse and go to the fine only so far as people are capable of it."[4]

But in doing so it is not only a matter of adapting to the deficient intellectual aptitudes of an audience. It is a matter of recovering a fundamental law of religious knowledge (and of all knowledge, we may add). Faith is by essence a synthetic, global knowledge, because it is adherence to someone. Before answering the question, What must we preach? Father Chevrier answered this one: Whom must we preach?

He proceeds according to the same principle with seminarians. He composed several notebooks for the use of the young pupils of the clerical school, and these notebooks quite naturally served as a prelude to what he wanted to do for the older ones, those whom he had make profession at the moment when they were going to enter philosophy at the diocesan grand seminary.

Through Father Chevrier's many writings it seemed to us possible to rediscover the following course in the development of his thought.

The essential intuition is first expressed in this form: To know Jesus Christ is everything.

Then it is the word *know* that develops: know, love and imitate or follow. Know and follow will moreover compete to express in a single word the whole content, in accordance with what is found in Scripture, for example in Saint John.

"Eternal life is that they know you, the true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ."[5]

"He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."[6]

Next, it is the name of Jesus Christ that evokes not only his person but also his life, and develops in the "Picture of Saint-Fons": the Crib, the Calvary, the Tabernacle.[7] To follow Jesus Christ is therefore to become like him poor, crucified, eaten. Each of these three aspects will itself be made explicit.

Finally, the *all* will also be developed *ipso facto*, throughout the book, in consequence of the preceding developments. We shall learn that to have

the Spirit of God is everything — everything for oneself, everything for a community. To have what is necessary and to know how to be content with it is everything. To love God and to instruct the poor is everything. And in a thousand other less literal forms we find this *all*, the inestimable price of each aspect of life, as soon as it is a question of conformity to Christ.

To set out his thought, Father Chevrier willingly borrowed others' schemes. It is practically certain that the three parts of the Saint-Fons picture are not his invention. Besides, this way of approaching the mystery of our conformity to Christ is more than classical, and spiritual reflection tends to it more or less spontaneously.

With the notebook entitled *The Priesthood*, Father Chevrier really puts a book on the stocks. He tried to follow a plan that seems partly inspired by that of a theological treatise, for the first chapters give an abstract division of the subject: Aim, excellence… nature of this union (with Jesus Christ), its necessity, its effects.

In the end Father Chevrier adopts the plan he found in the Gospel. "If anyone wishes to come

after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."[8]

The wish to come after him is the fruit of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that knowledge which necessarily produces love and gives the impetus to answer the call of him who says: "Come."

This answer is realized by renouncing oneself, bearing one's cross and following the Master.

By dint of studying the Gospel and Saint Paul, Father Chevrier, having amassed materials and gathered observations, has to complete this plan. Other words of Jesus invite him to it. To renunciation of oneself he must add renunciation of family and world[9] and renunciation of the goods of the earth.[10]

To treat each part Father Chevrier follows diverse methods. He borrows, for example, from psychological analyses when he divides renunciation of oneself according to four domains: body, heart, mind and will.

He is always in search of a certain logic, and this is not always easy to discover either for him or for his readers. It happens that one can find a sort of spiritual progression traced through the plan. In this case, moreover, one can note hesitations

about the order to be followed, which is not exactly the same in the various manuscripts.

It also happens that the order is simply dictated by the succession of things in the Gospel. For example, in the last part of the True Disciple, the first question is of following Jesus Christ in fasting. For the Gospel shows us Jesus fasting forty days in the desert before inaugurating his preaching. Then comes prayer, which is associated with fasting in Scripture.

Finally, the order of development is also marked by Father Chevrier's apostolic experience. That is doubtless the case of the last chapters of the book, as will be shown further on.[11]

Whatever the detail of the historical exactness of the course we have just traced, we may retain that not a line of the True Disciple has meaning except in the light of the original intuition: "Everything is contained in the knowledge of Jesus Christ."[12] Apart from this light, one can only arrive at false interpretations.

It is likewise beyond doubt that the movement running through the True Disciple is also the one we find again through the Picture of Saint-Fons.

The first part of the True Disciple is turned towards the mystery of the Incarnation and what the knowledge of this mystery produces: a communion with Christ, a source of impoverishment, of abasement. This is the Crib. By the same movement, he who has learned to become poor is available to take up the Cross already present in his life of poverty. Then, having become good bread, he is in a position to work in perfect union with the living Bread come down from heaven, following him everywhere and in everything, to give life to the world.

What kind of book does Father Chevrier thus arrive at?

We have already noticed that he is in constant contact with his public. The text is, so to speak, put to the test as it goes along, for it is composed in dialogue with its users.

At Rome, in the spring of 1877, the Father lives with his first disciples. It is in this period that the Father writes to Joseph Jaricot: "I am working at my True Disciple. I explain it every day. We are going to begin to see the practice; that is where there will probably be some difficulties."[13]

The conditions in which this book was elaborated are still the conditions for which it is made at present. One must without hesitation apply to this case what Father Chevrier says elsewhere about catechism: "It is not the book that instructs, it is the priest."[14]

Father Chevrier's book is quite in its place when it is in the hands of a priest in charge of priestly formation who comments on it, stirring up dialogue with the seminarians.

It is a manual, if you like, in the sense that it is normally made to be put in the pupil's hands and above all to be held in the hands of a priest who wants to establish conversation with the pupils.[15]

This is further supported by the conception of formation that Father Chevrier had. He explained himself on it in the True Disciple itself. The great method is to take with one, in order to instruct, rebuke, set to work, as Jesus did with the twelve.[16]

So this manual of priestly formation is made to keep the person responsible for formation at the level of the mystery hidden in this task. Christ takes with him, to form them, those whom he calls to follow him. A mystery that is realized

through the persons who have the mission of forming others to the evangelical life.

The True Disciple is a book of priestly formation because it is not content with describing an outward behaviour of the priest, but is above all attentive to the spirit that produces this behaviour and to the source from which this spirit is drawn. Now to draw from this source and to become familiar with this spirit is indeed the essential of priestly formation. And this explains why a priest can use this book to the end of his course; one must constantly draw the same spirit from the same source as formerly, in order to be, as they say today, in a state of permanent formation.

Manual of priestly formation and description of a type of priest: these two aspects of the book are present even in the title Father Chevrier gave to the work, *The Priest according to the Gospel, or The True Disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.

Should one give preponderance to one or the other? Some, for reasons of historical fidelity, others for reasons of adaptation to the present mentality, think that one must opt for the first part of the title.[17]

At the Prado the habit is to say the True Disciple. At the process of canonization the usage already seems established, and besides it is indisputable that Father Chevrier used this title.[18]

A wholly practical reason pleads in favour of this usage: the phrase True Disciple is quicker and handier to pronounce than the other. Father Chevrier doubtless often used this title, perhaps for that reason.

Yet another suggestion must be made, for in my opinion Father Chevrier could have well-weighed reasons to prefer the second title.

On the one hand, he is intent on characterizing the essential attitude of the priest or future priest as that of the disciple who acquires the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The opening of the book is the manifest proof of it.[19]

On the other hand, the expression True Disciple is used equivalently by Jesus in Saint John and applies to the apostles.[20]

[21]Finally, Father Chevrier's spiritual family does not include only priests. Brothers and sisters were at his side before the priests. They can by full right consider the True Disciple as written for them too. And with all these, the laity also have

found in the True Disciple a help that continues the one Father Chevrier was able to give to the laity around him.

It is moreover evident that if priests agree to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ, they will thereby be priests according to the Gospel. Each is therefore free to prefer one or the other title.

To what books did Father Chevrier refer in writing the True Disciple?

Besides a Latin Bible, he may have had at his disposal various translations, but we must remember that editions of the Bible were not then what they are today.

For the Gospels he made abundant use of the volume by Mastaï-Ferretti: *The United Gospels* [*Les Évangiles unis*]. This way of weaving the texts of the four Gospels through one another goes back to antiquity, and several times in the course of the Church's history attempts have been made in this way to popularize the Gospel text. [Mastaï-Ferretti: the family name of Pius IX.]

Father Chevrier used Mastaï-Ferretti assiduously because he thus had the complete text of the Gospels at hand. He recommended the work around him.

At the present time, with the progress of biblical studies, such a method of work is no longer appropriate. We have at our disposal synopses of the four Gospels.

What should be retained from Father Chevrier's liking for Mastaï-Ferretti's work is his desire to leave nothing aside of the Gospel text.

When it is a question of the Old Testament, Father Chevrier cites most often in Latin, and he does the same for the New Testament when he seems to cite from memory. Most of the time these are passages familiar to him through the use made of them by the liturgy in the missal or the breviary.

Father Chevrier certainly had the desire to refer to the whole of Scripture,[22] but he gives an eminent place to the Gospel and one may say he has recourse to it constantly. Yet at the same time he gives an important place to the whole New Testament and particularly to the Epistles of Saint Paul.

Let us not be astonished to meet certain clumsy or even inexact interpretations of scriptural texts. For example, on page 195, on Romans 6:13: "that your members may be for him weapons of justice," Father Chevrier comments: "Weapons of

justice to punish yourselves." This application to bodily mortification considerably restricts the scope of the word "justice" for Saint Paul.

Another example, page 149, on Jesus' word to Mary at the wedding at Cana. In this translation and commentary Father Chevrier is quite simply dependent on Mastaï-Ferretti, in whom he trusts.

At that time there is not yet a special course in Holy Scripture in the seminaries.

However, all things considered, clumsinesses are rare, for Father Chevrier is not seeking a new interpretation of the Gospel but the practical consequences of the Gospel in his life, by assiduous reading, meditation, mental prayer. Thus the evangelical impregnation that took place assures him an essentially right interpretation.

Apart from scriptural references, one finds in the True Disciple a certain number of other references, but they cannot give indications of Father Chevrier's reading. They are a few scholastic adages, or those Latin maxims that ecclesiastics used to be fond of. One of them is a sentence of Saint Augustine, distorted.[23]

There are some allusions to various persons. Allusions to the Curé of Ars — this cannot astonish

us, since Father Chevrier knew the holy curé. Reference to Anthony the hermit, to Saint Benedict, to Saint Francis of Assisi and others, doubtless known through the Lives of the Saints that were classic at the time and through the readings of the breviary. Father Chevrier recommends the reading of the Lives of the Saints. We know that the Curé of Ars had given a good place to this work.

But all this, in the end, weighs very little in comparison with the mass of scriptural citations. Father Chevrier was very conscious of the situation. He saw its drawbacks but he had no choice. To fulfil his mission he could only proceed in this way.[24]

Practically, at least for the parts of the True Disciple entitled *Follow me*, Father Chevrier seems to have employed the following method.

1° – He searches personally, in the Gospel and in Saint Paul, for the passages that bear on the subject studied. He takes a sheet of paper, almost always rather long, for he likes vertical arrangements. As he goes he notes the Scripture passages by a sentence summarizing each passage, and follows it with a number referring either to the

*United Gospels* of Mastaï-Ferretti or to a translation of Saint Paul; here, for example, is the beginning of a study of this kind:

Follow me in my sufferings.

He is born in a stable (27) (that is, Luke 2:7).

The angels give the shepherds his poverty as the sign by which they will recognize him (28) (that is, Luke 2:12).

Etc.[25]

2° – He takes up this list again and tries to order it logically, for example by distinguishing the actions and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Among the manuscripts one finds sketches of plans and also sheets on which the Father has noted the same passages anew; but this time the order is no longer the same; it follows the sketched plan.

3° – Father Chevrier then brings in another hand than his own. To a seminarian or to a sister or to one of his penitents he entrusts the preparation of a notebook. On the pages of the notebook (school format 17 x 23) he has two margins of 40 to 50 mm drawn, one on the left, the other on the right.

In the central part, the complete text of the Scripture citations indicated by Father Chevrier is copied.

In the left margin are reproduced the Father's sentences that summarize the corresponding text and thus form a series of sub-titles.

The right margin remains free, intended in principle for Father Chevrier's comments… which will sometimes be written on the left or over the whole page. In so doing he sometimes modifies the wording of the sub-titles.

4° – It seems that, normally, another work was always to follow.

By collecting all the comments of the right margin, Father Chevrier has the sketch of the text destined for the True Disciple.

But, for the last chapters, this last phase of the work was only sketched and even, in certain cases, was not begun.

Consequently we can regard the texts of the last chapters as preparatory studies, especially from *Follow me in my charity* onward.[26]

After a rather meticulous examination of the manuscripts, it seems that this view really corres-

ponds to reality; but let us not forget that Father Chevrier did not shut himself up in a system. Whether it was a matter of composing a book or of governing his house, he always obeyed two imperatives: he keenly felt the necessity of a certain organization in order to be effective, and he always received the lessons of experience, constantly modifying the organization put in place.

---

**Notes**

1. Father Chevrier's manuscripts present a succession of ever more developed sketches. (Cf. p. 37.)↩
2. Ms X 8–9.↩
3. Ms X 24.↩
4. Ms VII 553.↩
5. Jn 17:3.↩
6. Jn 8:12.↩
7. This picture in three parts is called, at the Prado, the Picture of Saint-Fons. (Cf. Annex V, p. 533.)↩
8. Mt 16:24.↩
9. Cf. Mt 10:37; Jn 15:19.↩
10. Cf. Lk 14:33.↩
11. Cf. pp. 43, 338.↩
12. P. 113.↩
13. LP no. 83, April 1877.↩
14. P. 450.↩
15. This does not mean that the manual in question cannot be used in other conditions and by others than semin-

arians. A long experience clearly shows that people have found in this book what they were looking for without necessarily needing a master to comment on it.↩

16. P. 122.↩
17. Cf. Six, p. 379. — The Spanish edition of the VD (Desclée de Brouwer, 1961 and 1963) translated only the first part of the title.↩
18. Cf. letter quoted page 32. In fact only one manuscript, the principal manuscript, has the double title. Everywhere else one finds only the True Disciple.↩
19. P. 45.↩
20. Cf. Jn 8:31; 15:8. We know that Saint Ignatius of Antioch also has equivalent expressions (continued in note 5, p. 33)…↩
21. …"I am God's wheat and I am ground by the teeth of beasts, to become the spotless bread of Christ… It is when the world no longer sees even my body that I shall be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ." (Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Romans IV, 1 and 2.) One sees that this martyr, condemned to the beasts about the year 110, had discovered, long before Father Chevrier, that one must be good bread, well baked by death to self. (LP no. 53, 22 January 1866.)↩
22. In a notebook that contains a study on prayer, he had the references sought through the whole Bible. He also studies the prophetic announcements of Jesus Christ.↩
23. P. 330.↩
24. Cf. letter quoted on page 10, note 1.↩
25. Ms XII 665. This manuscript gathers about fifty gospel passages.↩

26. P. 415.↩

↑ Contents

## Our Edition

↑ Contents

Since Father Chevrier took up the writing of his book several times, a choice had to be made among the great number of manuscripts he left. A very important part of the work was supplied by Father Émile Desroche and Sister Renée de Limairac.

For a large piece, from the beginning to the end of *Renunciation of oneself*, the choice is already made, for a big notebook, formed of bound notebooks, certainly represents the most finished state of Father Chevrier's work. A large part of the notebook remains blank. Father Chevrier intended to reproduce on these blank pages the texts prepared on other booklets.[1]

Happily we also have the plan of his work; modified several times, this plan might perhaps have undergone further changes in a definitive draft, but one does not see what would have motivated important modifications. In the introductions specific to the various parts we shall indicate the few hesitations one may have on this subject.

For the parts that were not reproduced in the principal manuscript, we had to choose. But here too the choice was not very complicated, for the most elaborated texts appeared quite easily.

It will be seen, however, that in the last chapters the drafting is far from being as developed as in the first part. Father Chevrier did not have the time.

If, then, one does not pay attention to the general structure of the work, one may arrive at an inexact interpretation. Thus, notably, the part concerning the renunciations will appear disproportionately long in comparison with the last part entitled *Following Jesus Christ*, contrary to the importance of the latter in Father Chevrier's thought.[2]

Beside the text retained as the fundamental text, we present parallel texts. We did not wish to cite all the parallels. On the one hand this luxury of erudition would have been of no interest to the presumed readers of this book; on the other, if anyone needed to do scientific work by comparing Father Chevrier's various manuscripts, he would have every facility to find them in the archives of the Prado.

The parallel texts reproduced were judged interesting because they sometimes express themselves with more felicity than the fundamental text.

Texts of Father Chevrier that were not immediately destined for the True Disciple are presented in annexes. They are useful for understanding his thought well.

We wanted the typographical arrangement to allow one to follow, as far as possible, Father Chevrier's thought. Indeed, when one has Father Chevrier's manuscripts before one's eyes, one notices that the layout of the text is of great importance.

Things reproduced one after another in a compact layout cannot let us grasp the meditative attitude with which Father Chevrier wrote the same words while arranging them quite differently, in columns for example. One sees then that it is not an enumeration to be read quickly but a series of thoughts to be meditated. We have therefore respected all the paragraph breaks, and they are very numerous.

Father Chevrier's text is printed in roman type. Everything we have added is in square brackets [ ]. These are a certain number of conjectures ne-

cessary for the thought to follow its course, where words are manifestly forgotten or have remained illegible to us. We have supplied the punctuation, which is most often omitted in the manuscripts.

The parallels are reproduced in the same way, but in smaller type.

As regards the titles, we have respected those that were foreseen in Father Chevrier's plans and have reproduced them at their logical place, even if Father Chevrier had, here or there, forgotten to reproduce in the notebook a title at the place that belonged to it.

Latin citations are left as they are. The translation is in a note. When there is no translation in a note, it is because the text accompanying the citation itself gives a translation of it.

We have tried to ensure that one has the exact text of Father Chevrier and that it is nevertheless directly usable. That is why we have had recourse to all these procedures.

> *[Translator's note: in this English version, square brackets [ ] enclosing ordinary text are Berthelon's editorial conjectures, as in the French. The translator's own glosses and notes are always written in*

*square brackets beginning "Tr.:" in the main text (a few in the introduction above, before this convention was fixed, are unmarked). "[Italian: ...]" marks a place where the Italian edition differs from the French in a way that matters. Parallel texts that Berthelon prints in smaller type are translated like the main text; line-by-line layout is kept as far as the French digital copy shows it.]*

↑ Contents

## Advice for the Study of Father Chevrier and of the True Disciple

↑ Contents

All readers will easily understand that this last part of the introduction is destined specially for Father Chevrier's spiritual family, so that this volume may answer, as far as possible, the Father's intentions.

We have seen that this book is an instrument to be put into the hands of an apostle who has the mission of forming other apostles: *It is not the book that instructs, it is the priest.* But this condition cannot always be realized and must be supplied by personal work. Moreover, for those in charge of formation, some practical indications may be useful.

The study in question here is a work neither of historical research nor of scientific theology. It is necessary that such works be done, but they are at the service of another work, indispensable for every Pradosian: a personal study to become familiar with the person and thought of Father Chevrier and to live by the grace by which he lived, granted today to his heirs.

The following indications are therefore directly destined for a work of spiritual assimilation.

It is not rare for people to present themselves at the Prado without any particular interest in the person of Father Chevrier. Others have tried to read a Life of the Father or a part of his writings and have felt a disappointment: nothing catching.

The Father may thus appear to some almost useless and even, for a few, an obstacle to the extent that one would want to refer to him for our life today.

If we believe Father Chevrier himself, these difficulties are not new. He was already writing in 1866: "I wrote to Abbé Merle and I do not know what has become of him; I have not seen Monsieur Lainé again; these fruits are not yet ripe. I believe the Prado frightened them a little. For in-

deed one does not see on whom one can lean in this poor shack; it is truly only the good God who holds it up, and one does not see him; one sees only a poor wretch who holds God's place so badly that one is tempted rather to go away than to come."[3]

How are these difficulties expressed? I see three main ways:

1° – Instead of talking to us about Father Chevrier, it will be said, talk to us about the Gospel.

2° – Father Chevrier is one man in the Church among many others who are greater. Put him back in his right place.

3° – If you want to be faithful to Father Chevrier, seek not what he said and did in his time but what you must say and do today.

Let us take up each of these points.

1° – Talk to us about the Gospel and not about Father Chevrier.

An illusion seems often to underlie this difficulty: that there would exist someone who could give us the Gospel pure and simple. Only Jesus could do so, and he did. He deposited the Gospel with the Church; but in the Church there is no one

who can, by himself, penetrate the Gospel in its totality and perfect purity, whether for himself or to present it to others.

The treasure is at our disposal; we can and must draw from it; but the treasure infinitely exceeds our possibilities of investigation and, as long as we are not in the full light of heaven, we never see the Gospel except narrowed through our own judgment and that of those who teach us. Believing I am going to the Gospel pure and simple, I risk putting myself in tow behind a man or shutting myself up in my own mind.

Happily the Holy Spirit is there to raise up the spiritual guides we need, scribes learned in the Kingdom of heaven, like a householder who brings forth from his treasure new things and old.[4] Father Chevrier is one of these; that is why the Church has recognized him as founder of the Prado.

Two consequences can be drawn from this.

First, when I have difficulty entering into an expression of Father Chevrier, into one of his recommendations, I must see whether perhaps Father Chevrier is not just then opening me to a deeper, broader sense of the Gospel.

Then, if one has truly taken Father Chevrier as spiritual guide, one must take care, with him, to have recourse to the Gospel, to grasp how what he says is inspired by the knowledge of Jesus. I must attach myself personally to Christ as he did himself.

2° – Father Chevrier is only one man in the Church among many others.

Nothing is truer, but, as for anyone else, what matters is to know the role God assigned him. One must not refuse the Holy Spirit the power to raise up founders, men who receive a grace broad enough to become the spiritual guides of the family that issues from them.

It is true, however, that one cannot have the Spirit of God — Father Chevrier himself declares it — if one does not have recourse to the Church and to the saints. So also it is putting oneself in Father Chevrier's school to have recourse at length to some important spiritual author who seems to suit us particularly. Besides, a broad culture on this point is necessary for a priest. It may also happen that another spiritual master, having marked us more, is the one who introduces us to

the knowledge of Father Chevrier, and a work of comparison can be very useful in those cases.

It remains that one must not be surprised if, in a period of more special formation, one has recourse mainly to Father Chevrier: it is fidelity to the Spirit of God, for those whom God calls in the same way.

3° – Let us seek what we have to do and say today.

It is quite evident that that is what has to be done, but there are several ways of going about it.

One may be inclined to invent from scratch, without wishing to draw inspiration from anyone. To believe one succeeds is an illusion, for in all our most personal initiatives we remain marked by the mentality of our milieu, by our past, by our own temperament. All this marks us, by the way, providentially, but it is still fitting to be aware of it and not to resign ourselves to staying in this narrow circle which we spontaneously believe wide enough because we feel at ease in it.

If, on the contrary, we have the guarantee that a man enjoyed an exceptional spiritual and apostolic experience in order to be the inspirer of a whole line of continuators, we must agree that

the power of the Holy Spirit can use this privileged experience to make our life fruitful today.

The man in question does not readily unleash enthusiasm? Should we not say, so much the better, for then he will more easily be given his true place.

And then, what is this man going to tell us? Not: "In your place, this is what I would do," but: "Here is how you can find what Jesus would do in your place," or, better still, "what Jesus wants to do through you and with you, now."

Finally, this appeal to seek what we must do today must also awaken us to another very important thing: recourse to Father Chevrier, to be true, must be accompanied by recourse to his family as it lives today, for, thank God, we are not alone and we have brothers and sisters who have understood something of this life in the footsteps of Jesus that we desire.

Let us not fear, then, to look at them, without voluntarily excluding a single one. All help us to understand Father Chevrier and above all to know Jesus Christ better, to work better, in the Church, with the whole Church, at God's work, announcing the Gospel to the poor.

With the doctrinal orientation that came from the Second Vatican Council, we are resuming the habit of giving more attention to charisms in the Church, and we see better that spiritual families exist to perpetuate, as long as God shall dispose, the special mission and the particular gifts made to the one who is recognized as founder.

The term *founder* does not lead us to consider things under this essentially spiritual aspect. It has a mainly juridical resonance in present-day language, and those who wish to be faithful to the founder are suspected of wanting to perpetuate a society for its own sake. One must conceive the founder above all as an initiator, a man who received a particular gift for the service of the People of God, what is called a charism, and this man is a privileged witness for those to whom God gives a similar grace. It is in reference to him that they can follow the personal grace that is in them, and it is also in reference to him that they form one same spiritual family. "True unity is in the union of one same spirit, one same thought, one same love, and it is Jesus Christ who is its centre, through the Holy Spirit."[5]

Two things are necessary to accompany the study of the True Disciple: to know the life of Father Chevrier and to read his letters.

We have already cited several times the book of J.-F. Six: *Un prêtre, Antoine Chevrier.*

It is the most recent work to be read if one does not want to be content with a short biography. It has, among other things, the great interest of replacing Father Chevrier in the history of his time.

Father Chevrier's letters are interesting, in particular because they show how he applied day by day the orientations drawn in the True Disciple. They have been reproduced in two forms. A printed volume gathers a choice of letters. The choice was well made; unfortunately, to make the text more presentable, corrections, sometimes very important, were introduced by the editor.[6]

The complete text of all Father Chevrier's letters that have reached us has been duplicated. This duplicated edition is out of print.[7]

For a progressive work one can take inspiration from the following plan:

1. For a first contact with the True Disciple, it is better, in general, to begin by reading

the following passages, in the order indicated:

Attachment to Jesus Christ, p. 109

Renunciation of the goods of the earth, p. 275

Renunciation of one's mind, p. 205

Bearing one's cross, p. 325

Following Jesus Christ, p. 335

1. One can work very usefully by looking in Father Chevrier's letters for everything that relates to the various chapters of the True Disciple, for example: the study of Jesus Christ, poverty, the cross, catechism, etc.
2. For a continuous work through the book, one can read in sequence, helped by one of the fundamental themes that serves as a guiding thread. Here are some examples:

1. Love:

– the mystery of the Incarnation, manifestation of God's love in the world,

– the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which necessarily produces love,

– the renunciations, expression of the love that wants to free itself from everything that does not go to Jesus Christ,

– the cross, expression of love, distinctive sign of Christ and of his disciples,

– following Christ, a life in love, both on the personal level and in the accomplishment of the mission.

1. Mission:

– Christ, the Word incarnate, God's envoy,

– the knowledge of Jesus Christ: opening us to the totality of Jesus Christ's mission towards us,

– attachment to Jesus Christ: hearing the call to mission, Come, follow me,

– the renunciations, especially poverty, the missionary's freedom,

– the cross and following Jesus Christ: As the Father has sent me, I also send you. One and the

same mission accomplished in the same spirit, in the same manner.

1. Man in God's plan:

– Knowledge of Jesus Christ, sent by God because Son of God made man,

– Attachment to Jesus Christ: God calls other men through his Son,

– Renunciations: for God's work, it is enough that a man be sent by God to men. The whole mission, all the strength of the one sent lies in the fact of being sent. To be free with regard to all the rest.

– The cross: the apostle tried is a man who knows how to suffer; he has the strength and the intelligence, the know-how for it.

– Following Jesus Christ: the action of the man sent by God on behalf of the men to be saved, an action always willed for man and not for works.

1. The Word:

This theme is doubtless the most essential of the True Disciple.

– In God there is the Word, the Word through whom all was made,

– The Word was made flesh, he took the time to speak to us, he entered and he remains in conversation with men.

– One must attach oneself to this Master by receiving his word with the simplicity of the True Disciple.

– The Word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, produces in us an effect of purification, of transformation, with the inner action of the Holy Spirit, so that we can think and act according to God.

– The Word of the Lord gives us inner strength to bear the cross with joy.

– One must follow Jesus Christ in the announcing of the Gospel, beginning where he began: prayer, fasting, presenting oneself to men with his gentleness, his humility, his goodness.

– One must announce the Word with authority, fidelity, simplicity, to all, always and everywhere,

– One must go to the end of this mission by accepting the inescapable consequences of the preaching of the Gospel: struggles, persecutions.

– One must accomplish God's work in the sacrifice of one's life as Jesus himself did: it is through his ministry that the one sent by God makes his way towards his Passover which introduces him into glory.

1. To study a particular chapter or passage of the True Disciple, one must try to find everywhere two references: Holy Scripture and Father Chevrier's experience, that is, what he saw, heard, lived.

For example, let us simply take the opening page.[8]

"Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks often, in the Gospel, of his disciples." Let us go and look in the Gospel, noting, if possible, all the passages where the word *disciple* is used and the characteristics that accompany it. One will soon have an eloquent picture before one's eyes.

"Our first work is therefore to know Jesus Christ in order to be afterwards wholly his." Where does Father Chevrier get this certainty? His personal experience and his apostolic life showed him that the fruits that remain come out of the knowledge

of Jesus Christ. By another way one obtains nothing, or only ephemeral results.

In some passages it is recourse to Scripture that surfaces immediately. In others, conversely, it is recourse to experience. But it is worth the trouble to seek both ceaselessly. Thanks to this search, one will more easily find the transpositions to be made and will more easily be able to get beyond the things that cause difficulty.

Need we add, in closing, that it is quite useless to read this book as one reads a novel. If one does not receive it as a meditation, it will not yield its secret.

---

**Notes**

1. Cf. p. 274.↩
2. P. 335.↩
3. LP no. 54, 3 June 1866.↩
4. Mt 13:52.↩
5. P. 231.↩
6. *Lettres du Vénérable Antoine Chevrier*, Éditions Vitte, Lyon–Paris, 1927.↩
7. Note added later: a new edition has appeared since, available at the Prado: 13 rue Père Chevrier, 69007 Lyon.↩
8. P. 45.↩

↑ Contents

# Opening[1] [Italian edition: "Prologo" (Prologue)]

↑ Contents

Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks often, in the Gospel, of his disciples.

He chooses his disciples, he speaks to his disciples, he instructs them apart,

He gives them particular laws.

In a word, it is a special choice of men who are his and who go with him.

*What is a disciple in general?*

A disciple in general is a man who has taken another for his master, who follows him, listens to his word, gives him his confidence, admits his doctrine and puts it into practice.

*What is a disciple of Jesus Christ?*

A disciple of Jesus Christ, then, will be a man who takes Jesus Christ for his Master; who follows him, gives him all his confidence, listens to his doctrine and puts it into practice, and has no other desire than to serve him, to love him and to do all that he has taught him.[2]

*What must one do to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ?*

To become a True Disciple of Jesus Christ, one must first know him, know who he is.

The knowledge we have of him will help us to give ourselves to him, and the better we know him, the more we shall attach ourselves to him, the more we shall love his doctrine, the more desirous we shall be to follow him and to practise all that he will teach us.

Our first work is therefore to know Jesus Christ in order to be afterwards wholly his.

---

**Notes**

1. Reference of the principal manuscript in the copies: vol. XI, pp. 269 to 482 and, in this volume, up to p. 274, except pp. 235 to 243.↩
2. Ms XI 6; XI 39.

   A disciple is a friend who follows another, who takes someone for his master and gives him his confidence, his heart and his will. (Ms XI 6.)

   A disciple is a man who follows another: who has taken someone for his master, who listens to him, who follows him, who gives him his confidence, and who is ready to sacrifice himself for him. He admits his doctrine and puts it into practice.↩

↑ Contents

# Part One: Knowledge of Jesus Christ

↑ Contents

## I. The Trinity

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* From the very first words Father Chevrier astonishes us by tackling at once the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

He does so by having recourse to the classical theology of the West, the one which, following Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, recognized in the exercise of our intellectual faculties a likeness of God's inner life. It is Scripture itself that sets us on this path by designating Jesus Christ as the Word, the *Verbum*.

Father Chevrier does not show himself very skilful in presenting this theology. Perhaps, besides, his professor had proceeded with a similar clumsiness in the seminary lessons.

But the most important thing is not there. One must notice the expression *in God*, which recurs several times, and the final sentence: *We can now say what Jesus Christ is.* Father Chevrier clearly

noted that the knowledge of Jesus Christ, sent by the Father, is inseparable from the knowledge of the only true God.[1]

***Preliminary notions on the existence of the three divine persons.***

One must know that in God, as in ourselves, since we were created in the image of God, there is being, thought, love; that these three things are absolutely necessary to constitute an intelligent and complete being.

Since in God everything exists in a perfect state — for if anything imperfect were in God he would no longer be infinite or perfect — the thought that comes from God, that goes out from God as from its principle, is perfect like God himself and forms a person distinct from the principle that begot it.

As in me: I feel that my thought is from me, that it goes out from myself, that it comes from me, that it is something of me, and yet that it is also distinct from the love that follows it.

In God this thought, which is called the Word, is an interior word as long as it is not produced outwards; it is something of God, it emanates from God, it is God himself thinking, it forms a divine

person in a perfect state, who is the second person in God, who begets his thought or his divine Word.

[Tr.: the French sentence is syntactically tangled; its sense is that the second person is the Word, the Father's thought.] This second person in God is his divine thought, eternal and divine; it is the interior expression of his eternal and immutable thought, and it is as ancient as God himself, because God thinks from all eternity and cannot exist without his thought, which is as essential to God as God himself.

There are, then, in God, God and his Word, who is nothing other than his thought itself in the state of a person.

This thought or person cannot exist without intimate relations with the principle that produced it.

God sees his thought begotten by himself, coming from him, going out from him, perfect like himself; he contemplates it as another himself, because it contains all his light, his intelligence, his wisdom; nothing is more beautiful, more perfect than this infinite thought, which is one, perfect and infinite; he necessarily loves it.

For its part, the Word, or the thought of God, sees its author and its principle from whom it goes out in a perfect state; it sees this principle that begot it and admires all its infinite and eternal perfections, and it loves this principle with an infinite love;

And from the love of these perfect and infinite subsistences there is born a third person who is called Love or the Holy Spirit, because he emanates from the first two principles and proceeds from the one and the other. [Tr.: Chevrier's "l'un de l'autre"; the Italian has "dall'uno e dall'altro".]

And since this love proceeds from these two persons, and the first two persons could not have existed without knowing and loving each other, and the first two persons are eternal, necessary to their own existence, it follows that the third person, who is Love or the Holy Spirit, exists at the same time as the other two persons;

And since this love proceeds from two perfect, infinite principles, it follows that the Holy Spirit is eternal, infinite, like the Father and the Son, and that the infinite love of these first two persons for each other cannot produce a person inferior to the other two;

And that in God himself there can be nothing imperfect, nothing finite; otherwise he would not be God.

That is what there is in God, and it cannot be otherwise, even in the eyes of reason.

*Necessity of these three persons for a perfect God.*

*Coexistence of these three persons, who cannot exist one without the other.*

*Equality of these three persons.*

*Distinction of these three persons.*

*Inseparability of these three persons.*

*Comparison of our soul and the flame, which necessarily produces light and heat.*

[Tr.: the six lines above are headings only (an outline of points to be developed, not developed in the manuscript).]

That is what there is in God, and it cannot be otherwise; and these three persons in God are only one and the same thing.

God, principle of everything, thinks and loves; his thought, infinite like God himself, becomes a person infinite and eternal like its principle.

And his love becomes a person infinite and eternal like the principle from which it emanates.

And everything in God is perfect and infinite.

And these two persons are eternal like the principle from which they emanate, because the Father, or principle of these two persons, cannot exist without his thought and his love.

These two divine persons receive everything from the first principle by an infinite generation; an infinite principle which communicates to the other two persons all that it has without destroying itself, without diminishing itself, because it is an infinite principle and, having an infinite life, it communicates all that it has of itself without losing anything of itself.

These first notions being well understood, we can now say what Jesus Christ is.

---

**Notes**

1. Cf. Jn 17:3.↩

↑ Contents

## II. What Is Jesus Christ

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* One may compare the pages that follow with those that precede. If Father Chevrier was clumsy in speculative theology, once he is back at the direct commentary of Scripture he is on the contrary quite at ease and does not hesitate before rather bold formulas (for example, page 62, on God's need to communicate himself).

Behind these pages, especially behind the last, more vibrant lines, there is the spiritual experience of Christmas 1856, which lives anew unceasingly in the soul's contact with this sentence of Scripture: *The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*

Saint John answers this question very clearly in the first chapter of his Gospel, when he says:

***In the beginning was the Word.***

That is to say, at the same time that God was, the Word was also, because God cannot exist without his thought or his Word; an intelligent being cannot exist without thinking, and God, who is wisdom itself, intelligence itself, cannot exist without thinking, without his thought.

In the beginning he *was*; he does not say: was created, but *was*.

There is a difference between this beginning of Saint John's Gospel and the beginning of Genesis, where Moses says: *in principio Deus creavit.*[1]

***And the Word was with God.***

That is, he had not yet gone out from God as he did later.

He was in God as my thought is in me, being part of myself; I feel it, I feel its existence. So the Word was in God as an interior Word; he was in God as my thought is in myself, and as I cannot exist without my thought; thus God possesses from all eternity his interior Word, not yet manifested to the world.

***And the Word was God.***

This Word, begotten by the Father, who is God, being the perfect thought of God, his thought, his knowledge, his science, his wisdom — this Word, who has received everything from the Father by an infinite and divine filiation, without any reserve, forms a divine person who is God, like the principle from which he proceeds, as the child who comes forth from his father is like his father and consequently becomes man like his father.

Thus the Word, who is begotten of the Father in an infinite manner, receives everything from him and is found to be like him, perfect like him, God like him.

***He was in the beginning with God.***

From the beginning, before all things, he was in God, being one with him, God himself, having one nature with him. He was in God as my thought is in me, and that from the beginning, that is, from all eternity; thus in these words one sees the unity of his nature and the eternity of the Son of God and yet his distinct existence, because *he was*, and the preceding word says that he was God.

In the beginning, that is, before manifesting himself to the world, as he did later, he already existed and he was in God.

***All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing.***

It is by his Word that God the Father created all things. Is it not indeed by our word that we command or that we make things?

When we have something to do, to produce outside ourselves, we say, we speak, and we make by

our word. A general of an army commands and is obeyed.

So God makes everything by his Word: *ipse dixit et facta sunt.*[2]

All that was made outside God was made by his Word or his powerful and infinite word: the angels, heaven, earth, men — everything was made by his divine Word, who is the divine expression of the Father's will and who, being his Word, has the same power as the Father and can will and do himself only what is in him and what he does only with him.

***In him was life.***

The life of the Father, like the life of men.

Is it not in thought that life is found?

Take away the thought of an intelligent being, what will become of him? A dead being; and as he draws life from the Father, who is life by essence, so he communicates this life of thought, of intelligence, to all the beings to whom he gives being, and in giving them being, he gives them life, intelligence, and the Holy Spirit gives them love.

Thus each person communicates something:

The Father gives being to his Son

The Son gives life and intelligence

And the Holy Spirit communicates love.

And these three benefits are therefore absolutely necessary to make of us beings who are good and capable of good.

In him is the principle of life that he communicates to us in creating us: intelligence, thought, reason, faith.

Natural life,

Spiritual life.

***In him was life, and the life was the light of men.***

In this life that the Word communicates to men in creating them, there is found the light, the true light that enlightens every man coming into this world.

Is it not indeed in the Word, who is the thought of God, that the true light is found which makes us know God and heavenly things?

Is it not in this Word that all the wisdom of the Father, the science, the knowledge of God and all the divine and human sciences are found?

It is from this divine Word that the rays of this divine sun go out, spreading over all intelligent

and Christian creatures to lift them up, to enlighten them and to make them know the spiritual and divine things without which man remains in the ignorance and darkness of his own reason.

Light of angels, of men, of Adam, of Moses, of the prophets, of the saints.

*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*

This interior Word, who is the eternal thought of God, who is in God from all eternity, who is God, clothed himself in an exterior form to manifest himself to men.

Thought is essentially internal, and to become exterior, to manifest itself outwardly, it needs to put on an exterior form. So, as long as we do not speak or write, our thought is interior, hidden, and known to nobody, and to manifest it one must give it an exterior form.

So in God: his thought or his Word remained hidden within and unknown as long as he had not put on a form, and, to manifest himself, he had to take an exterior form.

It is to be noticed that the manifestation of our thought is a necessity for us, that we cannot live without manifesting our thoughts. It is a need for

us; even the dumb find a means to manifest their inner thoughts.

Thought cannot remain captive and in chains; otherwise our thoughts would be useless to ourselves and to others.

Now this need we have to manifest our thoughts, our desires, our wills, our feelings to others — who gives it to us, if not God?

If God gave us this need, which is good, why would God not have this need to communicate himself to us, who are his creatures, intelligent creatures, his creatures whom he formed in his image and likeness? Why would he have created us in his image and likeness and given us a supernatural end if he had nothing to say to us and nothing to teach us? God could not create us intelligent and form us in his image and likeness without saying anything to his creature and giving it a sign of his will upon it.

What would be said of a father who brings children into the world and leaves them in peace without manifesting in any way his will to them, and their duties? That would be unworthy of a father, and nothingness would be better than such a situation.

God had to speak to men, and he certainly spoke to them.

And he spoke to them by his Word, because the Word is his thought, his wisdom.

And just as, to manifest our thought, we clothe it in an exterior form — the spoken word or writing, a letter or a messenger who carries our wishes to others —

So the divine Word took a form to manifest himself to angels and to men.

He manifested himself to all intelligent creatures: first to the angels, taking a spiritual form, since they were spirits themselves, he had no need to take a material form.

He manifested himself to Adam by taking a visible and material form. Which? Scripture does not say; and when we read that God speaks to Adam, it is already the Word beginning his mission on earth of speaking to men and manifesting to them the wishes of his Father.

No one has ever seen God, but it is the Son who has made him known to us (John 1:18).

He spoke to Abraham in the form of angels.

He spoke to Moses.

And to the prophets in more or less sensible forms.

At last, in the course of the centuries, at the moment decreed by Providence, he spoke to all men, himself in person, putting on a human form.

This is what Saint Paul tells us: *multifariam multisque.*[3]

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

O ineffable mystery! God is with us,

God has come to speak to us; he has come to dwell with us to speak to us and instruct us.

What he had formerly done only in passing, so to speak, and in haste, he has done in these last times in a very sensible, lasting manner.

He himself took the form of man in order to dwell with us and have the time to speak to us and tell us all that the Father wished to teach us through him.

We are not beings abandoned by God.

We have God, who is truly a Father who loves his children and wants to instruct and save them.

**Notes**

1. In the beginning God created.↩
2. He spoke and it was done. (Psalm 32:9 [Vulgate; Ps 33:9 in modern numbering])↩
3. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets… (Hebrews 1:1).↩

↑ Contents

## III. The Divinity of Jesus Christ

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Everything in him proves to us that he is this eternal Word who comes on earth…

After this affirmation comes an accumulation of Gospel references. From time to time a comment springs up. Titles show a desire to put in order the quotations drawn from the Gospel.

The whole shows clearly that it is a matter neither of demonstrating the divinity of Jesus Christ nor of making a biblical theology about Christ. In the prolongation of the preceding commentary on the prologue of Saint John, we are invited to a contemplative gaze upon every page of the Gospel, certain of finding in it the person of the Son of God.

This is moreover explicitly confirmed by the important closing remark.[1] This attention to the divinity of Jesus Christ manifested in the Gospel exercises faith, which thus becomes livelier and more able to guide the believer in everything, able also to meet unbelief for a truly apostolic labour.

Finally, it is interesting to note the mention of the Church as a sign of the divinity of Jesus Christ. In 1870 the First Vatican Council proclaimed: "The Church… is by itself a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefutable witness of its divine mission."[2]

Today we are invited more clearly to go further by looking at the Church not only as a sign that confirms the divinity of Christ and sends us back to his past life as the Gospel shows it. The Church is still more a present manifestation of the presence of Jesus to his own, and we can cast upon her the same contemplative gaze as upon the Gospel in order to recognize in her "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, the same for ever."[3] Besides, the Church never presents herself to us without the Gospel in her hands.

*This Word made flesh is Jesus Christ*

Everything in him proves to us that he is this eternal Word who comes on earth to manifest to us the thoughts and wills of God.

Everything shows us that he comes from heaven and that there is nothing earthly in him, except that body which he took in the womb of a Virgin[4] and with which he clothed himself to speak to us and show us the way to heaven.

*First, he was named and declared such by the angel Gabriel on the day of his conception (Luke 1:26)*

The angel Gabriel, having greeted the Virgin Mary, chosen by God to give bodily birth to the Word of God, said to her: Fear not, Mary, for you have found grace before God; behold, you shall conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and you shall call him by the name of Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord shall give him the throne of David his father.

Mary, fearing for her virginity, asks the angel how this can be, since she has consecrated herself to God by virginity. The angel reassures her, saying:

The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;

therefore that which shall be born of you, being holy, shall be called the Son of God.

Nothing is impossible with God.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.

He has a virgin for mother

He is conceived by the operation of the Holy Spirit

He is holy

He is named Son of the Most High

He is called Son of God.

So it is the eternal Word who takes birth, life, in the womb of a virgin; and it had to be so, for a man cannot beget a God.

Only God can beget his Son.

He who thinks alone has the right and the possibility of begetting his thought, of expressing it outwardly; a stranger cannot express another's thought.

It is therefore the Father alone who has the right to beget his Word outwardly, by his Spirit, who is love and who produces outwardly the acts of love.

He alone has the right to beget him in time because he alone begot him from all eternity.

A man cannot say: I have given birth to a God, I have begotten a God.

*An angel announces him to Saint Joseph*

While Saint Joseph, spouse of Mary, astonished at the condition of Mary his wife, was meditating leaving her and going far away, an angel appeared to Joseph and said to him: Fear not to keep Mary as your wife, for that which is born in her is of the Holy Spirit; she shall bring forth a son, and you shall give him the name of Jesus, because it is he who shall save his people from their sins; and all this was done in fulfilment of what the Lord said by his prophet, saying: Behold, the Virgin shall conceive in her womb and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

And Joseph kept Mary as his wife.

*The angels proclaim him at his birth.*

At his birth the angels come down from heaven and proclaim him to the world, announcing that this child brings peace to the world and comes to procure all glory for God.

They go to warn the shepherds of Bethlehem and announce to them that a Saviour is born to them, that this child, lying in a manger at Bethlehem, is the Christ, the Lord.

A star announces him to the inhabitants of the East, and kings, the Magi, hasten at this sign and come to adore him, recognizing him as their king and their God.

*It is God the Father who proclaims him his Son on the day of his baptism.*

After receiving John's baptism, while Jesus was at prayer, behold the heavens are opened and the Holy Spirit descends upon him in the form of a dove and rests upon him.

And a voice was heard from heaven, saying: You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased.

*and at the Transfiguration*

When Jesus was transfigured on Tabor, in the presence of three of his apostles, and they were

witnesses of all that passed of great and wonderful between Jesus, Moses and Elijah, a voice came out of the cloud that enveloped them and said:

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear him.

It is Saint John the Baptist who proclaims him Christ, the true Lamb of God, and attests that he is the Son of God (Jn 1:15).

Saint John, raising his voice before his disciples and the crowd, says:

This is he of whom I said: he who is to come after me has been set before me; and of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace,

For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God;

But the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

(Jn 1:29 [as printed]): When the Pharisees ask John the Baptist who he is, he answers that he is neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet, that he is the voice of one crying in the desert.

[Tr.: the French reference "Jn 1,29" is printed twice; for this passage the sense is Jn 1:19–27.]

I baptize in water, but there is one in the midst of you whom you do not know, who will come after me, who has been set before me. It is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit, and I am not worthy to loose the latchet of his shoes.

(Jn 1:29): John, seeing Jesus coming to him, says to his disciples:

Behold the Lamb of God,

behold him who takes away the sin of the world,

behold him of whom I said:

after me comes a man who has been set above me, because he was before me,

and it is that he might be known in Israel that I came baptizing in water.

John saw the Holy Spirit descend like a dove from heaven, and he remained upon him.

And he who sent me to baptize in water said to me: He upon whom you shall see the Holy Spirit descend, it is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

And I have seen, and I bear witness that this is the Son of God.

*Saint John*

(Jn 3:28): Elsewhere he says, speaking to the Jews:

You know that I said to you: I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him.

He must increase, and I must decrease.

He who comes from above is above all.

He who is of the earth is earthly.

He who came from heaven is above all: he attests what he has seen and heard, and yet no one admits his testimony.

He who has accepted his testimony has declared that God is true, for he whom God has sent speaks the language of God, because it is not by measure that God gives him his Spirit.[5]

The Father loves the Son and has put all things into his hands.

He who believes in the Son has eternal life.

But he who is unbelieving to the Son shall not see life.[6]

But the wrath of God abides upon him.

*It is the crowd that follows him that proclaims his divinity*

*It is the multitude of sick who run from all sides to ask for healing (Mk 1:32)*

*It is the demons themselves who cannot help calling him the Christ and the Son of God (Mk 3:11)*

*It is all nature that obeys his word and bows before him as before its Creator (Mk 4:31 [as printed])*

*It is the apostles who confess that he is the Christ and go to preach him everywhere after his death (Mt 16:16)*

*The most striking testimony is the one he gives of himself, by his words and his actions.*

*He speaks as a God, as the Word of God.*

He is the divine Word, he is the very word of God; he must therefore speak as God himself, or rather as

the very thought of God, expressed outwardly in a human form; better still:

The form is nothing; it is the thought, the intelligence, that is everything.

As the Word or eternal thought of God, he truly goes out from God.

It is God who begot him from all eternity, and [that thought] has become visible, sensible, since he took a body to manifest himself to men; but it is always the same Word, the same thought; so it is not the sound of his voice or the writing I examine that is essential, but it is his thought that his signs express,

that is all, that is the essential.

And the Word, expressed outwardly to the world, is always that true interior Word of the Father, whom he truly calls his Son, because there is, in this exterior form of man, his eternal Word, whom he begot from all eternity.

That is also why Jesus Christ can always truly call God his Father, because it is he who truly begot him from all eternity, although he has for some time taken an exterior form.

Hence he always calls God his Father and gives him no other name, because he has really come out of him and he is the interior Word although expressed outwardly under a sensible form.

Just so, my thought is always my thought although it is expressed outwardly by exterior signs.

*He always calls God his Father.*

*And God calls him his Son.*

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

*He calls God his Father in the strict and true sense.*

It is not by adoption, like us, that he calls God his Father, but in the strict and true sense.

Just as the child comes from his father, goes out from his father, and has the same nature as his father, the same life, the same power, because he has really gone out from the father.

As my thought goes out from me, so Jesus Christ goes out from his Father.

This is what he expresses by his divine words.

*He came out of God.*

Before leaving the world, he said to his apostles: I came out from God and am come into the world.

I leave the world and I go to my Father.

He answers the Jews, who tell him that God is their Father: If God were your Father, you would love me.

For from God I proceed and came;

for I have not come of myself,

but he sent me.

And Saint John expresses this truth by saying: No one has ever seen God.

The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of God, is the one who makes him known.

***He has the same nature as the Father.***

And Our Lord says to the Jews: My Father and I are one, that is, one and the same thing.

Do you not believe that I am in my Father and my Father in me? Believe it at least because of my works.

Believe my works, that you may know and believe that my Father is in me and I am in my Father.

***He has the same life as the Father.***

As the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son also to have life in himself.

Eternal life: Before Abraham was made, I am.

He calls himself the Principle,

in him was life, and the life was the light of men.

He was in the beginning with God; in the beginning was the Word.

***He is like the Father in everything.***

He who sees me sees my Father.

He who sees me sees him who sent me.

I am in my Father and my Father is in me.

***He is equal to the Father in power and in greatness.***

All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.

My Father works until now, and I work with him. [Tr.: Chevrier's "agit sans cesse"; cf. Jn 5:17.]

Whatsoever the Father does, the Son also does in like manner.

All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing.

---

**Notes**

1. P. 82.↩
2. *La Foi catholique* [The Catholic Faith], Paris, éditions de l'Orante, 1961, p. 275, no. 452.↩
3. Hebrews 13:8.↩
4. In fact, in becoming man the Son of God wished to insert himself biologically into the human race. On the word *earthly*, see the explanation given p. 142.↩
5. God gives him his Spirit without measure (Jn 3:34).↩

6. He who refuses to believe in the Son… (Jn 3:36).↩

↑ Contents

*Equal in riches.*

All things have been given to me by my Father.

All that is my Father's is mine.

*He is worthy of the same honours as the Father.*

The Father has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father.

He who honours not the Son honours not the Father who sent him.

*He deserves the same confidence as the Father.*

It is the will of my Father who sent me that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life.

He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.

You believe in God, believe also in me.

*He can therefore justly be called the Son of God.*

He answers Caiaphas, who asks him whether he is the Son of God, the Christ,

he answers with authority and truth: I am; you say it.

He answers the Jews: Of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world you say to me: You blaspheme, because I said: I am the Son of God.

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though you will not believe me, believe the works,

That you may know and believe that I am in my Father and my Father in me.

***He truly speaks as a God.***

What man, indeed, can speak thus?

What man can say with truth: God is my true Father? I came out from God. I come from God.

It is from God that I proceed.

God and I are only one and the same thing.

God is in me and I am in God.

I am the life, the principle of all things, and just as God has life in himself, I too have life in myself, and no one can take my life from me unless I myself will it.

He who sees me sees God himself in me. For I am in God and God is in me. I have all the power of God in heaven and on earth.

All that God does, I also do myself.

All that God has, I also have for myself.

He who believes in me believes in God, and I give eternal life to him who believes in me; such is the will of God.

I am the Son of the living God.

He who believes in me shall never die, and I will raise him up on the last day, and he shall have eternal life.

*What man ever dared to speak thus?*

*What is strongest and most convincing is that he calls his works in witness of his own words.*

Indeed, a man might say as he pleased, "I am so-and-so, I am the son of so-and-so… count, workman, tailor, architect"; if he does not prove it by his papers or his works, his words are regarded as null and he is only a liar; but if his works correspond to his words, then he is worthy of credence and one is forced to believe what he says

and to admit his testimony, his title and his identity.

This is what Jesus did himself, bringing his works as a second testimony of his divinity, as Word of God.

And he does not fear to say himself: Believe my works.

If I do not the works of God my Father, believe me not; but if I do them, you are obliged to believe in me.

Believe my works, that you may know and believe that my Father is in me and I am in my Father, and that we are only one and the same thing.

***Not only does he speak as a God, but he acts as a God.***

He puts into execution this word that he says to the world: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.

Whatsoever the Father does, the Son does in like manner. My Father works without ceasing, and I work with him.

The Jews might well have challenged Jesus and said: You say and you do not do what you put forward.

But Jesus says, to answer everything: Believe my works, and my works are not hidden; I do them before everybody; it is the crowd, the people and you yourselves who are the witnesses every day.

***He commands nature, and nature obeys him as a God, its creator; he calms the storms.***

When he is on the sea with his apostles and the tempest threatened to swamp them, the frightened apostles cry out: Lord, save us, we perish. Jesus, awaking from his sleep — for he was asleep — says to them: Why are you afraid, O you of little faith? And, rising up, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea: Peace, be still; and immediately the wind ceased and there was a great calm; and everyone, in admiration, was seized with fear, and they said to one another: Who then is this? He commands the winds and the sea, and the winds and the sea obey him.

Ah! He was the creator of the world.

*Ipse dixit et facta sunt. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil.*[1]

***He walks on the waters and makes Peter walk on them.***

Another time, the apostles alone were crossing the sea, and Jesus had stayed on the shore with

the people to dismiss them after the multiplication of the loaves,

and they were toiling much at rowing because the wind was against them.

After rowing for 25 or 30 stadia in the night, they saw Jesus walking on the waters, approaching the boat and passing them.

They, troubled, thought it was a ghost and cried out with a loud cry. But Jesus said to them: Have confidence, it is I, fear not.

Peter, having heard the voice of his Master, said to the Lord: If it is you, bid me come to you upon the waters.

And Jesus said to him: Come.

And Peter, coming down from the boat, walked upon the water to go to Jesus, but for a moment he was afraid because of the violence of the wind and began to sink; he cried out: Lord, save me; and Jesus, stretching out his hand, took hold of him and said to him: O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

They took him therefore with them, and when he was in the boat the wind ceased and they were at land at once; and those who were in the boat

came and adored him, saying: Truly you are the Son of God; and their amazement grew more and more.

Because indeed they found themselves there before the Master of the world, the eternal Word, who knows how to command the winds and the sea, and knows how to make the waters firm under his feet and under those of his disciples when he wills.

Who indeed would not have been seized with fear, to find himself in such company, that of the Son of God?

***He commands the fish of the sea, which come into Peter's net.***

Jesus had gone up into Peter's boat to teach the people who were on the shore; when he had finished, he told Peter to put out into the deep and cast his nets for a catch.

Master, said Peter, we have toiled all night and taken nothing, but at your word I will let down the net.

And they took so great a quantity of fish that their net was breaking, and they filled two boats so that they were almost sinking.

At this sight Peter falls at Jesus' feet and says to him: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.

For they were seized with amazement at the draught of fishes they had made.

*He multiplies the loaves in the desert*
(Jn 6:1)

*He changes water into wine at Cana*
(Jn 2:1)

*He withers a fig tree that had no fruit*
(Mt 21:18)

*He is master of life and death; he commands the sick and the dead, and the sick and the dead obey him:*
This is the fulfilment of the word he said: I am the resurrection and the life.

He confirms this word by his works.

He gives health to the sick

he gives life back to the dead

and gives it back to himself.

*He heals Saint Peter's mother-in-law.*
(Mk 1:29)

*He heals a man born blind.*

(Jn 9:1)

*He heals two blind men.*

(Mt 9:27)

*He heals a leper.*

(Mk 1:40)

*He heals a deaf-mute.*

(Mk 7:31)

*He heals all the sick who present themselves.*

(Mt 15:29)

*He heals a withered hand.*

(Lk 6:6)

*He heals a paralytic.*

(Mk 2:1; Jn 5:1)

*He heals a woman with a haemorrhage.*

(Mk 5:25)

*He heals all who touch his garment.*

(Lk 6:19)

*He heals the centurion's servant*

(Mt 8:5)

*He heals an officer's son*

(Jn 4:46)

*He heals ten lepers.*

(Lk 17:12)

*He heals the daughter of the Canaanite woman.*

(Mt 15:21)

*Summary of all these miracles, in which one notices the infinite power of him who works them. Only God can act thus. Master of life.*

*He is also Master of death.*

*He raises the son of the widow of Naim*

(Lk 7:11)

*He raises the daughter of Jairus.*

(Mk 5:21)

*He raises Lazarus*

(Jn 11:1)

*Not only is he Master of the life of others, he is also master of his own life for himself.*

He says so himself:

As the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son also to have life in himself.

I lay down my life that I may take it again; no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself.

I have power to lay it down and power to take it up again (Jn 10:18).

He stays 40 days and 40 nights without taking any food.

At Nazareth, when his enemies drive him out of the synagogue and lead him to a high mountain to cast him down headlong, having arrived on the mountain he turns round and, passing through the midst of them, he went his way, without anyone daring to say anything more to him; he makes himself master of all these rebellious and hostile wills; they can do nothing against his life; his hour is not yet come.

Several times his enemies come to seize him, but they cannot lay hands on him; an invisible force prevents them from approaching him: it was not yet the hour when he was to let himself be taken.

When they come to take him in the garden of olives, he says only one word to those who question him in order to take him: It is I; and at these words they fall backward.

To show them that he is more powerful than they all and that, if he lets himself be taken, it is because he is quite willing.

And when he lets himself be taken, he makes them understand clearly that now it is their hour and the power of darkness.

If he dies on the cross, he utters so great a cry in expiring that the soldiers are astonished and exclaim: Truly this was the Son of God, truly this was the Son of God. And the most striking miracle of all is that he takes his life up again himself after men have taken it from him. As he had foretold long beforehand to his apostles.

*Reflection on this power that he has over himself.*[2]

*By his infinite knowledge he knows all things, the future and what is most secret in the hearts of men:*

*He reads in the heart of the Samaritan woman.*
(Jn 4:17)

*He knows Nathanael without having seen him.*
(Jn 1:48)

*He distinguishes those who really believe in him and those who do not believe.*
(Jn 6:64)

*He knows the interior murmurings*

*of his disciples concerning the Eucharist*

(Jn 6:61)

*He foretells to Peter his threefold denial.*

(Mt 26:34)

*He announces to Peter his death.*

(Jn 21:18)

*He announces to his apostles his whole passion and how he himself is to die.*

(Mk 10:33)

*He foretells Judas's betrayal.*

(Mk 14:18)

*He knows who are pure and who are not.*

(Jn 13:10)

*Not only is he Master of time, he is also Master of eternity:*

*He forgives the sins of the paralytic*

(Mk 2:5)

*Of the sinful woman.*

(Jn 8:11)

*He promises salvation to the woman with the haemorrhage.*

(Mt 9:22)

*He promises heaven to the grateful leper.*

(Lk 17:19)

*He gives heaven to the good thief.*

(Lk 23:43)

*He promises heaven to him who believes in him*

(Jn 11:25)

*He promises it to his apostles who have left everything for him.*

(Mt 19:27)

*What is most astonishing is that he communicates his power to his apostles.*

(Lk 9:1)

*And the apostles work the same miracles as Jesus Christ himself.*

(Lk 10:17; Acts 3)

*The existence of the Church is the greatest existing miracle and the confirmation of the preceding miracles.*

Do not forget the great act of faith in Jesus Christ, Word and Son of God.[3]

**Notes**

1. He spoke and it was done (Ps 32:9 [Vulgate]).

   All things were made by him and without him nothing was made (Jn 1:2 [sic — Jn 1:3]).↩

2. This phrase perhaps announces explanations that never came, or it is a simple note to prepare explanations to be given orally, or again an invitation to personal meditation.↩

3. Cf. Introduction, p. 67.↩

↑ Contents

## IV. Titles of Jesus Christ

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* This way of approaching the person of Christ is traditional.[1]

Here it is a question of the bonds that the Son of God contracts with us in his Incarnation: God gives us his Word, and he is everything for us.[2]

These titles of Jesus Christ therefore show him to us in his work as Saviour.

One can never neglect this essential aspect of the bonds that exist between Christ and us.

Father Chevrier found these titles in Scripture. Some are found there only implicitly; this is the case, for example, of the title *centre*.

A preponderant place is given to the title of Master, which the Father studied often, as his manuscripts testify.

Here, for example, is what he had written on a sheet of paper that was fixed to a wall or a board, by a procedure familiar to him. It was thus that he proceeded to mature a development from a sketch which he could have immediately before his eyes whenever a moment's respite presented itself in the midst of a life ceaselessly harassed by one person or another:

Necessity of a Master

Necessity — what a divergence of ideas!

Need of a master — one cannot guide oneself all alone — trade, apprentice, science, study.

Reason, the world, men, philosophers.

It means leaving all the so-called masters to attach oneself to Jesus Christ: reason, men, one's imagination, oneself. Need of a master.

To live without a master, what does one do? Nothing, or everything crookedly; in spite of oneself one looks for a master, one is glad to have found one.

One feels one's incapacity, one's littleness — limited, error.[3]

In some of Father Chevrier's writings other lists of titles are found, for example this one:

Sent by God or Messiah

Son of God

Son of man

Saviour-Jesus

Redeemer

Priest…..)

) Christ

King…..)

Master

Judge[4]

Why did Father Chevrier not take up such important titles when writing the True Disciple? Here is an explanation.

Certain lists were prepared with a view to catechism. The children who come to the Prado to prepare for First Communion do not always have faith, or at least not an explicit faith. Father

Chevrier looked in the Gospel for how to make them discover progressively the person of Jesus:

With what wisdom and humility and prudence Jesus Christ presents himself to the world; how gently he goes, prudence and charity!

He calls himself the One Sent by God [*l'Envoyé de Dieu*], the simplest title, the most intelligible; he says that he says nothing of himself; he does not impose himself, but he comes on God's behalf; he does not command; he does not say: I am the Son of God, you must believe in…; but he disposes minds to this great act of faith in him: God his Father.

This is how Moses and the prophets acted; they said: it is on God's behalf that I speak to you, it is God who commands you: always the same course, the same spirit.[5]

It would not be surprising if the same progression had been proposed to the young pupils of the clerical school. Various manuscripts suggest it.

These various titles passed implicitly into the True Disciple. It is enough to notice that the commentary on the prologue of Saint John presents Jesus as the one sent by the Father, and that the present chapter details the features of Jesus Christ

the Saviour. One thinks of Saint Paul's exclamation: "Before your eyes Jesus Christ was depicted crucified."[6]

The spiritual experience of 1856 is always present in this meditation on the titles of Jesus Christ. It shows itself particularly when there is question of the beauty of Christ, of his light.

To make us share in this experience, Father Chevrier invites us to prayer. He composes the prayer *O Word! O Christ!*[7] The exercise of faith of which we have spoken[8] blossoms into prayer. In the same sense other prayers will be proposed in various passages.[9]

***He was given to us by God to be our light, our Wisdom, our Justice, our Sanctification and our Redemption (1 Cor 1:30).***

God could not make us a greater gift, give us a greater treasure, than to give us his Word, his adorable Son, because he is everything for us.

↑ Contents

## 1° Our Wisdom

↑ Contents

He is our wisdom by spreading around us that divine light which enlightens us and shows us the

truth and the just value of all things. Since sin, man has lost wisdom because he is no longer enlightened by God but has led himself by his own lights: he has fallen into all sorts of vices, misfortunes and crimes.

***By giving us the true light that must guide us on the road of life and instruct us***

Jesus Christ was given to us to repair this misfortune, and becomes our Wisdom by enlightening us with his divine lights, to teach us to distinguish the true from the false, good from evil, the just from the unjust, and to esteem each thing in its just light, its value, to know how to put each in its place, the earthly and the spiritual, time and eternity.

For this he is the true light that enlightens every man in this world.

He is the divine Word; in him is found life, and life is the light of men.

He comes from on high, with all the beauty, the glory, the splendour of the heavens

Therefore he is called *Oriens ex alto*

*sol justitiae*

*candor lucis aeternae*

*splendor patris* (Heb 1)[10]

It is not only a ray of light that comes to us from on high, as in the saints and the prophets, but it is the whole divine light that comes to enlighten us with its splendour.

Hence Scripture says that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light (Mt 4:16).

The light shone in the darkness (Jn 1:5).

*Nunc lux in Domino*[11]

That we may walk as children of the light, to know how to distinguish and know the true, the just, the good and the right.

*In lumine tuo videbimus lumen*[12]

That you may be children of light and of the day (1 Thess 5:5).

Our Lord does not fear to tell us himself that he is the light of the world: *Ego sum lux mundi.*

When God creates the world, he gives the sun to light the eyes of our body.

But when God creates our souls, he gives us Jesus Christ, his Word, to light our souls and our intelligences,

because he was the life, and the life was the light of men.

It is through Jesus Christ that we receive life and light, and the true light, *Lux vera*, to distinguish this light from on high from all those little human and earthly lights which come to light with their false day our darkened souls.

Jesus Christ is the light of our souls as the sun is the light of our bodies. Just as the sun delights our eyes, lights us, uncovers objects for us, makes us know and appreciate each thing, each object, and shows us the way to take, shows us the value, the colour of things, the use we should make of them. What an immense benefit the sun is for our bodies!

So Jesus Christ is the Sun of our intelligences and our souls.

It is by his light that we must learn to know each thing, to know the truth, the spiritual value of each earthly thing, to know the true from the false, the just from the unjust, good from evil.

How far this spiritual knowledge of things surpasses the material knowledge that the sun gives us of visible and created things!

When, then, we want to know something, to esteem it, judge it, give it its value, we have only to seek the light, Jesus Christ, and he will enlighten us and teach us what it is worth and how we should esteem it, knowing what he says of it, what he does about it… and we shall have the true light… the true judgment of things.

By the very fact that he is our true light, he is our wisdom, because if we act by this light we shall not be mistaken; if we conduct ourselves by this light we shall not go astray.

If we appreciate things by this light we shall judge justly, because he is the true light that comes from heaven and came out of God himself to enlighten us.

For the light of heaven is the divine wisdom.

In him are all the treasures of science and wisdom (Col 2:3).

He grew in age and wisdom before God and men, and the grace was in him.

Full of grace and truth.[13]

↑ Contents

## 2° Our Justice

↑ Contents

It is he who makes us just, who makes us righteous.

He is called the sun of justice, *Sol justitiae*, and Saint Paul tells us: that through Jesus Christ you may be filled with the fruits of justice, to the praise and glory of God (Phil 1:11).

We become just by accomplishing the law he gave us; it is he who gave us the divine law that we must follow, the precepts and counsels we must observe, which will make us just in God's eyes by making us walk in the way that God himself traced for us through his Son.

For love of us, God treated his Son, who knew no sin, as if he had been sin itself, putting his own Son to death on the cross, that in him we might become just with the justice that comes from God (2 Cor 5:21).

↑ Contents

### 3° Our Sanctification

↑ Contents

It is also he who makes us holy, by communicating to us the grace that purifies and sanctifies souls.

Of his fullness we have received grace for grace, says Saint John.

Grace and truth came to us through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17).

He is himself full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14).

He sanctifies us, makes us holy, by the sacraments that he established.

Since sin entered into the world, sin reigned in us. But Jesus Christ drives it out by his grace.

We become holy in God's eyes through Jesus Christ. From impious, wicked men that we were, we become holy through Jesus Christ.

He is our sanctifier.

↑ Contents

## 4° Our Redemption

↑ Contents

It is he who redeemed us by delivering himself for us, by paying our debt to his Father, by doing the penance we had deserved for our sins, by dying for us on a cross, as a guilty man, as the last criminal in the world, because he wished to bear our sins.

Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal 3:12 [as printed; the passage is 3:13]).

For love of us, God treated his Son, who knew no sin, as if he had been sin itself, putting his own Son to death on the cross, that we might become just with the justice that comes from God (2 Cor 5:21).

Jesus was delivered to death to expiate our sins (Rom 3:25).

He blotted out the decree of our condemnation, fastening it to the cross (Col 11:14 [sic: Col 2:14]).

↑ Contents

## 5° He is our king.

↑ Contents

Notebook *Jesus King*[14]

He comes to govern us, to command us.

***Our only king.***

God, the great and only king of the world, established him king of men, as we see in the psalms and the prophets.

I will give you all the nations for your inheritance.

He shall rule from sea to sea.

On the day of his conception, the angel announces his future greatness and kingship.

He shall be great, he shall be called the Son of God, and the Lord shall give him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob, and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Lk 1:32).

Saint John the Baptist prepares his kingdom.

At his birth, kings themselves come to adore him and ask at Jerusalem where is he who is born king of the Jews.

During his life he is proclaimed king by the people, who bless his name and his reign.

Some proclaim him, others deny him.

We have no king but Caesar.

*Nolumus hunc regnare super nos*[15]

When Pilate asks him whether he is a king, he answers: Yes, I am. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice (Jn 18:37).

He explains in what his kingship consists: he is king of truth.

My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly fight for me, but my kingdom is not from hence.

This kingship of Jesus Christ is not in soldiers, fortresses, houses, frontiers.

It is a wholly spiritual kingship.

It is the kingdom of truth.

He is the king of truth. *Ego sum veritas.*

I came to bear witness to the truth.

This kingdom is not limited; truth has no limits, no frontiers; it is everywhere; it is the portion of souls. Whoever loves truth takes Jesus for king.

This kingdom is not defended by arms, fortresses or soldiers.

It is the kingdom of souls; it is in the whole universe; everyone is called to it; everyone can enter it.

It is the only true kingship, the only true kingdom; the others are only earthly kingdoms which

dispute a corner of earth, which seek only earth and men.

The kingdom of Jesus Christ is very different, very superior.

The head of this spiritual kingdom is very different from other kings.

The kings of the earth have magnificent castles; he has only a stable for lodging, and during his life he has nowhere to lay his head.

The other kings have a crown of gold on their head; he has a crown of thorns, [his] throne? a cross.

The others have cloaks of gold and purple; he has only rags to cover him.

The others have a golden sceptre; he has only a reed as sign of his empire.

And yet, in spite of this so poor, so contemptible get-up, Pilate shows him to the people and says to them: Behold your king.

True sense of these royal insignia: they are true and just for this king of truth.

How does this kingdom exist in the world?

This kingdom of truth really exists; it has been established for 1870 years and no one has been able to destroy it; it functions.

It has its head, its officers, its soldiers, its subjects, its enemies, and it extends over the whole world.

What a beautiful kingdom is that of Jesus Christ!

What a great king is Jesus Christ! How small the kings of the earth are before Jesus Christ, the only and true king of the universe and of men!

Let us bow down, then, before Jesus Christ, our king, and salute him as our true and only king.

*Rex regum, Dominus dominantium; sedenti in throno et agno benedictio honor et Gloria in saecula saeculorum*[16]

And at the end of the world it is then that he will appear under the beautiful title of king, when he comes to judge the world, to reward those who served him and to punish those who disobeyed him.

He will then give paradise to the good and condemn the wicked to hell.

It is then that the eternal reign of Jesus Christ in heaven will begin.

How great this kingdom will be! how beautiful this kingdom will be! how numerous this kingdom will be! from Jesus Christ to the end of the world, and before him all those who will have hoped in him.

Holy, pure kingdom.

Where there will no longer be the reign of Satan,

where all will be in justice and in charity,

where we shall bow down with the 24 elders to sing, the virgins, the martyrs, the saints… Oh! the beautiful kingdom of Jesus Christ!

---

**Notes**

1. This procedure is already found in the Fathers of the Church, and one can say that the New Testament itself already employs it, designating Jesus with titles borrowed from the Old Testament: Son of man, Christ, Prophet, Chosen One of God, Lamb, etc.↩
2. P. 89.↩
3. Ms XI 511.↩
4. Ms VIII 133.↩
5. Ms VIII 152.↩
6. Gal 3:1; cf. the title of King, p. 93.↩
7. P. 107.↩
8. P. 67.↩
9. Pp. 272, 323, 411.↩

10. Light from on high (Lk 1:78). Sun of justice (Mal 3:20 [4:2]). Brightness of eternal light (Wis 7:26). Splendour of the Father.↩
11. But now you are light in the Lord (Eph 5:8).↩
12. In your light we shall see light (Ps 36:10 [35:10 Vulgate]).↩
13. Ms XI 147 —

    It is he who is science and truth,

    It is he who makes us know the truth, makes us know the true from the false, the true goods, what the world is; the wisdom of the world is folly to Jesus Christ and the wisdom of Jesus Christ is folly to the world.

    This wisdom is spread through all his life; his actions, his words, are so many strokes of wisdom and light which enlighten us and show us how we must conduct ourselves to be truly wise.

    He is our rule of conduct, our model, and we must look continually at this light to see how we must conduct ourselves.

    In great men one sometimes finds a little scrap of wisdom, a little ray of this light that enlightens us, but Jesus Christ is Wisdom entire; man cannot receive Wisdom entire, but Jesus Christ possesses it entire, because it is not by measure that he received the Holy Spirit.

    It is not necessary to go far to find wisdom; it is in Jesus Christ; it suffices to know, to study Jesus Christ.

    There are those who seek it in great books, in philosophy, in travels, in study; it is in Jesus Christ.

    I know only Jesus Christ, says Saint Paul, and Jesus Christ crucified.

    We are wise only through Jesus Christ

…….

We shall be just only through Jesus Christ

…….

We shall be holy only through Jesus Christ.

(This ending has been simplified to bring out the three affirmations that conclude each paragraph.)↩

14. Father Chevrier made use here of a study done separately, which explains a greater development.↩
15. We will not have him to reign over us (Lk 19:14).↩
16. The King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15). To him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honour and glory and power for ever and ever (Rev 5:13).↩

↑ Contents

## 6° He is our Master, our only Master[1]

↑ Contents

[Tr.: Scripture references in this chapter are given exactly as printed in the French; several are inexact (e.g. “Ph 1:2” for Phil 2:9, “1 Cor 2:13” for 1 Cor 11:3, “Jn 7:4” for Jn 8:4, “Mk 9:16” for 9:17).]

A master is one who teaches and instructs us.

Now Jesus Christ is our only and sole Master.

He is the Word of God; in him are all the treasures of science and wisdom.

As Word, he is the very thought of God; he possesses all the science of God, all the knowledge of the Father.

[2]He is the Father's word, clothed in an exterior form to speak to us: it is he who comes from heaven to speak to us and make known to us the wills of God his Father.

He is himself the living letter that the Father sent us that we might read it and accomplish it.

It is God himself who teaches us this: Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom I am well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth justice to the nations (Is 42:1).

On the day of the transfiguration it is the Father who proclaims him, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear him (Mt 17:5).

God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him may not perish but may have life everlasting (Jn 3:16).

*His great function is to instruct the world*

This is what he explains to the inhabitants of Nazareth, when he explains the words of the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit of God is upon me.

Therefore he has consecrated me by his divine anointing and has sent me to evangelize the poor (Lk 4:18).

He said to his apostles: Let us go and preach, for to this I came.

*Ad hoc veni.*

I must evangelize the kingdom of God; for therefore am I sent (Lk 4:43).

If I was born and came into the world, it is to bear witness to the truth, to teach the truth (Jn 18:37).

I am the light of the world; as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world (Jn 9:5).

I am the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6).

*It is his title*

And to his apostles he said: You call me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am (Jn 13:13).

One is your Master, the Christ (Mt 23:8).

The Samaritan woman says to him: When the Messiah comes, he will teach us all things. Jesus answers her: It is I myself who speak to you (Jn 4:25).

***What he teaches he teaches only according to his Father who sent him***

My doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me (Jn 7:16).

He who sent me is true, and the things I have heard of him, these I speak in the world (Jn 8:28).

The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself; but the Father who is in me, he does the works (Jn 14:10).

I speak that which I have seen with my Father; I, a man, have told you the truth which I have heard of my Father (Jn 8:38).

The word that I have spoken to you is not mine but my Father's who sent me (Jn 14:24).

I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting; therefore the things I speak, I speak as the Father has said to me (Jn 12:49).

*He knows God the Father.*

He knows God the Father; he is his Word; consequently he is always with him and in him (Jn 8:35).

No one has ever seen God, but the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known (Jn 1:18).

No one has ascended but he who descended from heaven, the Son of God, who is in heaven (Jn 3:13).

He who sent me is with me, and he has not left me alone, because I do always the things that please him (Jn 8:29).

You are from beneath; I am from above. I am not of this world (Jn 8:23).

He can therefore say in truth: You believe in God, believe also in me (Jn 14:1).

He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me (Jn 12:44).

Amen, amen I say to you, he who hears my words and believes him who sent me, has life everlasting; he has passed from death to life (Jn 5:24).

He is therefore truly our Master. He alone has the right to teach us the eternal truths. He received

from God the great function of teaching men; he was sent for that; he alone can instruct us because he alone knows God and has received the orders for it.

In listening to him we listen to God himself, and by believing in him we have eternal life.

He is our Master.

***The apostles call him by no other name than Master.***

When they were sailing on the sea and the tempest threatened to engulf them, they cry out: Master, save us, we perish (Lk 8:24).

When Jesus asks the crowd who it was that touched him, Peter says to him: Master, the multitudes throng and press you, and do you ask who touched me? (Lk 8:45).

John, speaking to Our Lord, says to him: Master, we saw a man casting out devils who yet does not follow with us, and we forbade him (Lk 9:49).

The apostles, seeing a man blind from birth, ask Jesus and say to him: Master, who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? (Jn 9:2).

When Jesus says to his apostles: Let us go into Judea again, they say to him: Master, the Jews but

now sought to stone you, and do you go there again? (Jn 11:8).

James and John want to obtain a favour from Jesus and say to him: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, you would do it for us (Mk 10:35).

Passing by the withered fig tree, Peter says to Jesus: Master, behold, the fig tree which you cursed is withered away (Mk 11:21).

The apostles, not having understood the sense of a parable, say to Jesus: Master, explain to us this parable (Mt 15:15).

Seeing the fine stones of the temple, the apostles say to him: Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings! (Mk 13:1).

The apostles, wanting to know the end of time, say to him: Master, when shall these things be? (Lk 21:7).

Judas himself, when he greets him to betray him, also says to him: Hail, Master (Mt 26:49).

Finally it is always this title that they give him because they had recognized in him this divine right to instruct them and teach them, which was the great function of the Messiah Saviour.

Others give him this title and call him by no other name, so much authority had his word, so penetrated were they all with this great function of the Saviour towards them.

*Martha.*

When Martha calls her sister to tell her that Jesus was there, she says to her: Mary, the Master calls you (Jn 11:28).

*Magdalene.*

Magdalene, recognizing Jesus after the resurrection, has no other name on her lips than that of Rabboni, Master (Jn 20:16).

*Scribes and Pharisees*

The scribes and Pharisees themselves give him no other title when they speak of him.

A scribe wants to become his disciple and says to him: Master, I will follow you whithersoever you shall go (Mt 8:19).

The Pharisees say to the apostles: Why does your Master eat with sinners? (Mt 9:11).

The Pharisees and scribes say to Jesus: Master, we would see a sign from you (Mt 12:38).

The crowd, after the multiplication of the loaves, having found Jesus, who had taken refuge at Capharnaum, says to him: Master, how did you come hither? (Jn 6:26).

The father of the lunatic, having brought his child to be healed, says to him, kneeling: Master, I have brought my son to you (Mk 9:16).

The lepers, lifting up their voice, said to Jesus: Master, have mercy on us (Lk 17:13).

The Pharisees, bringing to the feet of Jesus a woman taken in adultery to have her condemned, say to him: Master, this woman was just now taken (Jn 7:4).

A young man who asks, wants to know from Jesus what he must do to go to heaven; he says: Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting? (Lk 18:18).

The blind man of Jericho cries out: Master, that I may see! (Mk 10:51).

The Pharisees, indignant at the applause Jesus was receiving, said: Master, rebuke your disciples (Lk 19:39).

A doctor of the law questions Jesus and says to him: Master, which is the great commandment? (Mt 22:35).

This was, then, the ordinary title given to Jesus. It must be also the one we should give him. His word for us must be the word of the Master, a true word, an infallible word, the word of God.

The Master says it, that is enough.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

*Verba mea spiritus et vita sunt*[3]

He who believes in me has eternal life.

↑ Contents

## 7° He is our head.

↑ Contents

To lead us, he is our head. Our first. Our leader. And we must follow him.

And you, land of Juda, are not the least among the cities of Juda, for out of you shall come forth the captain who shall rule my people (Mt 2:6).

In him dwells the fullness of the divinity, and he is the head (Col 2:10).

God has spoken to us lately by his Son, and as he is the brightness of the Father, the glory, the perfect image of his substance, he has raised him above the angels, because his name is more excellent than theirs (Heb 1:2–4).

He is before all (Col 1:17).

God has exalted him above all things and has given him a name which is above all names (Phil 1:2 [as printed; Phil 2:9]).

God has put all things under his feet. [Heb 1:22 — as printed in square brackets]

And has made him head over all the Church (Eph 5:23 [as printed]).

Jesus is the head of the Church, which is his body (Eph 5:23).

I would have you know that Christ is the head of every man (1 Cor 2:13 [as printed; 11:3]).

We grow up in all things in Jesus Christ, as in our head (Eph 4:15).

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may hold the primacy, because it hath pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell (Col 1:17 [as printed; 1:18–19]).

I would have you know that Jesus Christ is the head of every man (1 Cor 2:3 [as printed]).

He is the head of the Church (Eph 5:23).

It is in the head that intelligence is found, the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the word that commands. We are the members.

It is for him to lead us.

*Ego sum via*[4]

Follow me.

He who follows me walks not in darkness.

Let us have no other head than him.

↑ Contents

## 8° He is our model.

↑ Contents

He is perfection itself.

He is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).

The image of God (2 Cor 4:4).

Figure of his substance (Heb 1:3).

*Splendor patris*[5]

*Speculum*,[6] he who sees me sees my Father.

In seeing him, then, we see the invisible God with all his perfections.

In imitating him we are sure to act with wisdom.

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased (Mt 17:5).

He took, on earth, the form of man in order to give us the example.

I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you do also yourselves (Jn 13:15).

*Sicut et ipse ambulavit et nos debemus ambulare.*[7]

*Imitatores mei estote sicut et ego Christi*[8]

He is himself perfection itself.

*Ego sum via*, the way

Ms X 738 — Ms X 642

*Sacerdos alter Christus*

That is our motto. Jesus is the priest *par excellence*, he is the true priest, he is the beloved of the Father. He is our model. Our duty is to imitate him.

There are two ways of being other Jesus Christs: by powers and by virtues.

He who resembles Jesus Christ only by powers is only a machine-man, useless, fruitless, who shows the road without going on it, who saves others without saving himself.

A signpost that shows the road whose board is often effaced, a clanging cymbal, a canal that makes the water flow without keeping any of it.

One must resemble Jesus Christ by virtues in order to be truly other Jesus Christs. It is in this that the true likeness between the priest and Jesus Christ consists.

It matters much, then, for us to study the life and virtues of Jesus Christ in order to conform to them our life, our doctrine, our words and our works.

All that Jesus Christ did on earth, the priest must seek to do also in the matter of virtues; all that he said of himself, the priest must seek to be able to say also, or to have said by others.

To resemble Jesus Christ, that is therefore our continual work, the continual attention of our mind and the sincere desire of our heart. (Ms X 738)

All that Jesus Christ said of himself, the priest must be able to say also of himself.

Our union with Jesus Christ must be so intimate, so visible, so perfect that men must say on seeing us: there is another Jesus Christ.

We must reproduce, outwardly and inwardly, the virtues of Jesus Christ, his poverty, his sufferings, his prayer, his charity. We must represent Jesus Christ poor in his crib, Jesus Christ suffering in his passion, Jesus Christ letting himself be eaten in the Holy Eucharist. (Ms X 642)

---

**Notes**

1. Ms XI 26.

   Necessity of a Master — One cannot guide oneself alone; our ignorance is so great, our reason so little enlightened; we are so quick to be mistaken, to deceive ourselves, to take evil for good, false for true.

   Qualities of this Master. If we need a master for material things, to learn to read, to write, secular sciences, to learn a trade, a state… how much more shall we need a Master to guide us in spiritual things[a]… One wants to find in him a superiority of authority and intelligence… One desires to find in him truth, holiness, justice, a surety of doctrine that does not deceive us…; examples conformed to his words, something from heaven on which we can lean without fear, a sure and solid foundation, something infallible in him to whom we can give

ourselves with confidence. This is so important for faith and for the conduct we must hold.

Where to find such a Master? We shall not find him among men, nor in ourselves. I feel that I can be mistaken and I feel that every man can be mistaken too. This Master will therefore not be among men; he must come from God, come from heaven; it must be God himself who instructs us; otherwise, nothing solid, nothing sure, nothing certain.

Could God have refused us this Master? No. God, who created us in his image, who created us with intelligence, who gave us the knowledge of good, of the beautiful, of the true,

1. Manuscript torn.

↑ Contents

↩

2. (Continuation of the manuscript, in a note on the preceding page.)

   of evil, could not have left us to wander at random without instructing us, without caring for us and without making us arrive at the end for which he created us: he had to give us a master. God so loved the world that he gave it his only Son that whosoever believes in him may have life everlasting. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear him.

   Who is this Master? It is Jesus Christ. He alone fulfils all the conditions we must ask of a true master, such as we desire and have the right to ask.↩

3. My words are spirit and life (Jn 6:64).↩
4. I am the way (Jn 14:6).↩
5. Splendour of the Father.↩

6. Mirror.↩
7. As he (Christ) walked, so we ought also to walk (1 Jn 2:6).↩
8. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Cor 4:16 [Vulgate; 11:1 in modern numbering]).↩

↑ Contents

## 9° He is the principle and Creator of all things.

↑ Contents

When the Jews ask him who he is, he answers: The Principle, I who speak to you (Jn 8:25).

It is by him that all things were made in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible, thrones, dominations, principalities, powers; all was created by him and for him (Col 1:16).

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. All things were made by him and without him was made nothing (Jn 1:1).

He is the principle, the firstborn, because it hath pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell (Col 1:18–19).

There is but one God, who is the Father, of whom all things have their origin and who made us for himself; and there is but one Lord, who is

Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made and by whom we are all that we are (1 Cor 8:6).

↑ Contents

## 10° He is the foundation of all things.

↑ Contents

That is, all things must rest on him.

No one can lay another foundation than that which has been laid, and this foundation is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:11).

*Omnia in ipso constant* (Col 1:17).

All rests on him,

All leans on him.

Nothing solid can subsist without him.

You are built upon the foundation of the apostles, united to Jesus Christ, who is himself the corner-stone, on whom every building being set rises and grows into a temple (Eph 2:19).

Walk in the ways of Jesus Christ Our Lord, rooted and built up in him as on your foundation (Col 2:6).

Take Jesus Christ away from the earth: what solid foundation remains? None.

There remain only men; and men cannot be solid foundations if they themselves do not have God for support.

*Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.*

*Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.*[1]

Those, therefore, who want to build, to edify anything whatever without Jesus Christ, are mistaken and build only ruins.

He is the stone that has become the head of the corner of the whole edifice of God, in heaven and on earth.

Whoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken, and on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder (Mt 21:44).

A comparison that Jesus Christ uses at the end of his sermon on the mount:

He who hears the word and puts it into practice is like a man who builds upon the rock; nothing will be able to demolish this house.

But he who hears and does not do, builds upon sand: his house will fall.

One must therefore build on Jesus Christ, on his word, and put it into practice, and our house will be built upon the rock.

Ms X 21 — Ms X 635

Jesus Christ the spiritual foundation.[a]

It is in vain that we shall try to build if God is not with us, if he is not the architect, if he does not direct the works, give the plan, choose his workmen and command everything himself. A single bad or misplaced stone can shake the edifice.

*Omnia per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso*[b]

It is therefore Jesus Christ whom one must seek, it is with him that one must build, it is for him that one must edify, it is his spirit that one must seek, it is he whom one must seek and set as the foundation of everything…

The knowledge of Jesus Christ, his study, mental prayer: that is the first thing to do in order to become a stone of God's spiritual edifice.

What is founded on Jesus Christ alone can remain; what is founded on another foundation can neither last nor be solid. Thus all the exterior acts of obedience, humility, charity, exterior mortification are nothing if they have not come out of the

knowledge of Jesus Christ, the love of Jesus Christ, and if Jesus Christ is not their principle. These exterior things come naturally when the life of Jesus Christ is in them; otherwise they are only illusory, forced or hypocritical acts, when they do not come from this principle which is Jesus Christ…

It is therefore for him to do everything, to choose, to call, to build, to reject, to call whom he pleases.

All we can do is to show the way, to make known what Our Lord said himself, the way he followed, and for each one to see afterwards whether he wishes to follow Jesus thus and take his place in the house of God…

It is not enough to begin with God; one must act and finish with God.

All that I see my Father do, I do with him.

Be yourselves built into the structure of this edifice as living stones, to compose a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, to offer to God spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him (1 Pet 2:5).

It must be Jesus Christ who chooses the stones of his house. (X 21)

A single bad or misplaced stone can shake, bring down the edifice. Who will dare to meddle in the construction of an edifice? Who will dare to play the architect, to do the work, the architect of God, or God himself? Let God act. (X 635)

1. Fundamental article of one of the first preparatory essays of the VD.
2. All through him, with him and in him.

↑ Contents

## 11° He is the root from which we must draw the sap that is to give us life

↑ Contents

In a tree, it is the root, which one does not see, that is the most essential part of the tree. It is the root that gives life to the whole tree, that sends the sap to all the leaves and makes it live.

So it is with Our Lord.

He is for us this root, this life-giving sap that communicates to us spiritual and divine life.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing (Jn 15:5).

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live for ever (Jn 6:51).

He who receives me shall live by me.

In him was life and the life was the light of men (Jn 1:4).

The living bread is he who came down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst (Jn 6:35).

Walk in the ways of Jesus Christ, rooted in him and built up in him as on your foundation (Col 2:6).

It is necessary that, practising the truth in charity, we grow up in Jesus Christ, our head, from whom the whole body, being closely joined by every connecting joint, increases and builds itself up in charity, according to the efficacy and measure of each member (Eph 4:15).

↑ Contents

## 12° He is the centre towards which everything must converge

↑ Contents

In a circumference there is a centre from which all the rays start and towards which all the rays are directed.

It is the centre where everything must come together and from which everything must start.

To go to heaven, one must pass through this centre.

Are not the crib, the calvary, the tabernacle the centres where all men must go to receive life, peace, and set out again from there to go to God?

This is what Saint Paul explains to us: God has poured out upon us the riches of his grace abundantly, filling us with intelligence and wisdom, to make known to us the mystery of his will, founded on his good pleasure, according to which he purposed in himself, in the dispensation of the fullness of times,

to re-establish all things in Christ, both those that are in heaven and those that are on earth. And it is in him that we were called (Eph 1:1 [as printed; 1:7–11]).

He is our peace, who of the two peoples has made one, breaking down in his flesh the wall of separation, the enmity which divided them, and form-

ing in himself of these peoples one new man, making peace between them, to reconcile them to God by his cross, having united both in one body.

It is through him that we have access, the one and the other, to the Father, in one Spirit.

You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens (Eph 2:14).

There is neither Greek nor Scythian nor barbarian (Col 3:11).

We are all one in Jesus Christ.

*In ipso. Per ipsum et cum ipso.*[2]

*Omnia vestra sunt. Vos autem Christi.*

*Christus autem Dei.*[3]

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female: you are all one in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:28).

Admirable fusion that unites us all in Jesus Christ, the only centre into which we must melt entirely.

↑ Contents

## 13° He is the end towards which everything must tend.

↑ Contents

He is our end; he must be the end of our thoughts, the end of our desires, the end of our actions, the end of our life, and the one towards whom we must strain with all the strength of our soul.

It is in Jesus Christ that all the promises of God have their truth, and it is also through him that they are all accomplished, for the honour of God and to our glory (2 Cor 1:20).

It is before him that we shall appear one day to render him an account of all our actions; then he himself will be our reward, if we have loved and served him.

He who believes in me has eternal life.

To see Jesus Christ, to possess Jesus Christ, will be our eternal happiness.

Whether we live or whether we die, it is to Jesus Christ that we belong (Rom 14:8).

He who does not go to Jesus Christ goes to death.

He must therefore be the end of our labours, of our actions, the end of our whole life; we belong to him by every title.

↑ Contents

## 14° He is the resurrection and the life.

↑ Contents

The resurrection in this world, first by making us pass from the death of sin to the life of grace.

The resurrection by calling us one day from the tomb to give us eternal life.

Resurrection of souls, resurrection of bodies, spiritual life, eternal life.

I am the resurrection and the life.

He who believes in me, though he be dead, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die (Jn 11:25).

Amen, amen I say to you: whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but has passed from death to life (Jn 5:24).

The Father raises the dead and gives them life; so the Son gives life to whom he will (Jn 5:21).

As the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son also to have life in himself.

The hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live (Jn 5:25).

As in Adam all die, so in Jesus Christ all shall be made alive (1 Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1).

I will raise him up on the last day (Jn 6:40).

I am the life.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. He who eats this bread has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

↑ Contents

## Summary of the titles and greatnesses of Our Lord Jesus Christ

↑ Contents

Jesus Christ is the eternal Word.

This Word of God, who was from the beginning with God and who, begotten by the Father, is eternal like the Father and God too like him.

It is by him that all things were made and without him was made nothing. In him was life and the life was the light of men.

He came on earth to enlighten the world with his divine light; he is the true light.

Because he is himself the sun from on high, the brightness and the eternal light,

the splendour of the Father,

the figure of his infinite substance,

the image of the invisible God,

the eternal wisdom,

the infinite beauty of heaven become visible on earth.

He is the mirror in which God contemplates himself and finds himself reproduced.

It is this divine light that opens our eyes to the true light, to make us know God and make us love him.

He was given to us to be

our wisdom,

our justice,

our sanctification,

our redemption,

He is the way, the truth, the life.

He is our king, our master, our head and our model.

He is the principle of all things, the foundation on which everything must rest, the root from which we must draw the sap that is to give us life, the centre towards which everything must con-

verge, the end towards which everything must tend.

He is the resurrection and the life.

That is Jesus Christ!

↑ Contents

## O Word! O Christ!

↑ Contents

How beautiful you are! How great you are!

Who will be able to know you? Who will be able to understand you?

Grant, O Christ, that I may know you and love you.

Since you are the light, let a ray of this divine light fall

on my poor soul, that I may see you and understand you.

Put in me a great faith in you, that all your words may be for

me so many lights that enlighten me and make me go to you, and follow

you in all the ways of justice and truth.

O Christ! O Word!

You are my Lord and my only and sole Master.

Speak, I want to listen to you and put your word into practice. I want to listen

to your divine word, because I know that it comes from heaven. I want to listen to it,

to meditate it, to put it into practice, because in your word there is life,

joy, peace and happiness.

Speak, Lord, you are my Lord and my Master, and I want to listen

to no one but you.[4]

---

**Notes**

1. Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.

   Unless the Lord keep the city, he watches in vain that keeps it. (Ps 126:1 [Vulgate; Ps 127:1])↩
2. In him, through him and with him (conclusion of the eucharistic prayer of the Roman Missal).↩
3. All things are yours. But you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. (1 Cor 3:23)↩
4. Ms XI 162.

   O Word! O Christ! how great you are! how beautiful you are! who will be able to know you?

   Who will be able to understand you?

Grant, O Christ, that I may know you and love you. Let me cast a glance

On you, O infinite beauty! Dim a little your great light, that my eyes may

A little contemplate you and see your divine perfections.

Open my ears to your divine word, that I may hear your voice and meditate your divine teachings.

Open my mind and my intelligence, that your word may enter even into my heart and that I may taste it and understand it.

O Word! O my Master! O my Head, my King,

Speak, I want to listen to this divine word because I know that it comes from heaven; I want to listen to it, meditate it, put it into practice, because in this word there is life, joy and happiness.

Speak, Lord, I want to listen to you.

Speak, Lord, you are my Master and I want to have no other master than you.↩

↑ Contents

## V. Attachment to Jesus Christ

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* This part sets out the effects of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In the one who gives himself to it, this knowledge necessarily produces love.[1]

One may compare the first pages[2] to the degrees of love in Saint John of the Cross[3] or the degrees of humility in Saint Ignatius of Loyola.[4]

This chapter obliges us to give a spiritual sense to the whole book. That is to say, all the demands of the evangelical life set out in what follows are conceivable only as the visible fruits of a grace itself invisible. And it is not merely a question of a love logical with itself; it is a question of a grace that comes to make grace bear fruit.[5]

The primary result to which the knowledge of Jesus Christ must lead is an attitude of simplicity. This evangelical simplicity is the disposition required in order to fulfil the priestly ministry in a spiritual manner.[6]

Father Chevrier sketches this spiritual conception of the ministry — charismatic, one might call it — through explanations, partly open to dispute, about good priests, bad ones and perfect ones. An older text has been put in a note in which he approaches the question by the classic distinction between the two ways, that of the precepts and that of the counsels.

Here again it is an effort of speculative theology in which he is not at ease. He tries to ward off the

objections he has heard and which must be discerned behind his text: if you want to remain in the ranks of the secular clergy, then do as everybody does; otherwise, apply to a religious congregation.[7] A certain impatience with these objections makes him say inexact things about religious, who will not recognize themselves in them.[8] The Second Vatican Council has renewed the manner of approaching this question.[9]

One must therefore not stop at the more or less skilful and somewhat polemical refutation, but at the conviction he wants to communicate: the situation of the priest, made to live in the midst of men, is by itself an invitation to evangelical perfection.

***To know Jesus Christ is everything.***

Everything is contained in the knowledge of God and of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Haec est vita aeterna ut cognoscant te solum Deum verum et quem misisti Jesum Christum.*[10]

Jesus Christ is the eternal Word,

he is the living word of the Father on earth,

he is his science and his wisdom.

In him are all the treasures of science and wisdom.

So Saint Paul wishes nothing else for his faithful than to know Jesus Christ.

I bow my knees before the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named; that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man, that Jesus Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, and that, being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of this mystery, and to know the love of Jesus Christ towards us, which surpasses all knowledge, that you may be filled with the gifts of God in all their fullness. Now to him who, by the power that works in us, is able to do infinitely more than we ask or think, be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ, world without end (Eph 3:14).

No study, no science is to be preferred to this one.

It is the most necessary, the most useful, the most important, above all for him who wants to be a priest, his disciple, because this knowledge alone

can make priests. The other sciences are only accessory and circumstantial.

***He who has found Jesus Christ has found the greatest treasure.***

The rest is nothing.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

He has found wisdom, light, life, peace, joy, happiness on earth and in heaven, the solid foundation on which he can build; pardon, grace — he has found everything.

*Super aurum et topazion*[11]

*(qui me invenerit inveniet vitam)*[12]

He who believes in me has eternal life.

He shall never hunger, he shall never thirst.

He shall never die, and even though he be dead, he shall live.

I am the way, the truth, the life.

Come to me, all you who are weary, and I will refresh you.

You will not come to me that you may have life? he said to the Jews.

*Ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant*[13]

***He esteems nothing above Jesus Christ.***

Because Jesus Christ is everything to him.

Saint Paul expresses it very well: what things were gain to me then, *before my conversion*, the same I have counted, for Jesus Christ, as loss. I say more: all things seem to me a loss compared with this high science of Jesus Christ, my Lord, for love of whom I have suffered the loss of all things, counting them as dung, *stercora*, that I may gain Jesus Christ, that I may know Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death (Phil 3:7).

I do not want to know anything but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified (1 Cor 2:2).

***He leaves everything to possess Jesus Christ.***

Because Jesus Christ is everything to him and he esteems nothing above Jesus Christ.

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field; which a man having found, hides it, and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he has and buys that field to possess it (Mt 13:44).

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking good

pearls; who, when he had found one precious pearl, went his way, sold all that he had and bought it to possess it (Mt 13:45).

This is what the apostles did when they had found Jesus Christ: they left their nets and their parents and followed him (Mk 1:38 [as printed; cf. Mk 1:18–20]). And having left all things, they followed him (Lk 5:11).

The apostles said to Jesus: We have left all things and have followed you (Lk 18:28).

*He wants to please only Jesus Christ.*

Because he is his joy, his happiness, his Master, his God.

Do I now seek, says Saint Paul, the approval of men or of God?

Or do I aim at pleasing? If I still pleased men, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:10).

The knowledge of Jesus Christ necessarily produces love, and the more we know Jesus Christ, his beauty, his greatness, his riches, the more our love for him grows, the more we seek to please

him, and the more we cast far from us all that does not go to Jesus Christ.

This is what made Saint Paul say: if any man love not Jesus Christ, let him be anathema (1 Cor 16:22), and made him regard as dung and mud everything that turned him away from Jesus Christ.

The love of Jesus Christ turns us away from all that does not tend to him, from all that does not go to him, even in our parents, our friends, our kinsfolk; we cannot bear anything that does not turn to the glory and love of Jesus Christ, and we say, like Jesus Christ himself to Peter, who was not thinking according to God: Get behind me, Satan, you are a scandal to me.

He is not afraid of displeasing men and the world in order to please Jesus Christ.

Like the saints: Saint Francis of Assisi.

### *He is not even afraid of passing for a fool out of love for Jesus Christ*

Let no man deceive himself, says Saint Paul to the unbelievers.

If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, for it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness; and again: the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Let no man glory in men (1 Cor 3:18).

We are fools for Jesus Christ's sake.

You are wise in Jesus Christ.

We are weak, but you are strong; you are honoured; we are despised (1 Cor 4:10).

In this passage Saint Paul distinguishes the two kinds of people or priests who

belong to Jesus Christ: those who act a little according to the world and those who are entirely Jesus Christ's.

The world cannot receive Jesus Christ, his spirit (Jn 14:17).

But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal 6:14).

He who belongs to Jesus Christ must therefore leave entirely aside the existence of the world, the glory of the world. Let the world think what it will, it matters little to me; let it regard me as a fool, it matters little to me, I belong to Jesus Christ. I do. I walk in his footsteps. *Qui pie volunt vivere in Christo persecutionem patientur.*[14]

***Nothing can separate him from Jesus Christ.***

Saint Paul, after speaking of what Jesus Christ has done for his elect, cries out: Who then shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? As it is written: For your sake we are put to death all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we overcome, because of him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might of men [Tr.: sic — the French repeats "powers" and "things to come"; cf. Rom 8:38–39], nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ Our Lord (Rom 8:35).

***His whole happiness is to follow Jesus Christ.***

He has heard and understood this word of the Master: Follow me.

He has understood this other word: you have no other master than Christ. *Ego Magister* — the Master says so.

He who loves me keeps my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.

He has understood these other words: *exemplum dedi vobis ut quemadmodum ego feci ita et vos faciatis.*[15]

And he wants to be made conformable to the image of Jesus, his Master and his Model (Rom 8:29).

And he says with generosity and sacrifice: Lord, I will follow you wherever you go.

Lord, I am ready to give my life for you.

Let us go and die with him.

When one loves someone sincerely, one is happy to follow him, to walk in his footsteps. One likes to see him, to hear him, and does everything to imitate him.

*He lives now only for Jesus Christ.*

The charity of Christ presses us, considering that if one died for all, then all were dead, and that Jesus died for all, that they who live may not now live to themselves, but to him who died and rose again for them (2 Cor 5:14).

You are not your own, you belong to Jesus Christ who has redeemed you (1 Cor 6:19).

None of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself; but whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end Jesus Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living (Rom 14:7).

*Jesus Christ is his life.*

*Mihi vivere Christus est*[16].

It is no longer I who live, it is Jesus Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20).

Jesus Christ must be our life, that is, Jesus Christ must be our habitual and constant thought; all our desires, our affections must go out towards him, by night and by day.

The mother lives for her child,

The wife for her husband,

The husband for his wife,

the friend for his friend,

the miser for his money,

the egoist for himself,

the merchant for his trade.

That is the life of each of these beings: he puts his life in what he seeks, in what he loves, and when he is separated from this object he weeps, he languishes, he groans, until he is reunited with the objects of his love.

For us, our life is Jesus Christ.

In a clock there is a spring that moves all the wheels and tells the hour.

It is Jesus Christ who must be in us this invisible, hidden spring and make us always show Jesus Christ himself.

Where our treasure is, there also is our heart. If Jesus Christ is our treasure,

our heart and our thoughts will always be with him.

*Mihi vivere Christus est.*

*Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo*[17].

He has no other thought, no other occupation than Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ occupies, takes all his thoughts.

***All this is very beautiful, but does everyone understand it?***

*Non omnes capiunt verbum illud sed quibus datum est*[18].

*Qui potest capere capiat*[19].

He that has ears to hear, let him hear (Mk 4:23).

*Verbum velatum*[20]. When Jesus Christ speaks of his passion to his apostles, the words he said to them were: *verbum velatum.*

The Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph did not even understand what the Child Jesus said to them at the moment he spoke to them, and *ipsi non intellexerunt verbum quod locutus est ad eos* (Lk 2:50)

***A special grace of God is needed to understand it***

No man can come to me unless my Father draw him (Jn 6:44).

It must be God himself who makes us understand his word and what he himself says. For no one knows what is in God but the Spirit of God. The

animal and carnal man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God; they seem foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they must be judged by a supernatural light (1 Cor 2:11).

We are not sufficient to think anything good of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God (2 Cor 3:5).

It must be the Holy Spirit who gives us the sense of spiritual and divine things and who discovers Jesus Christ to us, who gives us eyes to see, ears to hear and, above all, a heart to feel and to draw us to him.

And if we feel or understand something, we must know that every good feeling, every good thought of faith and love comes from God himself, and thank him for it.

This is what Jesus made Peter understand when he had made his profession of faith in Jesus Christ, saying: I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Then Jesus said to him: Blessed are you, Peter, for it is neither flesh nor

## Notes

1. P. 115.↩
2. Pp. 113–117.↩
3. Saint John of the Cross, *Œuvres spirituelles*, Paris, Éd. du Seuil, 1947, pp. 635–645.↩
4. Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Exercices spirituels*, Paris, Éd. de l'Orante, 1956, pp. 83–84.↩
5. Pp. 118–120.↩
6. Pp. 120–127.↩
7. P. 270, note 1.↩
8. See also p. 136.↩
9. See the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 44 and 46.↩
10. This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ. (Jn 17:3)↩
11. More than gold and topaz. (Job 28:19)↩
12. He who finds me finds life. (Prov 8:35)↩
13. I came that the sheep may have life and have it more abundantly. (Jn 10:10)↩
14. All who desire to live piously in Christ will suffer persecution. (2 Tim 3:12)↩
15. I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also may do. (Jn 13:15)↩
16. For me, to live is Christ. (Phil 1:21)↩
17. I desire to depart and to be with Christ. (Phil 1:23)↩
18. Not all can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. (Mt 19:11)↩
19. He that can receive it, let him receive it. (Mt 19:12)↩

blood that has revealed these things to you, but my Father who is in heaven (Mt 16:17).

*Ego plantavi*, says Paul, *Apollo rigavit sed Deus incrementum dedit. Neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus*[1].

So whatever we do and whatever we say, if God does not make fruitful in us what we say or do, it is all of no use. Yet if some plants are lost, all of them ordinarily are not, and it is not always and for all of them that the gardener sees his pains lost. We must hope it will be so with us.

One must do oneself some violence, pray, ask, do penance.

The kingdom of heaven is preached, and every one must use violence to enter into it (Lk 16:16).

The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and only those who do violence to themselves enter into it (Mt 11:12).

***Do you feel this grace being born in you?***

That is, do you feel an inner attraction that draws you towards Jesus Christ?

An inner feeling full of admiration for Jesus Christ, for his beauty, his greatness, his infinite goodness, which moves him to come to us. A feeling that touches us and leads us to give ourselves to him.

A little divine breath that urges us and comes from on high, *ex alto*, a little supernatural light that enlightens us and makes us see a little of Jesus Christ and his infinite beauty.

If we feel in us this divine breath, if we perceive a little light, if we feel ourselves drawn ever so little towards Jesus Christ, ah! let us cultivate this attraction, let us make it grow by prayer, mental prayer, study, so that it may grow and bear fruit.

And let us say with the bridegroom [Tr.: sic — "the bride"] of the Canticles: *trahe me post te, curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum*[2]

1. Ms XI 2.

Do you want to belong to Jesus Christ?

Do you feel the desire to belong to Jesus Christ?

Whose do you want to be, if you are not Jesus Christ's?

Listen to the call of Jesus Christ.

Listen to his promises.

***If we have this grace, we must also feel the call of Jesus Christ in us.***

Come. Follow me.

I am Wisdom. I am your Master.

*Ego Magister.*

I am the way, the truth, the life.

Follow me. I am the light of the world. He who follows me does not walk in darkness.

I came to cast fire on the earth, and what do I desire but that it be kindled?

It is the glory of my Father that you become my disciples and bear much fruit.

The disciple is not above the Master; it is enough that he be as his Master.

I have given you an example, that as I have done, you also may do yourselves.

*Nolite timere, ego sum*[3]. [Tr.: the French prints "temere"; Mt 14:27 has *timere*.]

*Venite ad me omnes... jugum meum suave est et onus meum leve*[4].

*To what does he call us?*

To perfection.

There are three kinds of Christians in the world: the good, the bad and the perfect.

There are also three kinds of priests in the Church: the good, the bad and the perfect.

The good are those who fulfil their duty as priests, who follow the laws of the Church, say their Mass, their breviary, preach when it is time, avoid mortal sin and scandal, do the good that comes their way; in a word, nothing can be said against their conduct, they are even edifying.

The bad are those who live in sin and in indifference to their duty, neglect the sacred duties of their ministry and often, only too often, alas, give scandal to the Church. There are the scandalous bad, who are the shame of the Church. There are also the hidden bad, who live in sin without being known and do no less harm to souls by their negligence and their forgetfulness of prayer and of all spiritual life.

The perfect, or rather those who tend to perfection, who seek to follow Our Lord more closely, who have the desire to work for the glory of Jesus Christ, who feel his love in them and desire to

imitate him in his poverty, in his gentleness, in his charity, in his zeal for souls, in his sufferings, in his cross.

There is a great difference between good priests and those who seek to be perfect; the good remain in that state but do not seek to follow Our Lord closely, to imitate him seriously; they even push away poverty,

devotedness and sacrifice; they still take care of their persons and do not want to oppose the world and the tastes of their confrères too much, whereas he who seeks perfection sees only Jesus Christ, he loves Jesus Christ and puts Jesus Christ before everything. He loves and seeks to imitate most faithfully the one he loves.

It is therefore to this perfection that Jesus Christ calls us, and not to a merely good state, which is the state of the great number.

Perfection is the state of the few. There are few who follow him thus. Yet one holy priest does more good than a hundred merely good priests.

One holy priest procures more glory for God than a hundred others, and he converts more souls to God than a hundred others convert to themselves alone[1].

It is therefore to perfection that Jesus Christ calls us, to become true disciples.

The particular graces of which we have been the object prove it to us clearly enough. Grace of choice. Particular vocation. Quite special care of Providence, spiritual and temporal: everything engages us to follow Jesus Christ in his perfect life.

———————

1. Ms X 739–740.

There are, for the priest as for the faithful, two ways to go to heaven, to God, and to fulfil the mission entrusted to him: the way of the precepts and that of the counsels.

The first suffices to go to heaven. It is the way of the great number, one is bound only to that; it suffices for salvation.

But those to whom God gives the light and the grace must follow the second.

The way of the counsels is that of true love; it glorifies God more on earth, it contributes to the salvation of souls, it draws down many graces on the earth and on the Church and assures us our salvation.

It is this way that brings us closer to Jesus Christ, more nearly, by conforming us to him, to his life, seeking to reproduce his life in ours, and having no other desire than to seek to imitate him as perfectly as possible.

……

Religious observe the evangelical counsels; why should secular priests not observe them? Is perfection not for them as well as for the others?

In the ministry, must priests not draw close to Jesus Christ as well as others? And must they not even more, they who are in the midst of the world and who must carry everywhere the good odour of Jesus Christ and be the living light that must shine in the midst of men?

Religious are in their cloisters, but the priest is made to live in the midst of men, and he, more than the others, must be holier and more perfect than the others; he is called to do more good by having necessary dealings with the faithful; and we must surpass religious by this light, this aureole of glory and holiness that must shine in priests in the ministry.

Nevertheless, those to whom God grants the grace of following Jesus Christ in his counsels

must not despise those who observe only the precepts.

Each one will render an account to God of the graces he has received. One must glory in nothing and guard against saying any word contrary to charity toward the neighbour: one must make the most of the grace of God and judge no one.

Besides, that is our goal, and I ask nothing so much as that you answer the call of Our Lord and ours.

***If you hear his voice,***

Harden not your hearts, do not close your ear to his voice.

***We must answer him with joy.***

*Ecce adsum*[5]*. Ego tuus sum*[6]*. Ecce ego*[7]

speak, Lord, your servant hears.

Lord, to whom shall I go? You have the words of eternal life.

You are my light, you are my way, my life, my wisdom and my love.

I will follow you, Lord, wherever you go.

I am ready to die with you, I will give my life for you, I will go to prison, to death.

You are my king, my head and my master.

Lord, if you need a poor man, here I am!

If you need a fool, here I am!

Here I am, O Jesus, to do your will: I am yours! *Ego tuus sum.*[2]

***Let us hear the first warning that Jesus Christ gives us in order to listen to his word and become his true disciple.***

Amen I say to you: unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God (Mt 18:3).

Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it (Mk 10:15).

I give you thanks, O my Father! Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent of the world and have revealed them to the little and the humble (Mt 11:25).

Suffer the little children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Mk 10:14).

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! (Mt 5:3).

Whoever shall humble himself and make himself little as a little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven (Mt 18:3 [as printed; cf. 18:4]).

*Explanation of the preceding words.*

One must receive the kingdom of God, that is, the word of Jesus Christ, which is to establish in us the kingdom of God; receive this word as a child receives the word of his master, with attention, submission, respect and love.

Attention, to understand what he tells us, to understand it, to grasp it.

Submission, without arguing, just as it is. We have no business arguing with our masters; it is for them to teach us, for us to listen to them and accept.

Submission of a child: that is above all what Our Lord recommends to us in the hearing of the word.

What have we to argue about with Jesus Christ, the divine Master? Either you want to be perfect, or not. If you do not want to, say simply: I do not want to follow this way, I will stay in the lower way — and then that is the end of it.

But if you want to be perfect, accept his divine word just as he gives it and seek to put it into practice with the grace of God, and do not do as that rich young man of the Gospel to whom Jesus Christ said: if you would be perfect, go, sell what you have and give it to the poor; he argues within himself and does not accept the word.

This submission of mind to the word of Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, where only the privileged souls of the good Master enter[1].

To listen as a child.

A child goes to class to learn and not to argue; he seeks to understand what he is told; he does not go to reason but to accept.

If he does not understand, he asks, not to argue but to be instructed and to accept.

What would one say of a child, of an ignorant person, who would argue with an astronomer or a geographer about the position of the stars or of a place on earth, when the scholar tells him: it is so?

So it is with us and Jesus Christ: we cannot argue with him about what he teaches us.

The child receives, accepts the word of the master; it enters his heart like a finger into melted wax; he receives the word.

Whereas those who are not children, and who want to argue and reason, listen to the word but do not receive it. It acts like a stone: it rebounds and returns to the place it came from[2].

There are subtle, narrow, quibbling, finicky minds that find

---

1. Ms XI 42; 81–82.

It is the Word of God who speaks to us. God speaks to us in his Son. (42)

One must accept the words of God with simplicity, with that divine authority which befits him, and leave aside those human reasonings that come only from pride or from our inner passions, which do not want to accept a doctrine so pure, so heavenly.

One must not come with the intention of reasoning, of arguing, nothing of the kind: God says it, it must be done. (81–82).

2. Ms XI 172.

One must receive the word as a child receives the word of his master. Knowing well that the master knows more than he does and that what he says is true and that it must be accepted just as it is.

The child who does not understand asks in order to understand, to be able to grasp the meaning, but not to argue, to reason.

One must respect the authority of the word, the authority of the master.

difficulties everywhere and reason about everything, accepting nothing but what suits them, is convenient to them and enters their mind[8]

Nothing is more opposed to the Spirit of God and to this title of child that Our Lord requires in order to enter his kingdom.

He who is of God hears my word. If you do not hear my word, it is because you are not of God, Our Lord said to the Jews.

They did not listen to the Word of God, they did not receive it, they listened only to argue and reason about this word and even to try to catch him out in order to accuse and condemn him.

Children have no passions yet; they find as yet no opposition to the Word of God in their young souls; they accept it simply, without opposition.

Nothing is more opposed to this submission of mind than our little passions[9]. The Word of God is so lofty, so pure, so heavenly, so far above us that when we hear it our thousand little passions rise up and revolt against it, because they find themselves in direct opposition to this very word, which condemns and destroys them.

Our heart and our mind cry out.

Our laziness, our avarice, our negligence, the love of comfort, of our ease, pride, the seeking of self, of our satisfactions — all this rises at once against this divine word and calls it exaggerated, impossible, says that the Gospel is a folly and that it is not possible to practise it.

Then one says that one does not want to be exaggerated, that there is a prudence to be had, that the Gospel is good only for a very small number, only for the saints, that it is too difficult to attain it.[10]

Then one listens with caution and reserve and, under pretext of prudence, one leaves the Gospel to follow one's little reason.

This is seen every day with regard to poverty, penance, sacrifice, devotedness, the truly evangelical virtues.

The Holy Spirit says somewhere that he stands at the door and knocks; he says even more: he says that he pushes the door to enter — *ecce sto ad ostium et pulso.*

Our heart is therefore like a door at which the Master knocks and by which he seeks to enter.

Now a door can be in several positions. And when someone knocks at this door and one comes to see to open it,

one can leave it shut and not let anyone in at all,

one can open it only a little and leave at the door those who come,

one can finally open it wide and let in those who knock.

That is also what we can do to Jesus Christ, our Master, with regard to the door of our heart, when he seeks to enter.

He who does not open his door is the one who refuses to let the Master enter and who refuses entirely to receive his Master in order to follow

him, who prefers to follow his ideas, his passions, the world.

He who opens only halfway is the one who listens without letting the Master enter his house entirely; he wants to receive no one, he remains master of his house and of his heart.

He listens but takes from it what he wants, does with it what he wants, takes from it what suits him and leaves the rest that does not please him.

He receives the Master with reserve and prudence and he listens more to his reason, to his little passions, which are his masters, than to the true Master who wants to enter; he is wary, he is afraid, he opens his heart only halfway.

And the Master cannot enter to govern as he ought to do[11]

The last opens his door entirely and lets in the Master who knocks.

He is happy to receive him and to give him a place of honour, he listens to him with joy and has only one desire, which is to understand what he says and to put it into practice.

He does not argue but seeks how he will be able to practise what he hears.

He remains in spirit at the feet of his Master, like Mary, and he lets himself be caught neither by reasoning nor by the passions that revolt. The Master speaks; he has no other thoughts, no other desires than to understand what he hears and to put it into practice, to nourish his soul with it.

It is love that guides him and nothing else.

He wants to enter the kingdom of heaven; that is all his desire.

He tramples underfoot all that reason and the passions can say to him.

He has only Jesus Christ for Master and wants to follow only him.

A submissive and generous soul, he does not say: that is difficult, that is impossible, that is contrary to prudence, to the way of doing things, nothing of the kind; the Master has spoken, the Master has said it; that is enough.

---

**Notes**

1. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither he that plants is anything, nor he that waters, but God that gives the increase. (1 Cor 3:6)↩
2. Draw me after you, we will run in the odour of your ointments. (Song 1:3)↩
3. Do not be afraid, it is I. (Mt 14:27)↩

4. Come to me, all you… my yoke is sweet and my burden light. (Mt 11:28–29)↩
5. Here I am. (1 Sam 3:4)↩
6. I am yours. (Ps 118:94 [Vulgate; Ps 119:94])↩
7. It is I. (Jn 6:20)↩
8. Ms XI 81.

   A little defect, a fly, a spider's web, a little spot will occupy them more than the whole; they will leave the beautiful, the great, the useful, to reflect and think only about a little fault, a nothing, which will occupy them and make them lose the fruit of an instruction or of some good examples.↩
9. Ms XI 82.

   Oh! how one must silence one's passions in order to understand Jesus Christ! He is so beautiful, so lofty, so pure, that his words cannot enter a heart in which there is any passion.↩
10. Ms XI 173. What is impossible to men is possible to God.

    1. This sentence comes at the end of a parallel verse.

↑ Contents

    ↩
11. Ms XI 173.

    We shall never do too much.

    What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of being hungry? of being persecuted, despised, rejected? What is all that?

    Can one who loves Jesus Christ be afraid of anything?↩

*Examples of simplicity.*

Zacchaeus, who climbs a tree to see Jesus Christ, his Master: a rich man, yet he might well have said: what am I doing? I am acting like a child; climbing a tree to see a man go by! Nothing of the kind, he wants to see Jesus Christ, his Master: he does not worry about men.

The shepherds who go to visit the crib at the voice of the angels.

The magi who leave their country and undertake a long and unknown journey to go and see a newborn child.

Saint Mary Magdalene, who goes to the house of Simon the Pharisee, where Jesus was dining, to ask pardon for her sins.

Saint Anthony does not reason when he hears in a church this word of the Gospel: if you would be perfect, go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you shall have a great treasure in heaven. He goes, sells what he has, gives it to a poor man and withdraws into solitude.

Saint Francis of Assisi also hears this word of Jesus Christ in a church: Take neither gold, nor silver, nor shoes, nor two coats. He takes it for him-

self and leaves everything to make himself the true poor man of Jesus Christ in the world.

That is the childlike simplicity that Our Lord asks of his true disciples.

What reasonings all the saints who followed the evangelical way might have made to keep themselves from entering so lofty a way, so perfect, so difficult to nature; and if they had let themselves be caught by all these reasonings, they would never have become saints.

Our Lord therefore had very good reason to say: Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

That means: if you conduct yourselves by human reasonings, if you consult your reasonings, the world, your ideas, your passions, you will never listen to my word and never put it into practice, because my word comes from above and your reasonings come from below.

I am from above, you are from beneath, he said.

If, then, he is from above, let us be led simply and not seek to put ourselves on a level with him — since he is above us — and to lower his doctrine by our little reasonings.

It is reasoning that kills the Gospel and takes from the soul that impulse which would carry us to follow Jesus Christ and imitate him in his evangelical beauty.

The saints did not reason so much.

And it is because there are so many reasoners that there are so few saints!

Let us not be afraid, *nolite timere*, it is I.

And if we had to walk on the sea like Peter, would we not have to go to Jesus, if he said to us as to Peter: COME.

Let us therefore keep ourselves in spirit at the feet of Jesus Christ,

like little children at the feet of their master,

with a sincere desire to listen to his word,

and to put it into practice.

***A great energy of will is also needed.***

*Regnum Dei vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud*[1]
[Tr.: the French prints "Regum Dei … rapuent"]

There is no place for soft, effeminate people.

## Notes

1. The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent bear it away. (Mt 11:12)↩

↑ Contents

# Part Two: The Five Conditions to Be Fulfilled in Order to Become a True Disciple of Jesus

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* We saw in the general introduction how Father Chevrier gradually worked out his plan.[1]

The orientation is wholly apostolic: it is a matter of fulfilling the duties of the apostolic charge,[2] by giving the signs that must accompany the proclamation of the Gospel.

The reference to the three parts of the Saint-Fons Tableau is explicit. It does not come in passing but as the sum of these pages, at the end. This confirms what we have already said on the subject.[3]

| | |
|---|---|
| Jesus, seeing a great crowd following him, takes occasion from it to teach how to follow him really, in mind and heart. | As a great multitude went with Jesus, he turned and said to them: |
| | If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters,<br>yea, and his own life also,<br>he cannot be my disciple. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. |
| Before really following him one must reflect well beforehand whether one can. | For which of you, having a mind to build a tower, does not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he has wherewith to finish it? |
| It is a matter of building a very high tower,<br>that of perfection. | Lest, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build and was not able to finish. |
| It is a matter of fighting powerful enemies.<br>And in order to build this tower, to fight these powerful enemies, it is also necessary to renounce one's family, oneself and the goods of the earth | Or what king, about to go to make war against another king, does not first sit down and think whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? |
| just as it is necessary for a man to have money to build a house, and necessary for a king to have soldiers to make war. | Otherwise, while the other is yet afar off, sending an embassy, he asks conditions of peace. |
| And he who would undertake this war or this building without having what is needed would be like a man who wanted to build without money or make war without soldiers. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| | So likewise every one of you that does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple.<br>Salt is good;<br>but if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?<br>It is neither profitable for the land nor for the dunghill, but shall be cast out. |
| | He that has ears to hear, let him hear! (Lk 14:25)<br>And elsewhere Our Lord tells us: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow me. (Mt 16:24) |
| The five conditions required by Our Lord Jesus Christ in order to become his True Disciple. | From these words of the divine Master we see clearly that, in order to become his True Disciple, one must first,<br>Renounce one's family and the world,<br>Renounce oneself,<br>Renounce the goods of the earth.<br>Then, when one has renounced all these things, one must next take up one's cross and follow him in the practice of all the evangelical virtues.[4] |
| [5]Necessity of studying these five conditions in order to become a True Disciple of Jesus Christ | Such are the conditions imposed by the divine Master on whoever wishes to become his disciple.<br>Without the fulfilment of these conditions, one fulfils only by half, or not |

| | |
|---|---|
| | at all, the duties of the apostolic charge, which are to be,<br>The salt of the earth<br>And the light of the world. (Mt 5:13) |
| | One is no more than insipid salt, an extinguished torch, and is good only to be cast out, according to the word of the Master.<br>We still have to know how one must practise,<br>This renunciation of creatures and of the world<br>This renunciation of oneself<br>This renunciation of the goods of the earth.<br>What is this cross that must be borne?<br>What is this road that must be taken to follow Jesus Christ truly and become his disciple?<br>This is what Jesus Christ himself teaches us in his holy Gospel and what we are going to study in the following pages. |

***Explanation of these words: you are the salt of the earth,***

Salt of souls.

Salt has the property of preserving from corruption, of keeping and of giving flavour to foods.

That is what we must be for Christian souls: preserve them from the corruption of sin, keep them in the grace of God and give them spiritual savour by putting into them faith and the love of God.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt lose its virtue [Tr.: the French has a garbled "que si le sel perd sa vert"], wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out and trodden under foot by men.

***You are the light of the world.***

You are the light of the world.

A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid, and a lamp one lights is not put under a bushel, but upon a lamp-stand, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Mt 5:13 [as printed; cf. 5:13–16])

We must therefore shine in the world by our light, that is, by our good examples and by our virtues.

We must practise the virtues opposed to the vices of the world, and the more the world is corrupt,

spoiled, the more we must shine in its eyes by the opposite virtues, and draw it, astonish it by our words and above all by our examples.

The more the world loves luxury and wealth, the more we must love and practise poverty.

The more the world loves comfort and softness, the more we must shine by mortification and penance.

Charity, devotedness, sacrifice: the world must see our works.

Difference between the cloistered religious — he lives for himself — and the priest in the world — he lives for others and owes himself to everyone by devotedness, sacrifice and good example[6]

There are different lights: sun, moon, gas, the lamp, the night-light and the extinguished torch, without oil, without wick.

If you do not believe my word, believe my works, Our Lord said to the Jews.

May we be able to say the same and show men our works to engage them to believe and be converted.

See how poor I am,

see how I am nailed on the cross,

see how I let myself be eaten by you, without a word, for your good[7].

---

**Notes**

1. Pp. 30–32.↩
2. P. 135.↩
3. P. 30; cf. Annex V, p. 33.↩
4. Ms XI 84 — XI 583.

   If these conditions are not fulfilled, one is good for nothing.

   Nothing more logical and more natural than the fulfilment of these conditions in order to be a True Disciple of Jesus Christ.

   It is quite easy to understand that he who is occupied with the affairs of the earth, with↩
5. (continuation of the note on the preceding page)

   trade, business, cannot occupy himself with the things of God; that he whose heart is divided between God and the creature, who has a wife and children or who loves creatures, cannot give himself wholly to God.

   It is easy to understand that he who occupies himself with himself, who constantly seeks himself, who has not renounced himself, will be constantly held up; he will have to occupy himself with himself, with his father and mother, … children who weep… and that before truly following Jesus Christ one must have renounced all that; without these conditions one can do nothing.

   How true the words of Jesus are! (Ms XI 84)

Complete renunciation of all things one possesses. He wants us to renounce everything in order to be his. He does not want half-men: he wants us whole. (Ms XI 583)↩

6. Cf. pp. 111–112.↩
7. Ms XI 565.

   Promises of Our Lord Jesus Christ: If you understand these things and put them into practice, you will be happy. (Jn 13:17)

   Love for Jesus Christ, our Master!↩

↑ Contents

## 1st condition: one must renounce one's family and the world

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* After Christmas 1856, Antoine Chevrier wanted without delay to put into practice the kind of priestly life he had just conceived. He met two oppositions, that of his mother and that of his confrères. He had already experienced maternal opposition when, as a seminarian, he thought of leaving for the foreign missions.

These two kinds of opposition are not obstacles but more or less painful trials, provided one seeks spiritual freedom with regard to one's family and to the whole sociological milieu, ecclesiastical in-

cluded. Indeed, when priests tend collectively to conform to a determined sociological milieu, a collective mentality is created among them which unconsciously enslaves them to the prejudices of that milieu: the world is found even in gatherings of confrères.[1]

A particularly hard struggle, sustained against a domineering mother, explains in part the importance Father Chevrier gave to renunciation of the family. But no one can evade this question, and most of those who were set apart for the Gospel[2] found themselves one day or another in the painful necessity of making loved ones suffer by freely deciding to answer God's call.

It should be known, moreover, that after the death of his father Antoine Chevrier took his mother with him to the Prado, taking great account of what he knew of her and arranging things in such a way that she did not intervene in the running of the house but nevertheless felt herself useful.

Here, Father Chevrier's two major preoccupations are to bring out in all its force the spiritual family and to win freedom. Freedom to announce the Gospel and to live close to the poor.

That is why renunciation of the world is above all a refusal of vassalage to a certain world which imposes its sociological sway on the clergy of the time, and perhaps more or less in every time.

It will be, as the case may be, high society, fashionable society, the cultivated world, worldlings, etc. There is a risk of seeking, through the priesthood, a social promotion. Now, Father Chevrier remarks, Jesus does not raise up his family according to the flesh.[3]

This renunciation of the world is also for Father Chevrier a demand for freedom with regard to political systems and groups. This is what he wishes to affirm by refusing to go and spend his evening in a drawing-room, chatting… about politics.[4] He knows, indeed, what obstacles are created among the poor of his time by the collusion of the clergy with the political options of certain social classes. Let us not, however, ask him to treat the relations of the Church and the world in the manner of Vatican II. He has no personal idea on the question.

He did sense that the different meanings of the word "world" would need to be specified, but he announces an explanation without giving it.[5] The

Gospel is partly responsible for this lack of clarity. In Saint John, the world designates either the universe, or the human race, or again those who refuse Christ. Let us say that in the True Disciple the world is every human influence that could prevent us from taking the Gospel entirely seriously. When one has met Christ, like Saint John, like Saint Paul, one can only find such a pretension intolerable.

Other terms too are a source of ambiguity: heavenly and earthly.[6] To understand Father Chevrier, one must refer, as he does, to Saint Paul,[7] who opposes the earthly man to the heavenly man. The latter is the new man, recreated in the grace of Christ, made alive, led by the Spirit, and certainly not dispensed from having his feet on the earth. The earthly man, the old man, is the one who is still delivered over to his covetousness as a descendant of sinful Adam.

If Father Chevrier's reference to Scripture is beyond dispute when he uses the terms world, heavenly, earthly, one may nevertheless admit that his language is influenced by the rhetoric of the period.[8]

Yet he puts to us a question that no one can avoid: are we spiritually free with regard to the world and in particular to our family?

This is the first act of renunciation that Our Lord Jesus Christ asks of whoever wants to come after him.

For indeed one cannot belong to God and to the world, and one must necessarily leave the one to give oneself to the other.

And, as Jesus Christ says, one cannot serve two masters.

Either one will love the one and hate the other; or one will hold to the one and despise the other.

One cannot be attached to God and to the world because of the opposition that exists between God and the world. And if, in Scripture, God says that the wife will leave her father and mother to cleave to her husband, how much more must he who wants to cleave to God leave all creatures.

It is the first act that God asks of Abraham when he calls him to himself.

*Doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ on renunciation of family and the world.*

Do you think that I am come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but separation.

For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

They shall be divided,

father against son,

mother against daughter,

daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law,

and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law (Lk 12:51).

Do not think that I am come to send peace upon earth.

I came not to send peace but the sword.

I came to set at variance

a man against his father,

the son against his mother,

and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law

and a man's enemies shall be

they of his own household.

(Mt 10:34)

He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Mt 10:37).

If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother,

his wife and children,

his brothers and sisters,

yea, and his own life also,

he cannot be my disciple (Lk 14:26).

*To renounce the world.*

Woe to the world because of scandals! (Mt 18:7)

Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world.

If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him (1 Jn 2:15).

The friendship of this world is the enemy of God. Whoever therefore will be a friend of this world becomes an enemy of God (Jas 4:4).

Be not conformed to this world (Rom 12:2).

You are not of the world, Jesus Christ said to his apostles.

No man can serve two masters.

***Why one must renounce one's family and the world.***

We know that the whole world is seated in wickedness [Tr.: French: "is under the sway of the evil spirit"] (1 Jn 5:19).

The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because it neither sees him nor knows him (Jn 14:17).

If any man love the world, the charity of God is not in him.

For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Which is not of God, but of the world… and the world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof.

But he that does the will of God abides for ever (1 Jn 2:15).

There is a wisdom that comes from below; this wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish.

For where jealousy and contention are, there is inconstancy and every evil work.

But the wisdom that is from above is, first, chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to good, full of mercy and good fruits. It does not judge. It is without dissimulation (Jas 3:15).

The sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they must be judged by a supernatural light (1 Cor 2:14).

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, for it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness.

The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain (1 Cor 3:19–20).

I am from above,

you are from beneath,

you are of the world,

I am not of the world (Jn 8:23).

They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world.

We are of God; he that knows God hears us;

he that is not of God hears us not; by this

we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 Jn 4:5).

The world places all its happiness in exterior and sensual things.

Jesus places it in spiritual things.

Mary has chosen the better part.

***Examples that confirm this truth: opposition between Jesus Christ and the world.***

When his kinsfolk had heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said: he is become mad, *in furorem versus est* (Mk 3:21).

His brethren did not believe in him (Jn 7:5).

A prophet is not accepted in his own country; a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred (Mk 6:4).

(here it is a question of good prophets, good priests, good servants of God, who do not live like the world, and not of those who follow the ideas of the world and of the family)

The brethren of Jesus said to him: Depart hence and go into Judea, that your disciples also may see your works which you do. For there is no man

that does anything in secret and he himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, manifest yourself to the world (Jn 7:3).

It is at Nazareth, his native place, that Jesus is driven out of the synagogue and led by the people to the brow of a hill that they might throw him down. But Jesus, passing through the midst of them, went his way, turning back [Tr.: the French has "se retournant"] (Lk 4:30).

The more we belong to God, the more we are opposed to the ideas and follies of the world, and the more also the world hates us and persecutes us.

The mother of Zebedee comes to Jesus to ask that her two sons may sit, one at his right hand, the other at his left, in his kingdom; the two sons make the same request, and Jesus says to them: You know not what you ask; can you drink the chalice that I drink or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am to be baptized? (Mk 10:38)

Peter himself, before having received the Spirit of God, is sharply rebuked by Jesus Christ.

Jesus speaks of his passion and announces what is to befall him.

Peter, taking him aside, begins to rebuke him, saying: God forbid, Lord, this shall not be unto you!

And Jesus, turning and looking on his disciples, rebuked Peter, saying: Get behind me, Satan, you are a scandal to me, because you savour not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men (Mk 8:31 [as printed; cf. Mt 16:22–23]).

*How Jesus Christ himself practised this renunciation of the family*

At the age of twelve, the child Jesus remains in the Temple to begin the mission his Father has entrusted to him in the world.

He remains in the Temple without his parents knowing.

And when the Blessed Virgin comes to him and asks why he had acted thus towards them, who had been seeking him for three days in sorrow and sadness, he answers them: Why is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? (Lk 2:49)

*The wedding at Cana.*

At the wedding at Cana, Jesus answers Mary, his mother, who tells him that the guests have no

more wine: Woman, what is that to me and to you? My hour is not yet come (Jn 2:4).

*Jesus on the cross.*

And on the cross, Jesus seeing his mother at his feet, says to her: Woman, behold your son (Jn 19:26).

*The woman who calls Mary blessed.*

A woman lifting up her voice from the crowd cried out: Blessed is the womb that bore you and the paps that gave you suck!

And Jesus replies: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it (Lk 11:27).

One came and said to Jesus: Your mother and your brethren stand without, seeking you and wishing to see you. Jesus, answering him, said: Who is my mother and who are my brethren?

And looking round about on them and stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said to him:

My mother and my brethren are those who hear the Word of God and do it.

Whoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother (Mk 3:35).

***What Our Lord Jesus Christ requires of those who want to follow him, with regard to their family.***

He that comes to me and hates not his father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, cannot be my disciple (Lk 14:26).

He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me (Mt 10:37).

Jesus said to a young man: Follow me. But this young man said to Jesus: Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Jesus said to him: Follow me. Let the dead bury their dead; but go you and preach the kingdom of God (Lk 9:60).

Another young man said to Jesus: I will follow you, Lord; but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house.

Jesus said to him: No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God (Lk 9:61).

**Notes**

1. Ms XI 599.↩
2. Rom 1:1.↩
3. Ms VIII 431.↩
4. P. 155.↩
5. P. 156.↩
6. Cf. p. 153 and elsewhere.↩
7. Cf. 1 Cor 15:47 (quoted pp. 197 and 269).↩
8. Cf. pp. 21–22.↩

↑ Contents

***Rules to follow with regard to one's family and the world.***

From the words and examples of Our Lord Jesus we see that a true disciple of Jesus Christ must first:

***Leave his father and mother.***

Leave his father and mother, after the example of the child Jesus at twelve, in order to consecrate himself to the work of God; and he does not even need their consent.

When God calls us, we must obey him.

He is our first Father.

He who loves his father and mother more than me is not worthy of me (Mt 10:37).

And when they come to seek us, say to them as the child Jesus did: why do you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's service?

Our first duty is to occupy ourselves with the things of God, who is our first Father.

We have a Father who is in heaven, who is above all the fathers of the earth and whom we must obey in the first place.

This Father is above you.

He is your Father and mine.

I come to separate the son from his father.

***To have nothing more in common with the family, except relations of charity and necessity[1].***

And when once this first separation has been made and one has consecrated oneself to God and to his service, one must have nothing more in common with one's family.

This is what Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us when he answers Mary, his mother, at the wedding at Cana: what is there in common between you and me? Woman, my hour is not yet come.

Every word must be studied, because every word contains a lesson.

***Examination of this word of Our Lord: what is there in common between you and me? Woman, my hour is not yet come.***

What is there in common between you and me?

That is: there is nothing more in common between you and me.

Since I left you to consecrate myself to the service of God and of the neighbour.

I left the natural family to enter a spiritual family. I broke these fleshly ties to take supernatural ties.

God is my Father,

The Church is my mother.

The children of God, my brothers and sisters,

That is my family.

There is nothing more in common between you and me; you have no more right over me and I have nothing more to do with you.

There remains to me no other tie than the tie of charity and gratitude, which cannot be broken.

This is quite simple, since we leave the natural way to enter the spiritual family of God.

Woman

This word that Our Lord uses in speaking to his mother makes us understand well enough that by the very fact that he has begun his divine mission on earth, that he has become the eternal Priest, Mary has lost her rights as mother over him and he no longer recognizes in her the right to command him in what concerns the kingdom of God and his divine mission.

He recognizes no other master, no other father, no other superior than God, his Father. His mother is no more to him than a woman.

My hour is not yet come.

I know what I must do and when I must do it.

I have my Father, whom I must obey and who fixes for me the moment when I must act and how I must do it.

It is no longer for you to tell me what I must do, nor to fix the moment of my actions.

I have no order to receive from you concerning my divine mission.

It is to God alone that I owe obedience and it is for him to fix the moment of my actions.

When I act, I must obey neither flesh nor blood nor any natural feeling; I must consult only the will of my Father.

What a great lesson Our Lord gives us in these words, and it is to instruct us that he spoke them in these circumstances; these words, hard in appearance, show us the separation that must be made between a priest and his family.

***We must form among ourselves a true spiritual family.***

Someone has just said to Jesus: your mother and your brethren stand without, seeking you and wishing to see you.

Jesus, answering the one who spoke to him, said:

Who is my mother and who are my brethren?

And looking round about on them and stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said:

My mother and my brethren are those who hear the Word of God and do it.

For whoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother (Mk 3:31 [as printed; cf. Mk 3:31–35; Mt 12:50]).

How well Our Lord makes us understand by these words that the natural family disappears to make room for a spiritual family, which no longer has flesh or blood as its tie, but has God, his word and the practice of that same word.

That is the great bond of souls.

And the bonds of this spiritual family are more intimate and stronger than those that exist in the families of the earth, which are only earthly and fleshly bonds.[2]

When two souls, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, listen to the Word of God and understand it, there is formed in these two souls a very intimate union of mind of which God is the principle and the knot.

This is the true bond of religion, the true bond of soul and heart.

This knowledge of God first produces the love of God and also the love of the one who thinks as we do and according to God; and this bond of mind, founded on God, is infinitely more intimate and stronger than any other natural bond.

And when to this spiritual bond there is joined the practice of this same word, then there is

formed a truly spiritual family, a Christian community, having God for foundation, his divine word for bond and the same practices for goal.

And there can be no Christian family or community without this union of mind founded on the knowledge of Jesus Christ, of his divine word, and the practice of the same works.

The love of Jesus Christ, the desire to keep his word, is the foundation of every Christian family, and we shall be really united in mind and heart only so far as this precious foundation is laid in our midst.

It is then that this word of Jesus Christ is fulfilled for us: Those are my brothers who hear the Word of God and do it.

We become his brothers, since we are united by faith and the same thoughts and his blood flows in our veins.

We become his mother by producing him on the altar and by giving spiritual birth to other children through the teaching of the faith and the sacraments.

Happy family! happy bonds that unite all the members of this same family in the same charity

and the same desire to make Jesus Christ known and loved!

And when this family really exists, we must find in this family all that is found in a true family: love, union, support, charity, all the spiritual and temporal care that is necessary to each of the members, without needing to go and seek elsewhere what is necessary for the needs of soul or body; otherwise the family is neither whole nor true.

This is what, moreover, those titles of brothers, sisters and fathers express that we give one another. These titles must express only what must exist inwardly; otherwise they are only derisory and lying.

From the words of Our Lord, we therefore see clearly that a true disciple of Jesus Christ must leave his father and mother to devote himself to the service of God, have nothing more in common with them, and enter the spiritual family of the children of God, and recognize as father and mother only God and his superiors, and as brothers and sisters those who belong to Jesus Christ.

***False ideas that parents continue to have about their children when they are priests.***

Parents always believe they keep rights over their children when they are priests.

And because they are not cloistered, because they are priests in the world, they think they can always advise them, direct them, have them with them, give them counsels; and as their counsels are wholly earthly, always that they should not tire themselves too much, so as to take care of themselves, not take so much trouble, these counsels are always harmful to the good of souls and to their own children, inspiring negligence in them.

They do not consider the good of souls[3] but the good of their children.

It is then that one must have in mind and on one's lips these words of Jesus Christ, our Master: *what is there in common between you and me?*

And this other of Our Lord to Saint Peter: get behind me, Satan, you are a scandal to me because you do not understand what is of God but what is of men.

Woe to him who lets himself be led by these harmful and pernicious counsels! He leads no

more than a wholly natural life; he no longer serves God but serves himself and his parents.

***In what sense we must hate our fathers and mothers.***

He that comes to me and hates not his father and mother, his wife and children… (Mt 10:37 [as printed; cf. Lk 14:26])

This word does not mean that one must despise one's parents, wish them ill, not look at them, pay no attention to them, render them no service. No. But this word means that our parents being in the natural and earthly way, and we being in a spiritual and heavenly way, our thoughts, our ideas, our aspirations, our affections must be as far raised above theirs as heaven is raised above the earth.

The thoughts and affections of our parents are ordinarily wholly earthly; our thoughts, our desires, our aspirations must be wholly heavenly.

*Nostra conversatio in caelis est.* (Phil 3:20)

We must draw our thoughts and our affections from heaven and not from the earth, nor from creatures.

We must hate and despise all that is earthly and seek and love only what is heavenly, and imitate

Our Lord in his conduct towards Saint Peter, whom he loved much and whom nevertheless he does not fear to call Satan when he expresses thoughts so different from and so opposed to those of the Master.

*Get behind me, Satan!* you are a scandal to me.

That is how we must answer whoever wants to turn us aside from our duty and from the true road we must follow.

We must hate our fathers and mothers, that is, not fear to cause them pain in certain circumstances by going directly against their ideas, when it is a question of the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

What often holds us back in our decisions is the fear of causing them pain, the distress our conduct will cause them: if I do such a thing, what grief for them! they will say: he no longer loves me, he no longer cares for me, he abandons me; he is ungrateful.

This is precisely the occasion to carry out the word of the divine Master and to behave towards them as if one did not love them, as if one were abandoning them, though at bottom one loves them very sincerely.

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

It is in these circumstances that one must appear cruel and fight against the feelings of nature and carry out the words of the Master: hate one's father and mother.

We must always keep ourselves in great freedom of action in all that concerns the service of God and the salvation of souls.

***We must love and esteem our spiritual brothers more than our brothers according to the flesh.***

This is what Our Lord Jesus Christ lets us understand in the answer he made to that woman who, lifting up her voice in the crowd, cried out: Blessed is the womb that bore you and the paps that gave you suck.

To these words, spoken wholly in praise of Mary, Jesus answers: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it (Lk 11:27 [as printed; cf. 11:27–28]).

Thus the title of mother disappears before that of servant of God, and he prefers a true servant of his to one who would have only a vain title of father or mother.

The same conclusion can be drawn from these other words addressed to the one who warned him that his mother and brethren were asking for him, and he, pointing to the disciples, said: my mother and my brethren are those who hear the Word of God and do it.

The true family, the true brothers who deserve all the affection of our heart and the first place in our affection, are those who love God and put the word into practice.

***We have no counsels to ask from our parents, nor from people of the world, in what concerns our ministry.***

This flows from the preceding article: the ideas of our parents, of people of the world, are earthly, and we must be wholly heavenly.

We must not go and complain to people of the world, tell them our affairs, our troubles, our worries.

These people are generally incapable of giving us good counsels, unless they are in a higher region than people of the world.

This is what Judas did: he went and complained in the world, to the Jews, to the Pharisees; he received only words of discouragement, he lost his

vocation, sold his Master and went and hanged himself.

He receives counsels from this one, from that one, counsels opposed to the spirit of God, and he was lost.

---

**Notes**

1. This commentary on John 2:4 is without doubt Father Chevrier's biggest blunder in his interpretation of Scripture. It is not personal to him. He follows the orientation given by the notes of Mastaï-Ferretti: "Jesus wishes to teach his disciples that in the functions and ministry of the apostolate they must no longer let themselves be guided by flesh and blood, but solely by the will of God." (Mastaï-Ferretti, p. 80)↩
2. Father Chevrier accentuates the contrast and in so doing exaggerates, for the natural family is indeed founded on the Word of God (Mt 19:5) and the Christian family is founded on the sacramental word. This kind of presentation by contrast is found in Saint Paul (compare 1 Cor 7:32–34 and Eph 5:25–32). See renunciation of one's heart, pp. 237–238.↩
3. "Souls," in the language of the time, means: human persons. It will be seen later that Father Chevrier does not use the distinction between soul and body but distinguishes body, heart, mind and will.↩

↑ Contents

***With people of the world we must have only relations of necessity and for the good of their souls.***

You are not of the world. I have chosen you and separated you from the world, Our Lord says to his apostles (Jn 15:19). Since we are not of the world, since we have been chosen

and separated from the world by Jesus Christ, we must not love the world, nor follow the world, nor do as the world does.

We must feel repugnance and opposition, even hatred, for all the trifles, the vanities of this world, its conversations, its feasts, its dinners, its pleasures, its enjoyments; otherwise we do not have the love of God in us, because Saint John says: if any man love the world, the love of God is not in him (1 Jn 2:15).

And Saint James also says: the love of the world is enmity against God (Jas 4:4).

By going often into the world, one necessarily takes on the tastes and ideas of the world.

We are so inclined to natural things, we have so much trouble keeping ourselves at the height of our vocation, that contact with the world can only be most fatal to us.

One very quickly becomes worldly by frequenting worldly people.

Tell me whom you frequent, I will tell you who you are.

It is also a great waste of time to go often into the world: how many useless things! how many banal conversations that mean nothing! How sad it is to see a priest spend his evening in a drawing-room, chatting about rain and fine weather, politics and other useless things, wasting his time when there are so many souls to convert[1]!

A priest should never sit down to chat and say useless things.

When a priest goes often into the world, he quickly loses his authority, his ascendancy over others.

One must be a great saint to go into the world and keep one's authority as a priest over others, especially when one is young.

People of the world quickly see our faults, our miseries; they examine them, make them the subject of their conversations, and we easily become the subject of their criticism and blame, and in-

stead of having edified them we have on the contrary scandalized them.

It is very difficult to keep oneself at the height of one's ministry and not to weaken sometimes; it is better that people come to see us than that we go to them ourselves.

People invite us, press us to go to their houses, pay us a thousand civilities, a thousand flattering advances. Let us not believe them. It is better in that case to pass for a savage than to pass for a visitor.

One should, it seems to me, see the priest only in the pulpit, in the confessional and at the altar; at the homes of the poor and the sick.

Everywhere else the priest exposes himself to criticism and to becoming worldly himself by taking on the tastes and ideas of the world.

It seems to me that the priest should flee even the public places where the world ordinarily goes to take its leisure.

The priest must flee everything that smacks of the world and, when he needs to relax a little, he should go to a place apart.

Prudence and discretion are also needed with everybody, but above all with people of the world.

When Our Lord Jesus Christ invites his apostles to take some rest, he does not lead them into the world and its feasts, he leads them aside: *venite seorsum in desertum locum et requiescite pusillum*[2].

One must flee the world.

***What is to be understood by the world***

***Not to go out without necessity, and when we go into the world, to remember that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.***

We are the salt of the earth.

We are the light of the world, according to the word of Jesus Christ.

When, therefore, we go into the world, it is not to do as the world does and say Amen to everything that is said, to everything that is done, as is, unhappily, too often done; but it is to be the example of the world. The priest must be in the midst of the world like a lamp that shines in all its brightness.

We must show that we are not of the world, that we are the masters of the world and not its servants.

Imitate in this Our Lord Jesus Christ, who shows himself Master everywhere: he is Master at the Pharisees', at their table, as in the synagogue; he speaks, he reproves, he instructs, he gives a lesson to everyone, to the head of the house, to the doctors, to the scribes.

After his example, we must never lose our authority as priests, and we must make it respected wherever we are.

But as it is difficult to do so and as great wisdom, great prudence are needed, and as often one can do more harm than good by one's imprudences and clumsiness,

it is better to stay at home than to go to others and lecture them; for that, great authority, great prudence, great wisdom are needed.

***To accept the hatred and contempt of the world, which are the just consequence of our conduct towards it.***

By acting thus with the world, with our parents, our friends, by conducting ourselves in a manner

so opposed to the world, we cannot but attract its contempt, its hatred and its sarcasms.

But this is precisely our glory and what makes our happiness and gives us the assurance of truly belonging to Jesus Christ.

Since Jesus Christ himself says: If the world hate you, know that it hated me before you.

If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you and separated you from the world, therefore the world hates you.

But remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master (Jn 15:18).

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world (Jn 17:14).

I am crucified to the world and the world is crucified to me (Gal 6:14).

The world has hated me without cause.

The world hates me because I give testimony of it that its works are evil (Jn 7:7).

Since you despise the world and its maxims, the world cannot but despise you too.

*By what do we know that we love the world?*

When we go there with pleasure, when we prefer the society of the world or of our family to that of our brothers.

When we find it hard to refuse the invitations and societies of the world.

When we speak with pleasure of our family, of the world, of their grandeur, their titles, their happiness, their riches above all; of their country house, their incomes, their manners.

All this indicates an attraction to the world and to luxury.

*Promises of Jesus Christ to whoever shall have left his family and the world for him.*

Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother (Mt 12:50).

There is no man who has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my sake, who shall not receive a hundred times as much now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions.

And in the world to come, life everlasting (Mk 10:29).

***Practical conclusion of this chapter on renunciation of one's family and the world.***

We must leave our father and mother to devote ourselves to the service of God.

We must hate our father and mother in the Christian sense.

Have nothing more in common with our family except to fulfil the duties that charity imposes on us.

Go to one's family or to one's parents only for motives of true charity and not merely to satisfy the affectionate feelings of nature on one side or the other.

Form among ourselves a truly spiritual family.

Love and esteem our spiritual brothers far more than our brothers according to the flesh.

Never ask counsel from people of the world,[3] nor complain to them or tell them our affairs.

Have dealings with people of the world only by necessity and for the good of their souls… direction, prudence.

Not go out without permission and, when we go into the world, always remember that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Accept the hatred and contempt of the world and of one's family, which are the just consequence of our conduct towards the world. He is mad.

Rest on the words of Our Lord, who promises the hundredfold to whoever shall have left all for him.

Holidays.

(One may allow going on holiday to one's parents up to the class of philosophy or rhetoric, because the knowledge of Jesus Christ is not yet great enough in these young souls to make entirely the sacrifice of the family; but in rhetoric or philosophy one must begin to understand the great maxims of Jesus Christ and to put them into practice, and then it is no longer affection that must lead souls, but duty, but Jesus Christ, who must begin to become the Master of these souls. Or else, if they are not capable of following his precepts, they cannot go further.[4])

---

**Notes**

1. Cf. p. 142.↩

2. Come apart into a desert place and rest a little. (Mk 6:31)

   Consequence of our conduct with the world. He is mad. [Tr.: stray line as printed in the French note.]↩

3. Ms XI 192: concerning our duties as priests.

   Ms XI 590: concerning the kingdom of God.

   _____↩

4. Renunciation must come out of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (Cf. p. 161.)↩

↑ Contents

## Second condition: One must renounce oneself

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* The preceding part already dealt abundantly with renunciation.

To speak of renunciation of oneself helps us to understand that it is a matter of a freedom to be acquired and not of acting as if things did not exist. Renouncing the world does not consist in living as if the world did not exist, but in taking the freedom to follow Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world; just as renouncing oneself is not rushing to suicide but having understood in practice that, to follow the Master, one must be entirely free from everything, from oneself as from the rest.[1]

Could one not find another expression, perhaps more exact than that of renunciation — for example, going beyond oneself?

Father Chevrier found in Mastaï-Ferretti the translation which he reproduced in the VD: *If any man will come after me, let him renounce himself.*[2] He felt that it was difficult to express well this word of Jesus Christ, which is why he also reproduces the Latin text and tries to explain himself, even inventing a word, which he does nowhere else: *s'abnéger.*[3]

Moreover, to speak of going beyond oneself, or some similar expression, would not correspond to Father Chevrier's thought. It would not correspond, besides, to any of the commentaries that the spiritual masters have given on Jesus. All refused to water down Christ's teaching, because they had experienced that, in taking the Gospel seriously, one had to effect such a dispossession of oneself and of the rest that one could not speak of it in terms of self-denial.

Renunciation that does not come out of the knowledge of Jesus Christ is worth nothing[4] and the knowledge of Jesus Christ necessarily produces love, but that happens only through a spir-

itual experience which only terms such as renunciation, nothing, death can evoke. It would be such a pity not to be

able to arrive at the All because one had refused to admit that one must pass through the Nothing.

In this respect, Father Chevrier's teaching is incontestable.

There is room, on the contrary, for discussion about the motives given to explain the necessity of renunciation. On this point Catholic Tradition conveys two currents, one which may be called pessimistic and the other optimistic. Both affirm the corruption of human nature inherited from Adam, but one current considers this corruption deeper, with wider consequences, than the other thinks. Both recognize that something good remains in corrupted man, that the grace of Christ restores human nature more magnificently than creation in original grace had established it, and that this restoration takes place through the Cross.

We give these summary explanations in order to try to situate Father Chevrier properly. Sometimes one hears it said on this subject: is he not

still a little marked by Jansenism? The question is not that at all.

Jansenism, as such, is not first of all an exaggeratedly pessimistic conception of the corruption of man but rather a cramped conception of God's saving power. Father Chevrier is at the antipodes of this doctrine.

The question is this: does he belong to the pessimistic current?

If the True Disciple were a work of theology, I believe one would have to answer yes. *All that we bring from this birth of Adam is spoiled and corrupted*, writes Father Chevrier.[5] But on this theological plane he has no personal position and does not care to have one. He is nevertheless influenced in his expressions by the pessimistic theological current which dominates in his time, and his expressions are a little brutal for us because it is the optimistic current that dominates at present. (This is no reason to judge the pessimistic current heretical when it stays within just limits.)

But the True Disciple is not a work of speculative theology. Let us repeat: Father Chevrier places himself at the point of view of spiritual experi-

ence, and from this point of view, who would hesitate to say that a congenital impurity, made of pride and egoism, is mixed with the best of our actions? It is only in hope that we are saved.[6] That does not mean that human nature is essentially nothing but corruption; no pronouncement is made on its degree of corruption; one simply affirms, from experience, that at every instant the effects of a certain corruption are present, and the spiritual man, illumined by the pure light of Christ, sees that in all his acts there is a certain impurity, a mixture, says Father Chevrier, and this mixture is, before God, inadmissible.[7]

Moreover, apostolic experience only confirms this inextricable coexistence

in every man of good and evil, and one wonders what apostle could contradict, from experience, sentences like these:

*It is very difficult to keep chastity entirely*[8]

*It is very difficult to leave entirely one's reason, one's science, one's natural life, one's defects of mind, in order to be filled with the Spirit of God and to act only according to the Spirit of God*[9]

*The perfect sacrifice of one's will is made with difficulty*[10].

*He who has not renounced himself is always in trouble, agitation, anxiety*[11].

Besides, everyone is quickly convinced of all this; but there are those who continue, despite their weakness and unfaithfulness, to hope in the Word of God, and those who find it more convenient to conclude: God does not ask so much.

So, is Father Chevrier pessimistic? I do not know.

On the plane where he places himself, that of the true apostles of Christ, let us ask of him an imperturbable optimism in the work of salvation accomplished by Christ, and he has that optimism:

*The more one is dead, the more one has life, the more one gives life.*[12]

It is an echo of Saint Paul: "Thus death works in us, but life in you."[13]

Let us ask him also to be realistic. What use is it to a man to think himself healthy if he is sick? Only here it is: he who has not discovered the physician prefers not to look too closely at his health for fear of falling into despair. Likewise the true knowledge of sin in us, which is an integral part of renunciation of oneself, comes out of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

It is in his light that we must learn to know each thing, to know the truth, the spiritual value of each earthly thing, to know the true from the false, the just from the unjust, the good from the evil.[14]

Father Chevrier announces to us a division into four parts, considering that we are body, heart, mind, will. He certainly learned in catechism that man is made of a soul and a body. Later, in philosophy class, this definition was commented on for him. But here the division indicated shows well that it is not a similar distinction. It is a matter of delimiting, as it were, four domains of human activity — an activity that, moreover, always takes us wholly, body and soul.

The body is the whole sector of activity that is at the service of our subsistence,

biological, as for example the fact of eating and all that must be done to prepare food. The heart is the whole domain of affective life, the mind all the activity we deploy in the service of thought, and the will is the domain of action, that is, all our undertakings.

This division seems satisfactory seen from this practical aspect. It is simple and corresponds to

common sense. By that it certainly suits Father Chevrier.

How did he work it out? His personal common sense, his gifts of reflection starting from experience could suffice. The various manuscripts of the VD bear traces of a certain searching, of hesitation, either on the number of parts to adopt (for example the heart is not always mentioned), or on the order of succession of the four parts.

It would not be surprising, however, if Father Chevrier borrowed this division from another. In fact, a number of works of spirituality can set one on this track; but we cannot say with certainty, nor even with likelihood, which of them served Father Chevrier.

*One must renounce oneself.*

This is the second act that Our Lord Jesus Christ asks of those who wish to come after him.

After having renounced one's family and the world, one must also renounce oneself, in order to be able to follow Jesus Christ.

It should be easy to understand that, to follow Jesus Christ, one must not be encumbered with one's family, nor belong to the world.

One must not be encumbered either with oneself and with all the miseries that accompany us; otherwise, one would be obliged to stop at every moment.[15]

*Doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ on renunciation of oneself.*

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Mt 16:24).

That is the word of Our Lord.

*Abneget semetipsum.*

To "abnegate" oneself, to renounce oneself, to look upon oneself as nothing. [Tr.: Chevrier writes the coined verb *s'abnéger*.]

One must look upon as nothing all that is oneself, all that makes up our being, all that we are, all that constitutes our person.

*What have we that is ourselves?*

We can consider as being ourselves, as forming our self, our person, our individuality,

our body,

our mind,

our heart,

our will.

That is what really constitutes our being, forms our person.

Well! Jesus Christ wants us to renounce all that, in order to follow him.

*Why does Jesus Christ want us to renounce ourselves?*

Because, he tells us, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit (Jn 3:6).

That is, all that we bring from this birth of Adam is spoiled, corrupted; one must be born again to take up a new life.

Unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven (Jn 3:2 [as printed; Jn 3:3]).

We were conceived in iniquity and born in sin, so that there can be nothing good in us.

An impure source cannot give clear and limpid waters.

The first man is earthly, being formed of the earth, and his children are earthly (1 Cor 15:47).

Since Adam's sin, we have been sold to sin by concupiscence; this Saint Paul explains in energetic terms when he says:

I am carnal, sold under sin.

For that which I do, I allow not; for I do not the good which I will, but the evil which I hate, that I do (Rom 7:15).

I serve the law of God with the mind, and the law of sin with the flesh (Rom 7:25).

And Jesus says: unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it remains alone, but if it die, it brings forth much fruit (Jn 12:24).

Image of what we are. If we do not put to death in us this fleshly and coarse nature, we shall bear no fruit, but if it dies, we shall bear fruit.[16]

Trees do not naturally bear good fruit: the fruits that come naturally are ordinarily sour and wild; what does the gardener do? He cuts off the head of the tree, splits it and places in the middle of this cleft a good branch.

This good branch grows, grows strong and bears good fruit, and the tree becomes good, but if a shoot grows outside this branch, it is worth nothing.

Image of what we are. This good branch is Jesus Christ.

These branches that must be cut are ourselves, our natural works, which are worth nothing.

It is Jesus Christ who must be placed in the midst of us to make us good; without him, we shall produce only wild fruits, useless for heaven. We must therefore renounce all that comes from this first nature, all that we brought from this first, vitiated and corrupted birth.

One must renounce oneself,

renounce oneself.

*What is it to renounce oneself?*

To renounce oneself

is to renounce all that makes up ourselves, that is, it is to renounce

one's body,

one's mind,

one's heart,

one's will.

---

**Notes**

1. Ms XI 98.↩

2. Mastaï-Ferretti, 344–345.↩
3. P. 165.↩
4. Cf. p. 158, note 2.↩
5. P. 166.↩
6. Rom 8:24.↩
7. P. 176.↩
8. P. 181.↩
9. P. 228.↩
10. P. 252.↩
11. P. 271.↩
12. Annex V, p. 533.↩
13. 2 Cor 4:12.↩
14. P. 90.↩
15. Ms XI 91 — XI 624.

    Why this renunciation of oneself? To live from Jesus Christ. (Ms XI 91)

    The more one dies to oneself, to one's mind, the more one has the life of Jesus Christ. (Ms XI 624)↩
16. This is not an immediate application of the preceding sentence, taken from Saint John, for that sentence speaks of the death of Christ on the cross and not of dying to ourselves.↩

↑ Contents

## To renounce oneself is

↑ Contents

## 1° to renounce one's body

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Here is a chapter that is difficult to present. These pages of Father Chevrier are often shocking in our day. Were they less shocking to his contemporaries? Certainly, for the mentality, still steeped in romanticism, admitted manners of speaking that lack sobriety for us. But let us not think that all this was easily accepted. When Father Chevrier speaks of gluttony and idleness, he denounces abuses that he had observed in the clergy of his time. And what if, in the things that shock us, he were precisely denouncing abuses of our own time?

Yet, to understand his thought well, these pages must be put back in their time.

Living conditions were different. Baths or showers for the poor were out of the question, and in the working-class milieus one shaved only once a week.

The mentality was different, notably regarding relations between men and women. It was unthinkable to see a woman doctor, lawyer, deputy, for no girl was seen at the University, not even in secondary education.[1]

Finally, in matters of spirituality, minute examinations on multiple defects were found normal. This did not alter the good humour of the people who listened to all these things like a familiar refrain to whose words one no longer pays attention.

These pages must also be put back in Father Chevrier's life.

People found it good to live with him. He was not the suspicious man, sniffing out evil everywhere, severe and gloomy like a living reproach.

He took care to provide more than the necessary for everyone so that each could eat his fill, and on First Communion days at the Prado the table was laden as for a country wedding. He was concerned to give his collaborators the necessary time for rest. With the Prado sisters or

some person of the feminine entourage, he had a simplicity of relations which was perhaps not very common at the time.

After that, what remains of all he tells us about renunciation of the body? There remains first of all the general design of a progressive spiritualization of the body, that is, an ever deeper hold of the Holy Spirit. Nothing in us should remain for-

eign to the influence of the Spirit of God, and all our visible behaviour should bear witness to the Christ whose members we are.

There remains also that, by his very life, Antoine Chevrier showed how a priest consecrates himself physically to the mission received.

First in the matter of chastity, he wanted to live in all truth the celibacy he had accepted, without eyeing those little compensations which too often degenerate into grave failings, as experience proves. If, in our day, one is more optimistic about human nature than in Father Chevrier's time, one is sometimes much more naive, which is not progress.

It is a matter of having a great esteem for chastity[2] and of knowing well what it is. As for the domains of work and food, it suffices to say that Father Chevrier "died of hunger"[3] at 53, realizing what he had written:

"It is better to live ten years less working for God than to live ten years more doing nothing."[4]

Taking into account, then, the necessary adaptations with the change of living conditions, let us hear, through these pages on renunciation of the body, a call to take seriously the words of Him

who vigorously denounced the rich man who ate well while poor Lazarus was hungry,[5] the lazy servant who did not do his master's work,[6] the man who looks at another's wife with lust.[7]

In studying the doctrine of Our Lord and of his apostle Saint Paul, we find that renunciation of one's body consists first:

in not letting oneself be governed by the body,

in not cultivating one's body too much,

in renouncing the sins of the body,

in making of one's body an instrument of penance,

in making of one's body a living host by the practice of justice and virtue,

in correcting the exterior defects of the body,

in voluntarily accepting sufferings and death for one's body

*1° Not to let oneself be governed by the body*

God said to Cain: you shall rule over your evil instincts (Gen 4:3 [as printed; Gen 4:7]).

Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal 5:16).

Make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences (Rom 13:14).

And elsewhere: Know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto justice? (Rom 6:16)

From all these words of Holy Scripture we see that it is not for the body to command, but to obey; that one must not satisfy its desires, content one's flesh, obey its whims, not make oneself a slave.

It is not for the body to command, but to obey.

We must consider our body as a servant and not as a master.

It must be subject to the spirit; the body is only an instrument to be used for work and for all the exterior things that can contribute to the glory of God and the good of others. It is a servant that must obey;

one must lead it and direct it as one leads an animal, as one commands a servant.

If one gives too much freedom to a servant, he abuses it and becomes insupportable and does what he ought not to do.

*Practical conclusion.*

Look upon one's body as a servant who must obey the soul and not as a master to whom we must submit.

Command one's body with authority and firmness.

*2° It is to renounce the cult of one's body.*

Saint Paul tells us that one must clothe one's body with modesty and sobriety and not with plaited hair and ornaments of gold or precious stones or costly attire (1 Tim 2:9).

Saint Peter also recommends it in his epistles: whose adorning let it not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God (1 Pet 3:3).

We must therefore cut from our exterior all useless adornment and occupy ourselves far more with adorning the interior man, whom one does not see, than the exterior man, who is seen.

We must cut off every exterior ornament such as rings, flowers, ear-pendants, chains of gold or sil-

ver, buckles, gold watch, precious stones, even if these objects came from the family.

We must have no exterior ornament, not even of devotion, except the crucifix.

We must cut from our clothes everything that smacks of luxury, elegance, etiquette, the fine, the studied, the arranged, excessive cleanliness, such as fine, ironed linen, collars, cuffs, patent-leather shoes, fringes, etc., everything that pleases, is pretty, graceful, amiable, that flatters the eye.

We must avoid taking too great care of our body, our shoes, our face, our hands, our nails, our skin. Never use pomades, perfume, scented soap, a mirror [Tr.: French "glace"]: a looking-glass is enough to shave or wash the face and comb one's hair once; do not admire oneself, contemplate oneself, nor seek the good appearance, the figure, the good tone, etc.

Never use those delicate and silky things that are used in the world; one makes of one's body a little idol that one adorns to have it admired in the world or at home.

How opposed this cult of the body is to the evangelical spirit!

Loss of time, occupation with oneself, forgetting of God and of his duties; the more one thinks of oneself, the less one thinks of God and of others.

The true ornament of the body is purity and modesty.

In the world, people occupy themselves a great deal with the body.

The saints occupied themselves little with it: Saint Benedict, Saint Hilarion, Saint Francis, Benedict Labre.

When one seeks God and one's neighbour, one has no time to occupy oneself with one's body.

*Practices.*

To all this one may add:

Wear the hair short,

a cassock of serge, without pronounced waist,

simple and poor shoes, and the rest likewise.

Shave twice a week.

Take baths only when necessary.

Have the tonsure made kneeling, to remind us of this renunciation of our body and also of our spiritual kingship over the world and all its vanities.

***To renounce one's body is to renounce the sins of the body.***

Saint Paul tells us: Let not sin reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof; neither yield your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin (Rom 6:12).

Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, for the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are: fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I foretell you that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19).

We see from all these discourses that one must renounce the sin that is in us, not fulfil the desires of the flesh and not make one's members serve sins.

We see that the principal sins of the body are impurity, gluttony and laziness, and that, con-

sequently, one must renounce these three kinds of sin.

*One must renounce impurity.*

Mortify, says Saint Paul, your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, shameful passions, evil desires. For these are things for which the wrath of God comes (Col 3:5).

The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body (1 Cor 6:13).

This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from all uncleanness, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles that know not God; for God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness (1 Thess 4:3).

According to these words, we must renounce all impurity, all sensuality, all dishonest desire, and know how to possess the vessel of one's body in sanctification and honour.

The body is naturally inclined to impurity and to all these sensual and dishonest enjoyments.

Our body is like a quagmire, a foul marsh.

On the surface the water looks clear and pure, but at the bottom there is filthy slime.

As soon as a foreign body is thrown into this water, or a light wind brushes the surface, the water stirs and clouds at once, and the slime of the bottom rises and makes all this water impure.

So it is with our poor body: as long as nothing stirs or troubles it, it looks calm and pure on the surface.

But as soon as a foreign body comes to penetrate it, or the light wind of a thought or an affection passes over it, then it stirs, it is troubled.

The impure slime rises to the surface, and then arise the trouble, the agitation, the impurity, the shameful pleasure that is found in this mixture of a foreign body that has penetrated into our mind, our heart or our body.

That is opposed to purity, for purity suffers no mixture, no contact; nothing must penetrate us but God, who is purity itself; the body belongs to the Lord, it is his, he alone has the right to enjoy it[8] [a].

It is therefore every foreign mixture, every contact, that must be renounced in order to remain

entirely pure and to know, as Saint Paul says, how to possess the vessel of one's body in sanctification and honour.

Saint Paul compares our body to a vessel: just as, when one carries a precious liquor in a fragile vessel, one is careful, one walks with caution, one takes care not to tilt it to the right or to the left, for fear of spilling a few drops, so must we carry with caution the vessel of our body, to keep it always within the bounds of chastity and decency.

*Rules of purity*

*To renounce every act contrary to purity.*

To keep oneself pure, one must renounce every forbidden pleasure in one's body, every agitation, emotion, that troubles the flesh and procures sensual sensations for it,

every culpable or pleasant action, such as caresses, useless touchings that can stir the flesh and be agreeable to it.

One must renounce not only what concerns ourselves, what regards our body, but also all that can come from creatures, and not allow a creature to enter our heart apart from God[9]

**Notes**

1. Cf. Six, p. 205, note 76.↩
2. P. 181.↩
3. Six, pp. 359–367.↩
4. Ms X 252.↩
5. Lk 16:19–31.↩
6. Mt 25:24–30.↩
7. Mt 5:27–28.↩
8. Ms XI 648 — That is to say, we belong to God and he alone has the right to penetrate us, because he alone is its master, he alone does not defile it, just as the rays of the sun do not defile the water into which the sun penetrates; on the contrary, they only make it all the more [clear — the French text reads "elle"] and more radiant; so it is with the Lord. Whereas when a foreign object is plunged into it, it troubles and darkens it; so foreign creatures do the same in our heart when they penetrate it.

   ==========

   1. Pp. 22 and 163–164.

↑ Contents

   ↩
9. In the ecclesiastical language of the time, "creatures" designates human persons, and quite often women in particular. It does not mean created beings in general.↩

***To avoid everything that can make us fall into sin.***

Our Lord speaks to us in energetic terms when, speaking to us of the necessity of avoiding every occasion of sinning in this kind, he says to us: If

your eye scandalize you, pluck it out, if your hand… (Mt 5:29)

*To renounce every too-natural affection.*

One must renounce every too-natural affection, for whomever it may be; one recognizes that an affection is too natural when one thinks often of a person, likes to think of her, when this thought makes the heart tender, awakens the senses, when one seeks the company and society of these persons.

It even often happens that the desire to do good to these persons, to be spiritually useful to them, is only a fine pretext that hides from us the evil that is in us.

*To be modest in one's glances.*

One must avoid affectionate or prolonged glances at anyone whatever, and above all at persons of the other sex.

It is through the gaze that love enters the heart and goes down into the body to stir it.

One must never stare at anyone in the face, especially in the eyes; besides being neither decent nor proper, it is altogether contrary to chastity and Christian modesty.

There are persons who have the habit of staring at those they speak to; this always indicates a tendency to affection and a desire to be loved.

David fell into sin because he began to look.

Eve looked at the forbidden fruit and her prolonged look inflamed concupiscence in her and made her fall into evil.

Job had made a covenant with his eyes.

Whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

But if your eye scandalize you, pluck it out…

***To avoid all useless dealings with women.***

We see in the Gospel the apostles very much astonished to see Jesus speak to the Samaritan woman, yet it was on the road, in a public place.

This astonishment of the apostles reveals to us the whole conduct of Our Lord Jesus Christ with women, with what reserve he speaks to them and what examples of prudence he gives in this regard.

For us, to follow these examples of Our Lord:

We shall not receive women alone in our room; we shall receive women in a public parlour,

The doors of the parlour must be glazed,

One may receive women in one's room when they are accompanied by their husband or their children, but never alone, though this may be necessary in certain particular cases.

*Not to make visits to women without necessity.*

We must forbid ourselves useless and frequent visits to women and devout persons, which are often made to pass the time, for pleasure or out of slight affection.

These visits only keep up an affection often too natural; one ordinarily occupies oneself only with useless and frivolous things; women interrogate, question, want to know what goes on in the presbyteries, the houses, the works; one lets oneself go into slander, indiscretions, imprudences that later have unfortunate consequences.

Devout women especially invite priests a great deal to come and see them, above all those who have nothing to do. These visits always end by scandalizing the neighbour, who is always more inclined to judge ill than well, and one often ends

by becoming the subject of the conversations of a whole neighbourhood or parish.

One cannot say how important this article is and how many priests have been lost by useless visits.

***To act with prudence and reserve in encounters, walks, journeys where one may meet women.***

One must, out of prudence, avoid holding conversations too long with women in the street, if one meets some acquaintance and has something serious or necessary to say; one must be short and brief in these encounters. And, without being impolite or discourteous, know how to disengage oneself honourably from their company, saying that one cannot stay longer.

Nor is it fitting to go up and down a street with a woman.

One must also avoid taking walks with women, on foot or by carriage; it is not at all fitting.

We cannot take too many precautions on this subject, in the evil and corrupt times in which we live.

We must not give others the occasion to speak ill of us; they say enough without our giving them the cause.

One must consult well the rules of prudence and wisdom before undertaking journeys with women, which is always very disagreeable for oneself, and also often scandalous for others, especially when one goes to hotels.

What we say of women applies also to religious sisters, who are no less subject to criticism than the others.

*To avoid all familiarity with women.*

We must avoid all familiarity or exterior sign of affection with women, such as embraces, closeness, handshakes or other similar things which, without always being mortal sins, are too often venial sins, attest an affection too natural, awaken the senses and scandalize the neighbour when he notices them.

Our Lord, in saying to Magdalene after his resurrection, *noli me tangere*, shows us thereby that if formerly he had allowed her to kiss his feet, when she was a sinner, it was to show her that he accepted her tears and her regrets, but that now she no longer needed these exterior signs to love him, and that one must know how to wean oneself from all these exterior marks when one is seriously God's, in order to lead a truly spiritual life.

There are people who seek to kiss your hand (it is the custom in many countries to kiss the priest's hand); one can let men do so without inconvenience.

As for women, one must know how to distinguish those who really do so out of respect for the priest from those who do it only to have the pleasure of kissing your hand and from a feeling of natural affection; the latter one must forbid by withdrawing one's hand.

Once one is a priest, and even as soon as one wears the cassock, one must no longer kiss one's sisters, cousins, relatives in public, nor address them with *tu*, especially those who are young.

As for elderly female relatives, such as mothers, aunts, old women, one should do so only when it seems fitting and necessary, in certain circumstances, on feast days, on returning from a journey.

One cannot, however, refuse the embraces of these persons, especially when one sees that they do it with such simplicity.

One must, however, avoid doing it in public, because there are always wicked eyes that add

malice and wickedness where there is no ground for it.

Affectionate embraces between persons of the same sex.

*Reciprocal attraction inter virum et mulierem.*

God has put between man and woman an altogether natural attraction because they were created for each other, and it is by a wholly supernatural grace and a quite special help that they can live apart from one another and do without one another.

This being so, a great grace of God is needed to guard oneself against a certain natural pleasure in being together, in living together and in rendering each other the mutual help that Providence has placed at the disposal of each for the other.

One must therefore take care in dealings with women because, even when one has renounced a woman as a wife, one has not destroyed in oneself the natural feeling that draws us towards them, and when one notices that one feels an affection, however slight, for a person, a woman, one must immediately put oneself on guard to turn away from it; and when one notices, for one's part, that a woman loves us ever so little, one must likewise

keep her away from us so as not to give her the occasion to love us more.

It must be very difficult for a man to live with a woman without experiencing some temptation of affection about her, and conversely it must be very difficult for a woman to live with a man and serve him without also experiencing some temptation of affection about him; unless there is a special grace which both must draw constantly from prayer, communion, and the rules of great prudence and great reserve toward one another.

To make chastity easier for us in this regard, to practise better the spirit of mortification and penance after the example of Saint Paul, we shall not take women into our particular service, but we shall take a man, a boy or two, who will be employed in the service of the church and the house.

In case of illness, if we have no capable man, we may take a sick-nurse from among the religious sisters or elderly women.

*Not to receive gifts from women.*

Gifts keep up affection and mutual relations.

One cannot receive anything for oneself, but one may receive things for the church, for the com-

munity, for the poor, things that can serve everyone.

*Not to go to religious sisters' houses without necessity.*

Religious sisters are no more exempt from criticism than others, and perhaps they are even more exposed to it, when they are assiduous and frequent priests too often or when one goes to them too often.

One should go to them only out of necessity and, if one goes, not sit down there; fulfil a duty, but never stop there to chat, to pass the time, to hold useless conversations.

*To avoid over-affectionate caresses with children.*

We are so inclined to evil that we find, even in children sometimes, an occasion to awaken concupiscence in us, especially when they have some natural qualities, some exterior graces; affection is often born of these qualities and they lead us to embraces, to unseemly caresses, which awaken the senses and lead to sin.

One must watch over these relations, even with children; not that one must avoid every sign of affection and tenderness, since we see Our Lord himself embrace little children; but one must do it

with an honest purpose, to attract them and lead them to God and not to satisfy oneself.

*To avoid every coarse, equivocal or dishonest word. (Eph 4:29)*

*It is difficult to keep chastity entirely.*

*Means of keeping chastity.*

Vigilance.

Prayer

Work

Penance

To have a great esteem for chastity.

To renew one's vow of chastity from time to time.

*Summary and practical conclusions.*

Renounce every act contrary to purity.

Renounce every too-natural affection.

Keep modesty in one's glances.

Avoid all useless dealings with women.

Not receive a woman alone in one's room.

Not make visits to women without necessity.

Act with prudence and reserve in encounters, walks, journeys.

Avoid all familiarity with them, even with those of one's family.

Not take a woman into one's particular service.

Not receive gifts from them for oneself.

Not go to religious sisters' houses without necessity.

Avoid over-affectionate caresses even with children.

Avoid coarse, equivocal or dishonest words.

Watch, pray and work to keep chastity.

And renew each year one's vow of chastity.

***One must renounce gluttony, the second sin of the body.***

(there are many things in this chapter that should go into the chapter on poverty)

Gluttony is the second sin of the body that must be renounced.

It is not a question here of those excesses that make one lose reason; it would be an abomination to see privileged souls, called by God to a vocation so holy as the priesthood, give themselves

up to such excesses and dishonour their dress and their brethren by making, as Saint Paul says, a god of their belly.

It is a question here of what offends modesty, mortification, poverty, and of knowing how a true disciple of Jesus Christ must take his food.

The body naturally seeks its food; it was given by God for the preservation of its life. But if one does not moderate this action, this natural ardour to take food, if faith does not come to moderate this wholly animal action, one goes at it with greed and gluttony, one seeks too much what is good, one savours the dishes, one takes more than the necessary, one considers it with enjoyment, one eats greedily, one drinks, one eats rather for satisfaction and pleasure than to meet a necessity of life, or else one is never content with anything, it is always too hot, too cold, too salty, too bad, too thin, too thick.

*Words and examples of Our Lord on this subject.*

We can draw from the words that Our Lord Jesus Christ said on this subject, and from the examples that he

gave us, all the lessons useful to us to regulate our conduct in this matter.

In his temptation in the desert, when the devil told him to work a miracle to appease his hunger, Jesus answered him:

Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

On another occasion, Jesus being thirsty, stood at the edge of Jacob's well and waited patiently for a circumstance to favour him so that he might drink; a Samaritan woman arrives to draw water; he asks for a drink and finds in this the occasion to instruct her and give her the living water of faith.

His apostles arriving say to him: Master, eat; and he answers these admirable words:

I have food to eat that you know not; my food is to do the will of my Father.

Elsewhere he says that he himself is the food:

I am the living bread that came down from heaven; he that eats this bread shall live for ever.

Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead; he that eats the bread that I shall give him shall never die.

By these words Jesus Christ shows us that our first food is the Word of God, that we must have

more ardour to nourish our soul than to nourish our body, that our true food is Jesus Christ himself, since he is the living bread that gives life.

Whereas the bread of the earth is only a bread of death:

Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead.

He who shall eat of this bread shall never be able. [Tr.: sic — the French text is garbled here; the sense is "shall never die" (cf. Jn 6:50).]

That we must have for the works of God and his divine word as much ardour as people of the world have for the food of their body.

My food is to do the will of my Father.

We must not add more attention or importance to this food of the body than Jesus himself gave it, when, being thirsty, he waited patiently for someone to come and give him a drink at the edge of Jacob's well, when, being hungry, he crushed ears of corn in his hands with his apostles, when, being hungry, he looked for figs on a fig tree at Jerusalem [Tr.: sic — Mk 11:12–13, near Bethany] or when he refuses to work a miracle for the devil to satisfy his hunger.

From these words of the divine Master we must conclude that the disciple, after the example of the Master, must take his food with faith, humility, gratitude and sobriety.

*To take one's food with faith.*

In taking this material food, we must think of that spiritual and divine food which is the only true one, since that alone leads us to eternal life, and bodily food cannot make us escape

death; that our true food is Jesus Christ, his divine word, his sacred flesh, his adorable blood,

that one day we shall be called to that eternal banquet of heaven where we shall feed on the eternal light, which will be our life.

*With humility.*

This animal food puts us in the rank of the beasts: like them we eat the grass of the fields, the fruits of the trees and the animals of the earth, which we should eat only so far as we have earned them by labour, since it was said to us after sin: you shall eat your bread in the sweat of your face.

How unworthy we are to live, since the sinner who offends God does not deserve to live, since

he employs his life in outraging God, and he who does not serve his Master is unworthy to live.

*With gratitude.*

Because everything comes from God, and it is he who sends us each day the food necessary for us to live.

It is he who every year covers the earth with flowers and fruits to feed men, and puts at our disposal the animals of the earth, the sea and the air to feed us, and who feeds us, us in particular, in a still more special and providential way than others, and we must never forget the prayers that precede and follow meals, after the example of the divine Master, who always gave thanks to his Father at those moments.

These prayers are:

before breakfast, the simple Benedicite

and the same grace after

before dinner, we shall say in abbreviated form those of the breviary

namely *Kyrie eleison*

*Christe eleison*

*Kyrie eleison*

*Pater*

*Benedicite, Dominus; nos et ea quae sumus sumpturi benedicat dextera Christi*[1]

after the meal, *Agimus tibi gratias*

*Pater*

*Benedicamus Domino*

*Fidelium animae*

at supper, the same prayers as for dinner.

***With sobriety.***

We must eat to maintain the life of the body, we must be content with what is necessary and not go beyond it.

Because the surplus is more harmful than useful, in whatever way it be.

Saint Paul remarks on it often in his epistles,

*Sobrius esto*[2]

Sobriety is the guardian of chastity; those who eat and drink beyond what is necessary can be chaste only with great difficulty.

*Vinum res luxuriosa*[3]

Sobriety always leaves the body free and ready, whereas intemperance, even slight, takes from us

the ardour for work, makes us sluggish or agitated and leads us to many faults interior and exterior.

Saint John the Baptist in the desert: *vinum et siceram non bibet*[4].

All the saints were of great sobriety in food.

Not to help oneself too abundantly,

greedy, finicky, gluttonous, eating too much.

***Sobriety and mortification.***

There is sobriety during the meal.

There is also sobriety and mortification outside meal times.

It is altogether contrary to mortification to eat at every moment, to have dainties in one's room or pocket and to take them at every moment, without necessity.

When one goes to the kitchen or elsewhere, to take fruit, grapes, apples or others, for the sole pleasure of tasting them, of eating them.

These habits indicate a man without restraint, without mortification, who lets himself go to all the desires of his flesh without repressing them.

One must act in everything with reserve and moderation.

Gluttony leads us a great deal to steal, and that without our noticing it, for these dainties are very often petty thefts from the neighbour.

And the scandal that results for the neighbour, especially for children who are inclined to take; by acting thus one authorizes these faults in others.

Sugar, beer, liqueurs, fruit, a nip [Tr.: "goutte"],[5] herbal tea, sweets.

Mortification at meals: one must not fail others by urging them to drink

or to eat, which is contrary to politeness, propriety and mortification.

Food must fulfil several conditions in order to attain the goal of divine Providence.

These conditions, these qualities, are cleanliness, quantity and simplicity.

*Cleanliness.*

Cleanliness is the first of the qualities because it is the most useful for life; uncleanliness is harmful to the body and to health and indicates in those

who prepare the food laziness, negligence and lack of charity.

It is therefore a great duty for cooks to prepare their food cleanly, wash and peel the vegetables, keep the food clean, not leave it lying about.

The illnesses, indispositions that occur often come from the uncleanliness or negligence with which the food has been prepared.

One must do these things with charity and get help when one cannot do everything alone.

*Punctuality.*

In a community, meals must be ready at the hour indicated by the rule; otherwise it causes much disorder.

And also, everyone must take his meals together and at the same hour, unless grave reasons dispense us.

Order and edification depend on the fulfilment of this article.

If each one comes to take his meals at the hour that pleases him, then it is a great disturbance for the brothers or sisters who cook, and a lack of charity, in making their work, so hard already, harder still.

*Quantity.*

The purpose of food is to maintain the life of the body; one must therefore give the body the food that is necessary to it.

The quantity varies according to age, temperament, health.

There are persons who need much food, others less.

We must never examine what others eat.

But we must, with charity, supply them with what is necessary so as not to expose them to not having enough, without examining whether one takes more, another less; that is for each one's conscience. Those who eat more sometimes make more acts of mortification than those who eat less.

Breakfast: a soup, two desserts

Dinner: soup, two dishes, two desserts

or three dishes and two desserts

supper: soup, one dish, two desserts.

*Quality.*

This condition concerns the sick and those whom one must care for out of charity.

Charity makes it a duty to care for those who are sick or weak, and it would be a fault to let them lack what suits them, when one can.

*Simplicity.*

Simplicity consists in cutting from the food everything that smacks of luxury, vanity, refinement, the satisfaction of taste and gluttony.

It is not refined, succulent, perfumed, well-prepared, well-coloured dishes that are the most useful for health.

On the contrary, they greatly harm the body by exciting it, enervating it, attacking the nervous and sanguine system and give rise to many illnesses. The Holy Spirit says that intemperance has killed more men than the sword; one shortens one's life much by the use of choice and well-prepared dishes.

A food, on the contrary, simple and frugal, maintains the strength and vigour of the body and preserves us from many illnesses[6]

*To eat in haste and without ceremony.*

It seems to me that it is a function that one should perform only in passing and without put-

ting into it the importance that is ordinarily put into it.

Does it not seem that far too much importance is attached to this animal function?

This preparation of tables, of rooms, of place-settings, of linen, of plates, of elegant and costly instruments, even multiplied for the various kinds of dishes and wines.

How opposed this is to simplicity and mortification; how much more simply the poor live! They do not put so much importance on preparations for their meals.

Often they have for table only their knees, for chair a bench or a stone, for utensil a bowl of earth or wood, and a wall to lean their back, tired from work.

And what does one find on their table?

A potato soup, cheese, vegetables, sometimes meat.

If we could do like them and eat as the poor!

Did Our Lord not often, almost always, eat as a poor man, when he was seated at the edge of Jacob's well and his apostles told him to eat?

Did he not eat as a poor man when his apostles, forced by hunger, rubbed ears of corn in their hands to feed themselves?

Did he not eat as a poor man when he looked for some figs on a fig tree to feed himself, for he was hungry?

It is that this bodily food mattered little to him; he had another food with which he fed his soul: I have food to eat that you know not.

Let us therefore leave to people of the world, to the bourgeois, this care of tables, this importance, this labour, this display, these ceremonies that they put into feeding this poor body.

Let us be content with little, let us take well what is necessary but avoid these apparatuses, these ceremonies in use among the rich and the bourgeois; let us eat like travellers and the poor[7].

How simple and poor it would be to do as soldiers do, cook everything in one pot: meat, vegetables, put the pot on the table or some other large dish that would contain all the food, and draw what is necessary for us and eat one's share, standing or seated on a bench, or on one's feet against a wall, like the poor, like travellers.

How much simpler, more in conformity with poverty and mortification.

Do soldiers not do so, and they are none the worse for it.

Are we not the soldiers of the good God?

It is then that by thus despising this earthly and material food, we could come to say like the divine Master: I have food to eat that you know not: my food is to do the will of my Father.

By living thus, what good example would not come of it for the faithful and the children!

Do the faithful and the children not always have their eyes on what we eat?

If we have something finer, more delicate, more appetizing, does it not excite their envy and jealousy? and they do not cease to say or think: he is much better off than we.

If we want to have ascendancy over them, we must make ourselves poor with them, make ourselves little.

We must not separate ourselves from the poor, even for food, and not expose them to say: he is treated much better than we.

What use is it to make oneself poor, if one does not live as the poor?

And this point is capital, because it is from the mouth that good or bad edification comes in part, edification or scandal.

Should we not be ashamed to be better treated, better fed than the others? to have good fine morsels on our table? dishes well seasoned, well prepared, well browned? while the others have only the strict necessary.

Should we not share with the poor, with our children, all that we eat? Does a father not share with his children?

The saints all made little of food and regarded this function, so to speak, as the most humiliating of all.

How beautiful and edifying was the poor curé of Ars, crossing the square with his pot of soup in his hand and eating his soup as he went to see his sick man!

He had no time to eat, as is said in the Gospel of the apostles themselves: they ate while working, while walking, as the poor do, and they converted more sinners by living thus than by eating at a

good table, because this kind of example strikes more than others, seeing that the world is so inclined to satisfy itself on that side.

The good curé of Ars ordinarily cooked a pot of potatoes which he ate with bread, as long as the supply lasted; he had even tried to eat the grass in the fields.

He bought the bread of the poor, begged from door to door, and gave them his own, to have the happiness of eating like the poor.

How the saints treated themselves badly in this respect!

And how they loved poverty and simplicity and pushed away from their table everything that smacks of luxury, refinement, ceremonies, display, comfort!

*A little corollary on tobacco*

It is forbidden to smoke, and one should take snuff only out of necessity.

*Summary and practical conclusions.*

To renounce gluttony

is to renounce every excess that can trouble the mind, the reason, or soften the body,

is to renounce all that is not necessary and serves only to flatter the taste, the palate, such as delicate dishes, fine wines, liqueurs, coffee, sweets, rare and choice things.

One should use these things only when there is real necessity and with great moderation; one should use them at home only with permission,

one should not expose oneself to temptation by keeping at home liqueurs, wines or other similar things, but these comestibles must be kept apart to be given when there is really need,

is to renounce all that smacks of luxury, refinement, comfort, display, ceremonies at meals,

is to be content with ordinary foods as regards bread, meat, fruit, vegetables, etc., unless one is sick,

is not to eat outside meals without necessity,

is to avoid going out to dine because gluttony too often finds its satisfaction there,

avoid going to people's houses to take coffee or little snacks,

take nothing at others' houses, when one goes somewhere; by that one avoids much gluttony and many little scandals and useless expenses to

others; only necessity can dispense us from this point.

One must avoid wasting one's time at table; one must eat in haste and without ceremony.

---

**Notes**

1. May the right hand of Christ bless us and what we are about to take.↩
2. Be sober. (2 Tim 4:5)↩
3. Wine is a luxurious thing. (Prov 20:1)↩
4. He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. (Lk 1:15)↩
5. "To take a drop" means, in popular language, to drink a small glass of spirits.↩
6. Ms XI 707 — The more one approaches simplicity in everything, the more one is in the truth. It is the same with food as with fashions: the further one gets from simplicity in dress, the more ridiculous one is; the further one gets from simplicity in food, the more one harms one's health. One must approach simplicity as much as possible to have good health. The more one takes things in their natural state, the better they are; the more men put their knowledge into them, the more they spoil them.↩
7. Ms XI 672. There must be in food cleanliness, quantity and simplicity; the rest is nothing. Does it not often happen that when one eats at the table of the great one is less nourished than at the table of the poor? and that ceremonies and apparatus are not food?↩

↑ Contents

*One must renounce laziness.*

Laziness is the third sin of the body.

Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks to us often, in the Gospel, of the sad consequences of this unhappy defect.

When he speaks of the barren fig tree that will be cut down and thrown into the fire because it bears no fruit,

of the workman to whom the master had entrusted a talent and who was put in prison for not having made it bear fruit,

of the servants who fell asleep and let the cockle be sown in the fields of the father of the family,

all these examples and parables show us how much God hates laziness, and he punishes it, even from this world and above all in the other.

Laziness is a great apathy to which one gives way and which makes us entirely neglect our religious or temporal duties.

Laziness leads us to idleness, sleep and softness, which are, so to speak, the three daughters of laziness.

*Idleness.*

Idleness consists in spending one's time doing nothing.

We were condemned to work by God, we were born for work.

You shall eat your bread in the sweat of your face.

Jesus Christ worked like a poor man until he was 30.

Saint Paul worked with his hands, sometimes night and day, to provide for his needs and be a burden to no one, and he said himself: he who does not work, let him not eat.

There are different kinds of work: there is manual work and spiritual work.

Each one must do the work to which he is called with zeal, activity, submission and charity.

To waste time is an irreparable thing; it is to disobey God, to be unjust towards the neighbour and to make oneself unhappy and insupportable to oneself. Idleness is the mother of all vices. The idle man is exposed to all temptations. He who works, on the contrary, is sheltered from many bad thoughts; when the mind is occupied with work, it has no time to think of evil.

If anyone must work on earth, it is above all the priest, since his work is so lofty, so important, for himself and for others.

Since his mission comes from God and since on his work on earth depend the glory of God and the salvation of souls, the happiness or unhappiness of men, in time and in eternity; before such a mission, so great a duty, must the priest cease working for a single instant, since by ceasing to work he may be the cause of many souls being lost?

O priest, how great your responsibility is, and how you must consume yourself in work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

And yet, if there is a man on earth who passes for doing nothing, it is the priest!

It is quite true that his work is wholly spiritual and that it is not always seen, but it is quite true also that the priest is often seen unoccupied and wasting his time.[1]

This is so true that if one goes out for some serious reason, one finds people who throw it in your face and say to us: Good day, Monsieur l'abbé. You are going for a walk, you have just come back from a walk. As if we did nothing but walk all day

long. That is the reputation we have in the world: walking about, wasting our time. Sad reputation! Alas! if we were seen less often in the streets and squares, less often dining at one house and another, less often paying useless visits, more occupied with the poor, the sick, good works, preaching more often and attracting people by our faith and our charity, we would not be asked so often if we are going for a walk.

The priest, more than anyone, must work all day long. Masons work all day, carpenters, joiners, farmers, tailors, etc. All those people work all day and even sometimes at night to earn their living and that of their children, and the priest would then have a gentler lot than the others, he who has an employment far loftier than theirs.

Is it not because the priest has not worked, or has worked badly, that the field of the Father of the family is in such a bad state? that ignorance has invaded our own workers and that they rise up today against us?

If we had worked well and had done good work, we should not be so unhappy, nor so persecuted. If the field is uncultivated and produces only

weeds, it is because we have neither sown it nor cleared it.

We must work at preaching, at catechizing, night and day. That is our work! The faithful and people of the world must not see the priest idle, unoccupied; it is the greatest scandal we can give them, because from our idleness they conclude many other things.

One must not look as though one were taking a walk, with nothing to do.

When one needs to take the air or a little recreation, one must try to do so in a solitary place, so as not to be seen by the world.

Chatting in the streets, stopping, saying useless things…

We see Our Lord inviting his apostles to take rest after the great labours of their mission, but they do not go into the world to seek rest in the world's feasts; he leads them aside: *seorsum in desertum locum requiescite pusillum*[2]

recreations

walks

holidays

drawing-rooms

Arrange one's time with order.

If one puts no order in one's work, one does nothing or, if one works, one does little work because the work is not sustained.

There are some who reach the end of their day, their week, their year, and their life and have done nothing because they have not done sustained work; they began many things and finished nothing, many undertakings and completed nothing: fruitless work.

Work must be constant, persevering and regular every day, every week, and then one comes to do something, to have something finished.

Otherwise, nothing. And how many, unhappily, fall into this defect of irregularity and inconstancy in their work; one would say, to see them, that they work a great deal; they bustle, they come and go, they have talked much, they have stirred about a lot to do nothing and arrive at nothing. That is a great misfortune.

The curé of Ars, speaking of such people, and of himself out of humility:

Much work and little accomplished.

One must fix the time of one's work and, when one has begun some work, some task, not abandon it until it is finished, in order to take up another.

Nor must one waste one's time in the little visits that brothers can pay each other.

Get used to being brief; it happens that one loses much time in room visits: one sits down, chats, prattles, wastes one's time. One must say what is necessary and, when one has finished, go away so as not to waste one's time and not make others waste theirs.

What is called in street language *flâner*, a *flâneur* [Tr.: a loafer, idler about town]: one who does nothing, who spends his time gabbing, stretching out, sitting, going hither and thither to kill time.

One is that more or less.

It is good to have serious work to do and to have a firm will to finish it, to fix one's attention and mind constantly on it, and to be little distracted from this work which one can do and finish.

Then the mind is occupied.

***Summary.***

The priest must be a man of work par excellence.

He must never be seen idle and unoccupied.

One must put order in one's work and be constant in what one does.

One must occupy oneself with serious work and not waste one's time on useless and frivolous things.

One must not waste one's time in conversations or useless visits to one's confrères; not be among those called loafers.

Always be occupied so as not to give the faithful occasion to look upon us as lazy people, people who have nothing to do.

***Sleep.***

Sleep is a rest that the good God has given us to repair our strength lost by the day's work.

One should take only the rest necessary to put one's body in a state to work. To stay in bed without necessity, for the sole pleasure, is a fault of laziness.

And when one stays in bed without sleeping and without necessity, one exposes oneself to many temptations and faults.

Remember that it was while the workmen slept that the enemy came to sow the cockle in the field of the father of the family.

And the reproach that Jesus Christ addressed to Peter when he said to him: Peter, are you asleep? What! could you not watch one hour with me?

One must go to bed early and rise early.

Know that evening work is painful, harmful to health, and that it is a great wrong to put off till evening one's work, one's breviary, one's prayers; one does them badly, to be rid of them rather than to fulfil one's duty, and one draws no fruit from them.

By rising in the morning, the day is always better filled, mental prayer always made, the breviary said at its hour; one is more content, everything goes better in the day, one does not find oneself behind.

If one begins one's day badly, one does not end it any better.

*Practice.*

The time necessary for rest in general, for those in good health, is from 7 hours to 7½ hours.

One must go to bed at 9 o'clock or 9:30 and rise at 4:30; that is the rule of the house; if one has reasons for acting otherwise, one must never do so without permission; health is often impaired because one does not take the necessary rest or goes to bed too late. Let us not waste our time during the day and we shall have time for everything. Let us fix well our hours of work and of various occupations and everything will go better for rising and going to bed. Rising and going to bed is a very important article for spending one's day well.

One must not sleep during the day without necessity or permission; one accuses oneself of it when it has happened.

*Softness.*

Softness is a soft, effeminate or nonchalant attitude of the body which one adopts and which comes from laziness.

One must renounce softness.

Softness denotes a soul that seeks its ease, its comforts, that wants to suffer nothing, endure nothing, a soul without strength, without energy, that can bear nothing, not even the slightest discomfort.

One can be soft, nonchalant in many circumstances.

One must avoid holding oneself badly in bed, in one's room, on chairs, when seated; in church when kneeling or seated.

Avoid leaning nonchalantly when standing or seated, taking soft positions by leaning one's back, one's elbows.

Avoid stretching out the arms, the legs, yawning, crossing the legs, especially in company.

And even alone.

Avoid sprawling on chairs, armchairs, sofas, throwing oneself back, taking any soft or effeminate position.

Not to choose the most comfortable places when one goes anywhere, but above all in church; it is better to do without a prie-dieu and place oneself in the first spot that comes, leaving the good places to others. A Christian, and especially a priest or religious, must always have an honest, Christian, good, mortified bearing.

We must glorify God in our body.

The body naturally leads us to sin; its inclinations are earthly

and sensual and continually lead us to laziness, gluttony, impurity.

It is for us to struggle continually against this poor body, and the struggle is very constant and very tiring.

This is what made Saint Paul say,

O unhappy man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Rom 7:24)

*4° To renounce one's body is to make of one's body an instrument of justice and penance.*

After having renounced the sins of the body, one must still do penance, to obey the word of Our Lord, who recommends it so much in the Gospel.

Do penance, says Jesus Christ. Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish (Lk 13:13 [as printed; Lk 13:3, 5]).

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of penance, said Saint John the Baptist in the desert to those who came to see him,

and do not begin to say: we have Abraham for our father, for I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham (Lk 3:8).

This is what the apostles preached when Our Lord sent them to announce the word to the peoples: do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand (Mt 3:2).

Saint Paul does not cease to speak to us of penance in all his writings.

Neither yield your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of justice unto God (Rom 6:13).

Instruments of justice to punish yourselves[3].

He tells us again that they who are Jesus Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences (Gal 5:24).

Mortify your members which are upon the earth (Col 3:5).

And, speaking of himself, he said: I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway (1 Cor 9:27).

The obligation to do penance is therefore clearly demonstrated by all these words of Our Lord and of Saint Paul.

One must do penance,

bring forth worthy fruits of penance,

make of one's members instruments of justice, after having made of them instruments of sin.

One must chastise one's body,

one must crucify one's flesh.

One crucifies one's flesh by refusing it what it asks.

One crucifies one's feet by not going where they would wish to go, by condemning them to rest,

one's hands by not doing evil, by keeping them stretched out in the form of a cross.

One chastises one's body by taking the discipline, by wearing some instrument of penance, by marking it [Tr.: the French prints "parquant"; read "marquant"] with the signs of the Passion, like Saint Paul: I bear on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus (Gal 6:17). By stretching it on the cross, on the wood.

One brings one's body into subjection by not letting it command, by holding it subject to the spirit and to faith, as a slave must be subject to his master. It has plenty of time to be demanding and

master when it suffers and is sick. Penance expiates past sins, preserves from faults for the future, gives vigour to the soul for the practice of virtue, keeps us from falling into lukewarmness and softness, and makes us merit many graces for ourselves and for others.

Penance makes us conformable to Jesus Christ and gives us a share in his merits.

Saint Paul says that he filled up in himself what was wanting of the passion of the Saviour.

To make oneself conformable to the passion of the Saviour in order to have a share in his resurrection.

All the saints did penance; we cannot read the life of a saint without being astonished at the penances he did.

---

**Notes**

1. The blow is hard. Typical attitude of Antoine Chevrier. He knows that the people hold the priest to be idle. He does not seek to justify himself; he seeks how to give no one any occasion of scandal so that his ministry may not be discredited. (2 Cor 6:13 [as printed; cf. 2 Cor 6:3])↩
2. Come apart into a desert place and rest a little. (Mk 6:31)↩
3. Cf. Introduction, p. 35.↩

↑ Contents

*Practices.*

Take the discipline at least once a week,

wear some instrument of penance sometimes, with the permission of one's superiors.

Sleep sometimes on the plank, with the permission of one's superiors.

Rise sometimes at night to pray, say for example 5 Paters and Aves with arms in the form of a cross.

Bear without complaint the inconveniences of life.

Fulfil one's duty in spite of the repugnances of nature.

One can find occasion to do penance from morning till evening,

If one wishes to profit by the daily occasions that present themselves.

There is a penance that comes from God, which is found in work, suffering and death.

There is a penance that comes from the neighbour, in bearing all that comes from him, without complaining and without letting him notice it.

There is a penance that comes from ourselves, by inflicting on ourselves voluntary penances.

***5° To renounce one's body is to make of one's body a living host by the practice of justice and virtue.***

Your body belongs to the Lord, Saint Paul tells us (1 Cor 6:15 [as printed; cf. 6:13, 15]).

If our bodies belong to the Lord, they must serve his use; we cannot do with them what we like, and we must see to it that they serve him as well as possible.

And this is why Saint Paul also says to us and adds:

Glorify God in your mortal bodies [Tr.: Douay: "in your body"] (1 Cor 6:20).

Christ shall be magnified in my body (Phil 1:20).

He says still more, he says: our bodies are the members of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:15).

It is for this reason that he draws this conclusion, saying:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service (Rom 12:1).

From these words we see that one must glorify Jesus Christ in one's body.

That if our bodies are the members of Jesus Christ, we must make them worthy of this glory.

That one must live as a wholly heavenly man, as Saint Paul says to the Corinthians[1]

As the first man is earthly, his children are also earthly, and as the second man is heavenly, his children are also heavenly; as therefore we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly (1 Cor 15:47).

If one must live as a heavenly man, one must for that put to death the earthly man that is in us, make him disappear as far as we can. We must make of our body a living host, carry about in our body the dying of Jesus Christ that the life of Jesus Christ may appear in it.

We become living hosts by consuming ourselves for God like a victim who immolates herself every day for him, like a candle consumed by fire, like incense which is consumed in burning and annihilates itself in spreading a good odour before God.

Everything in us must spread this good odour of Jesus Christ, must breathe in our exterior this heavenly life, this divine life that we must have within.

We must make to God the sacrifice of our whole selves and Jesus Christ must come out of us.

We are the members of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ must therefore be seen in our members, in all our

exterior, and we must make disappear from our exterior all that would dishonour this title of member of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ must be seen in our exterior, in our bearing, in our deportment, in our speech, in our actions, in our hands, in our feet, in our eyes, our head, because our whole being must reveal Jesus Christ and spread the good odour of his virtues. The body is the expression of the soul. It is by the body that we edify. It is also by the body that we scandalize. The faithful do not see the soul, they see only the body.

It is therefore by the body that we must edify the neighbour and reproduce Jesus Christ who is in us.

It is no longer I who live, it is Jesus Christ who lives in me.

One must therefore make disappear from one's exterior all that is coarse, fleshly, earthly, all that smacks of flesh, softness, sensuality, laziness, become heavenly men, take from the earth only what is necessary to maintain the life of the body and make of them organs of Jesus Christ.

Just as, when one opens a vase of perfume, the good odour escapes from the vase, so with ourselves, when we speak or act, the good odour of Jesus Christ must come out of us, that is, his faith, his love, his gentleness, his humility, his charity.

***6° One must rid oneself of and correct all one's exterior defects of the body, which are an obstacle to the glory of Jesus Christ in us and do not edify the neighbour.***

We all have exterior defects which, without being sins, are nevertheless an obstacle to the manifestation of Jesus Christ in us and keep the neighbour away from us, by exposing him to criticize us or to laugh at us. We must therefore seek to know these exterior defects and work to correct ourselves of them for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

If there are souls who must work to correct themselves of these defects, they are above all priests, religious men and women, who by their vocation are bound to glorify Jesus Christ in themselves, to carry him in all their exterior.

If a man of the world appears coarse, simple-minded, impolite, officious, abrupt, not much attention is paid; but if a priest or religious has these exterior defects, they will do great harm to themselves, to religion, to God and to their brethren in religion.

It is therefore important to work to correct oneself of one's exterior defects.

Moreover, are priests and religious not the favourites of God, his privileged children, his chosen children, the courtiers who form his court on earth, who represent God among men and who must give men a great idea of God, since they are with him, his chosen men?

Now, is it not to dishonour God to be full of exterior defects and to represent him so badly in the eyes of the world, and in seeing us with all our defects, our miseries, will they not be tempted to laugh at us and to despise God whom we represent so badly?

By this we must conclude how important it is for each of us to correct our exterior defects.

Besides, our exterior defects are always the expression of our interior defects, and by working to correct ourselves of the latter we shall correct ourselves of the former at the same time.

*Different exterior defects of the body.*

One can have exterior defects

in one's air,

in one's bearing,

in one's deportment,

in one's manners,

in one's tone,

in one's gait,

in one's voice or words,

in one's look,

in one's actions,

in one's gestures,

in one's carriage,

in the whole body,

in the exterior.

## *Exterior defects of the body*[2]

*[Tr.: the French is a six-column table of adjectives, set out in parallel columns; here it is given by category, in the order of the original. The adjectives are rendered as closely as possible; several are untranslatable nuances of nineteenth-century French.]*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air (look, mien) | Proud, haughty, disdainful;<br>Cross, angry, irritated;<br>Arrogant, bold, brazen;<br>Frivolous, dissipated, scatter-brained;<br>Timid, embarrassed, simple, *gnongnon* [Tr.: mawkish, mamby-pamby];<br>Sad, unsociable, sulky, bored;<br>Indifferent, absent-minded;<br>Pleased, self-satisfied, at one's ease. |
| Bearing (*maintien*) | Awkward, stiff, fidgety, disconcerted. |
| Posture | Slack, unseemly, indecent. |
| Deportment (*tenue*) | Dirty, slovenly, disordered;<br>Over-careful, studied, muffled-up, fashionable. |
| Manners | Affected, worldly, officious, eccentric, grimacing, conspicuous;<br>Abrupt, coarse, ill-bred;<br>clumsy. |
| Tone | Lofty, abrupt, arrogant, imperious, of anger or irritation, irritated;<br>Affected, coaxing, sugary; |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Tearful, complaining, silly;<br>Grumbling, whining[3]. |
| The tone [of society] | High tone, good tone, bad tone. |
| Gait | Abrupt, cavalier, noisy, hurried;<br>Slow, heavy, ponderous. |
| Words | Sour, sweet, flattering, stinging, biting, mocking, jerky, insolent. |
| Look | Hypocritical, sidelong, sly, evil;<br>Tender, fixed, amorous;<br>Searching, curious, jealous, envious. |
| Exterior | Gentle, agreeable, polite, civil, affable, deceptive;<br>Hard, severe, stiff, repellent;<br>Elegant, studied, conspicuous. |
| Carriage | Upright, stiff, stooped, bent, sideways, swaying. |
| Action | Slow, hasty, officious. |
| Gesture | Tiresome, misplaced, nervous, emphatic. |

These are the principal exterior defects of the body; if we recognize in ourselves some of these different defects, it is a duty for us to correct ourselves of them and to practise the virtue opposed to our exterior defects.

One must glorify Jesus Christ in one's body.

We must carry him in us and, for that, work to make these exterior defects disappear.

The principal exterior virtue is that modesty which Saint Paul recommends to us and which shapes our whole being: *modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus*, be modest in everything (Phil 4:5).

***Summary and conclusions.***

We must have a grave and serious air,

a dignified bearing,

a clean and proper deportment,

polite and decent manners,

a tone full of gentleness and charity,

a calm and silent gait,

the look humble and modest,

speech full of reserve and prudence.

The whole of our body must edify the neighbour and remind him that we carry God in us and that we represent him to the world.

***7° To renounce one's body is to accept the sufferings and death of one's body***

To suffer and to die: that is the condition of our body on earth.

Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return.

It is decreed that all men must die once.

Suffering announces death every day, and warns us that we are not immortal, but that our body will have an end.

This is why Saint Paul said: I die daily. *Quotidie morior.*

To suffer and to die: that is our destiny.

The submissive prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the garden of olives shows us with what submission we must accept suffering and death when the good God sends it to us,

Your will be done and not mine!

I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!

Fear not them that kill the body, but fear them that kill the soul.

He who has really renounced his body must be in these dispositions towards death.

He accepts the daily miseries of his body with humility and submission to the will of God.

He avoids complaining continually about nothings or little ills that are not worth the trouble.

He avoids those little cares, those seekings of self, those exaggerated cares of his body, of his health.

Exaggerated cares.

He does not have those apprehensions that death gives to those who have loved their body too much.

He occupies himself with his body only when it is necessary or when he can no longer go on.

The body goes away every day.

*Quotidie morior.*

One must attend the dissolution of one's body every day and make the sacrifice of it at every moment.

Every day one must lose something of oneself: the hair, a tooth; one day it is a limb that no longer functions, another day it will be another.

All these are warnings that death approaches and that we shall not always live.

*Tempus resolutionis meae instat*[4].

Happy he who knows how to take these warnings as he should and in time, not deluding himself about his approaching death.

Charity commands us to take care of those who suffer.

And renunciation of our body commands us to forget ourselves and not to pay too much attention to our body.

One calls exaggerated cares, for example:

listening to oneself in one's illness,

making great expense to cure oneself, to treat oneself, going to foreign countries, bringing in foreign doctors.

Exaggerated cares of the body.

There are many little exaggerated cares which do not at all befit a generous and Christian soul.

He who has renounced his body always has too much,

he is troubled to see that care is taken of him, he refuses rather than accepts, and, if he accepts, it is with much gratitude and humility.

He who loves his body, on the contrary, never has enough, he is always asking for special care, he is

never content, he is demanding, he needs 36 servants, he occupies everyone around him, one has to go

here and there to bring him all sorts of things, cushions, armchairs, bolsters, he complains continually […][5]

Nothing is more opposed to the spirit of humility and gratitude and poverty than all these demands, and it scandalizes people outside as well as those within.

*Practice.*

To keep ourselves in these sentiments, we shall bear with submission and humility the little indispositions of the body; we shall avoid complaining at every moment, being demanding in our sufferings, our illnesses, repeating often these words of Our Lord:

Your will be done and not mine!

Once a month we shall make the monthly retreat to prepare ourselves for death and to steep ourselves again in fervour and in death to self; it can be made by begging; one must see to it that our duties do not suffer.

*How one must conduct oneself in the illnesses of confrères*

*How one must assist the dying.*

*Sacraments, agony, burial.*

---

**Notes**

1. On the terms heavenly and earthly, see the explanation given, p. 142.↩
2. Father Chevrier drew up this table on a separate sheet. This sheet was then inserted in the manuscript notebook. By whom? As sealing wax was used to stick the sheet in, one may think this insertion is old. At a time closer to ours glue would have been used. It seems, moreover, that room had been reserved in the manuscript notebook for this insertion. Afterwards, this list of defects is repeated and blank spaces are left for a commentary which was not made, at least in writing. One finds only rare notations of no great interest, such as this: "the defects of the air are painted on the face." We omit reproducing all that to avoid useless repetition. (Ms XI 420–422)↩
3. The manuscript reads *gognard*.↩
4. The time of my departure is at hand. (2 Tim 4:6)↩
5. illegible word.↩

↑ Contents

## To renounce oneself, one must 2° renounce one's mind

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* What is to be understood when our "mind" (*esprit*) is in question?

It can be understood in two senses. Either it is a matter of our faculty of understanding and judging, of our intelligence. In this sense there is no question of renouncing it; that means nothing. Or it is a matter of our own spontaneous way of thinking, of judging — one might quite well say our personal mentality — and then one can speak of renouncing one's mind.

To renounce one's mind does not consist in suppressing the exercise of one's intelligence. It does not mean: I renounce understanding and judging. No one can arrive at this result, and those who think they arrive at it deceive themselves. To renounce one's mind is to want to set aside one's own spontaneous way of thinking in order to adopt another, because one knows that this other way is more right.

Consequently, to renounce one's mind means: I am determined to think, to judge as far as possible in the most intelligent way, and for that I do not want to cling to my ideas but to adopt the ideas of those who know better than I. Thus the very act of renouncing is an exercise of intelli-

gence, and on the merely natural level it is what is called good sense. But unfortunately we are inclined to think that those who do not have our ideas reason in defiance of good sense. That is a false idea of good sense. True good sense consists in asking oneself first who is best placed to know the truth about such a thing.

It often happens that one cannot admit the supernatural demands of renouncing one's mind because one has not accepted these natural demands.[1] Father Chevrier speaks of renouncing one's mind on the supernatural plane. That is, it is a matter of making one's own mind, one's mentality, yield in order to adopt the mind, the mentality of Christ; that is, of submitting the exercise of one's intelligence to the action of the Holy Spirit.

*Principal article and the most important of all*, says Father Chevrier, and, to convince us of this importance, he draws up an impressive list of the defects

of the mind. That these defects exist, and many others besides, is indubitable. It does not follow that each of us has them all at once, but he would be very foolish who thought himself exempt from

every defect of mind. Let us look around us: we have not much trouble discovering that this one is a charming companion but inconstant; that one is full of good will but really impractical; another is a man of duty but terribly authoritarian, etc.

How important it would be to arrive at a certain lucidity in recognizing our own deficiencies. Yet it is a matter of going beyond this lucidity. Father Chevrier does not stop at psychological analysis. He speaks to us as a man of the spirit. He knows that, to open oneself totally to the light and impulse of the Spirit of God, one must unite oneself, in the darkness of faith, to God's judgment on our mind. He who wished to keep to the lucidity he can acquire would remain in the flesh and could do only the works of the flesh, as Saint Paul says.[2]

*Principal article and the most important of all*, because it lets one glimpse Father Chevrier's essential idea of the priest and the spiritual experience the Father had of this state.

This essential idea is found expressed with simplicity in the following lines:

*Jesus Christ is the one sent by the Father.*

*The priest is the one sent by Jesus Christ.*

*All that Jesus Christ says of himself under this title, the priest must apply to himself.*

*He is clothed, like Jesus Christ, with the characteristics of one sent and must fulfil its obligations.*[3]

This is only a sober explanation of the word of Jesus to the apostles: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you."[4]

The priest is sent as Jesus Christ was, that is, according to Father Chevrier: Jesus knows his Father, he speaks according to him, he acts according to him, and all he does and says, he does and [says] in union with his Father.

So the priest must act and speak according to Jesus Christ and be united to him, and by doing so he will be united to the Father and will do everything according to God.[5]

How can this be done? By renouncing his mind, for, says Father Chevrier again,

*it is perhaps the most important article of all and from it flows all the rest. To renounce one's mind to take the Spirit of God, the spirit of Jesus Christ. And it is only so far as we*

*understand the things of God that we shall become spiritual and shall accomplish what the Spirit teaches us.*[6]

Here again we have a commentary on the Gospel: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit."[7]

The importance of this article is shown again by the practical consequences Father Chevrier draws. These consequences concern chiefly apostolic formation. At first sight they are as if in contradiction with what is said about the necessity of renunciation.

*Here is our misery, we were conceived in iniquity, we are wholly carnal and wholly evil, not capable even of having a good thought*[8]

Having started on this course, one might expect very rigid conclusions about the necessity of dictating to people the conduct to follow, otherwise they will follow their nature and go astray. It is quite the opposite:

*The Spirit of God is not in this exterior regularity or discipline either. When you have put this whole exterior system of order, arrangement, mechanical regularity into your men, if you think the Spirit of God is in*

*it, you are mistaken; he may very well not be in it at all*[9]

Father Chevrier recommends at length a method of formation altogether supple and liberal. For indeed God alone can produce in us an authentic renunciation of one's mind which is an act of supernatural intelligence. The grace of the Spirit of wisdom and understanding is needed for it, and it cannot be the work of a man but of Jesus Christ.[10]

A liberal method of formation, but a demanding method, and first of all for the formator, who must give himself entirely.

*The true rule to be imposed on others is this: Follow me, do as I do*[11]…

This liberality and this demand are found again in what concerns the life of an apostolic community.[12] Here more than ever Father Chevrier speaks from experience. *Spirit of God*: the expression recurs often in the following pages. Must one write it with a capital S, that is, is it a question of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity? or with a small s, that is, is it a question of the turn of mind produced in us when we let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spir-

it? The Father wrote without paying attention to this detail of writing.

One cannot decide with certainty. In any case, the one does not go

without the other. This difficulty in distinguishing between these two senses is already found in the Bible.

When it is a question of buying, of acquiring the Spirit of God,[13] there is no doubt: it is a matter of that turn of mind, of that transformation of mentality produced in us under the influence of the Holy Spirit. There could be no question of buying, of acquiring the Holy Spirit, who communicates himself freely in sovereign liberty;[14] but it is he who enables us to accomplish the costly actions necessary to our spiritual renewal.[15]

After having renounced one's body, which is the exterior part of our being, one must renounce one's mind, which is the principal part of ourselves, since it is the intelligent part, and it is the mind that governs us, that thinks and that gives the impulse to our whole being.

One can say with truth that it is the principal article and the most important of all, since it is by the mind that we think, that we conduct

ourselves, and that if the mind is good, all the rest will be good, but if the mind is bad, all the rest will be bad.

The eye is the lamp of your body; if your eye be single, your whole body shall be lightsome; but if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be darksome. (Mt 6:22; Lk 11:34)[16]

*Doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ on renunciation of one's mind.*

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Mt 16:24).

What is there more ourselves than our mind, since it is by it that we are what we are?

Jesus, speaking to Nicodemus, says to him: Amen, amen I say to you: unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus not understanding what Jesus meant, Jesus explains it to him by saying: unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God (Jn 3:5).

To be born again of water and of the Holy Spirit, what is that but to reform one's mind, to leave one's first mind to take the Spirit of God?

And elsewhere, Jesus says to us: Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God (Mt 18:3).

Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it (Mk 10:15).

*Explanation and confirmation of this doctrine.*

Our Lord could not have explained himself more clearly to show us the necessity of renouncing our mind, since he wants us to be born again in a new spirit, that of the Holy Spirit, that we become as little children. It is not by the body that we can become little and be born again, but by the mind.

*Why we must renounce our mind*

Our Lord tells us again himself, when he explains this second birth to Nicodemus:

That which is born of the flesh, is flesh,

and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit (Jn 3:6).

Although our mind is not born of the flesh, nevertheless it shares the defects of the flesh, and in coming into us it loses its beauty, its justice, its first qualities which it holds from God by its ori-

gin; it shares in our misfortune… in the vice of our birth from Adam, in the vices of our flesh.

We were conceived in iniquity.

Saint Paul tells us that the Lord knows the thoughts of men, and he knows that they are vain (1 Cor 3:20).

We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything good (2 Cor 3:5).

Here is our misery, we were conceived in iniquity, we are wholly carnal and wholly evil, not capable even of having a good thought, but, on the contrary, we can produce only bad ones, without the grace of God.[17]

***What is it to renounce one's mind?***

It is first to be well convinced that of ourselves we are only miseries and that we have only defects, and that we must renounce them seriously and work with all our heart to reform ourselves in our mind.

It is to renounce all the defects of one's mind.

We do not know ourselves, we are full of defects without knowing it, and it happens that we take our defects for qualities.

*What are the defects of our mind?*

Our Lord, speaking to the Jews and wanting to make us understand the evil that is in us… what bad ground we have, says these words:

From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man (Mt 15:19; Mk 7:21).

Saint Paul, enumerating the works of the flesh, that is, the works that do not come from God but from us, from our depths, from our mind, from within us, says:

Now the works of the flesh are: fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, and such like, of which I foretell you that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19).

It is important to list the different defects of the mind a little, so that one can recognize oneself and work to correct oneself.

## Defects of the mind[18]

*[Tr.: layout: the French is a table of three columns; each cell is one group of descriptive adjectives. The groups are given here in the original arrangement. "Esprit" = mind/spirit/turn of mind.]*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a spirit of pride, of haughtiness, of independence, of ostentation, of arrogance, of domination | a spirit of criticism, of mockery, of spite | a mind learned, presumptuous, self-styled connoisseur, pushing, curt, peremptory |
| a mind reasoning, stubborn, disobedient | a spirit of opposition, of quarrel, of discord, of revolt, of division | a mind sick, full of imaginations, worries, illusions, chimeras, follies |
| a mind touchy, demanding | a mind teasing, quibbling, snarling | a mind jesting, caustic, buffoonish |
| a mind light, superficial, poetic, wandering, absent-minded, impractical, inconstant | a mind subtle, narrow, scrupulous, pharisaical, distrustful, rigid, tenacious, not sociable | a mind in the air, capricious, scatterbrained, changeable, carefree |
| a spirit of grabbing, of selfishness, of vengeance, of contempt, of domination | a mind gay, playful, laughing, childish | a mind sad, unsociable, shadowy [touchy], closed |
| a spirit of hypocrisy, of lying, of finesse, of cunning, of deceit | a mind exaggerated, false, perverse | a mind chatty, loquacious, dawdling, lazy |
| | a mind curious, gossipy, tattling | a maker of witticisms, a great talker, a flatterer, a wit[19] |

*From the enumeration of all these defects one sees the importance of this article*

To how many defects of mind we are subject, and yet it is according to all these defects that we conduct ourselves, that we judge, that we direct.

Hence, how many false steps! what abysses we throw ourselves into!

As Our Lord says:

The eye is the lamp of your body; if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be darksome.

If we are blind in mind, how shall we be able to lead ourselves and lead others?

A blind man cannot lead another blind man; they will both fall into the pit.

Defects are like clouds, veils that are before us and prevent us from seeing and conducting ourselves.

It is therefore of the last importance to correct ourselves of our defects of mind and to ask each day for the good spirit.

To seek to acquire the good spirit — how important it is, it is everything!

There are in us three lights which enlighten us,

Reason,

the demon,

and the good God.

It is very difficult to distinguish well which light enlightens us, if we have not a supernatural light which enlightens us on our own light, which is often only darkness.

---

**Notes**

1. P. 123, note 1.↩
2. Cf. Gal 5:16–25.↩
3. Ms X 175.↩
4. Jn 20:21.↩
5. Ms X 715.↩
6. Ms XI 224.↩
7. Jn 20:21–22.↩
8. P. 212.↩
9. P. 219.↩
10. Cf. Is 11:2.↩
11. P. 222.↩
12. Pp. 231–233.↩
13. Pp. 219, 227.↩
14. Cf. Annex I, p. 507.↩
15. Cf. Eph 4:22–24.↩
16. Ms XI 224 — Ms XII 37.

it is perhaps the most important article of all and from it flows all the rest. To renounce one's mind to take the Spirit of God, the spirit of Jesus Christ. And it is only so far as we have the Spirit of God that we shall understand the things of God, that we shall become spiritual and that we shall accomplish what the Spirit teaches us. (Ms XI 224)

The Spirit of God and the spirit of man are very different: the Spirit of God is wisdom, the spirit of man is folly. (Ms XII 37)↩

17. On the pessimistic impression given by this paragraph, see the introduction to Renunciation of Oneself, p. 161.↩
18. Table drawn up separately and inserted in the notebook like the one concerning the defects of the body. We omit here again Ms XI 420, which would be only a repetition of the table. (Cf. p. 200, note 1)↩
19. There is nothing good except what they do, and everything bad that others do. (Remark taken from the omitted table.)↩

↑ Contents

***How one must work at this renunciation of the mind.***

***One must first struggle against one's spiritual defects.***

We must know that all that comes from the flesh is flesh, and that we must struggle against the flesh, that is, against what comes from this vitiated and corrupted nature, as Saint Paul says.

Walk in the spirit of God and you shall not fulfil the works of the flesh, for the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another (Gal 5:16).

I beseech you in the Lord, says Saint Paul again, that you walk not henceforward as the Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened with darkness, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart (Eph 4:17).

I am carnal, sold under sin; for that which I do, I allow not; I do not the good that I will, but the evil which I hate, that I do (Rom 7:14).

One must first struggle against oneself; it is the great combat we have to wage; a terrible, ceaseless struggle that we cannot carry on without a great grace of God.

When once we know some of the defects of our mind, or only one, we must declare war on it and struggle against it until we have conquered it with the grace of God.

*One must put off the old man.*

It is only by struggling continually against one's defects that one comes, little by little, to put off the old man.

One must come to strip oneself.

Put off the old man and his deeds, and put on the new, which is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him that created him (Col 3:9).

And elsewhere he tells us,

Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened; for Christ our pasch is sacrificed; therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor 5:7).

*To be renewed in the spirit of the mind [Tr.: French: "in the interior of the soul"].*

To renew oneself, that is, to destroy what is ancient, old, in order to take on something new.

Saint Paul says to the Ephesians that they were taught in the school of Jesus Christ to put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error,

and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph 4:22).

***And to become a new man by a new birth of the Holy Spirit.***

One must put on the man who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph 4:24).

*Nova creatura.*

One must become a new man, by making oneself a little child, by gradually leaving all that one received from one's first, evil birth and gradually taking all that is good in the new man that is proposed to us. Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This new birth is therefore necessary to enter this kingdom of the children of God which forms the kingdom of God.

Good communities on earth, which begin the kingdom of heaven.

*This new birth is effected by being filled with the good spirit, the HOLY SPIRIT.*

Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18).

It is this Spirit of God who, communicating himself little by little to us, forms new men in us.

Like the apostles, who were transformed by the Holy Spirit when they had received him.

With us, it is the work of each day that must effect this change; it is the grace of God, study, prayer.

*Where is the good Spirit to be found?*

*He is not in the world.*

The world cannot receive the Spirit of God; it neither knows him nor sees him.

There is too much opposition between God and the world for him to be found there.

The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, says Saint Paul, as it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness (1 Cor 3:19).

The sensual man perceives not the things that are of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because

they must be judged by a supernatural light (1 Cor 2:14).[1]

*The good spirit is not in science and genius either.*

Knowledge puffs up, says Saint Paul, and does not always give the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who gives true science, but science that does not come from the Holy Spirit does not communicate the Spirit of God.

How many learned men who, unhappily, have not the Spirit of God!

He is not in genius, in reasoning, because the thoughts of men are vain and we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything good.

One can be learned, know how to make fine reasonings, be a great philosopher, a great mathematician, know all the sciences, and not have the Holy Spirit.

Saint Paul himself teaches us this: If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and

all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, and have not charity, I am nothing (1 Cor 13:1).

One can therefore have science, every possible knowledge, have a transcendent genius, without having the spirit of God.

Alas! how many examples of this kind, even in [the Church];[2] does one not often see the finest geniuses, the greatest scholars, turn head over heels and fall into error and evil? They were learned but had not the spirit of God, or else they lost it after having received it.

The proof that the Holy Spirit is not necessarily in science, [nor] in the learned, is that Jesus Christ chose his apostles among the poor and humble to do his great work.

*Infirma mundi elegit Deus ut confundat fortia.*[3]

And Our Lord gives thanks to his Father that he communicates himself to the little and humble and hides himself from the great and proud.

What does that mean, if not that the great and proud, however learned they be, whatever great geniuses they be, are often unworthy and incapable of receiving the spirit of God.[4]

Our Lord tells us that the ways of the Holy Spirit are unknown to us; one does not know whence he comes or whither he goes; if he came from science, one would understand his ways. One often sees science together with wickedness and impiety.[5]

He is not even in the learned philosopher, the learned theologian, although these sciences come from the Holy Spirit; one can have these sciences without having the spirit of them, which is the spirit of God; does one not often see the greatest theologians fall into error and abandon the truth? Science and reasoning often kill and often destroy the simplicity and the good sense which comes directly from God and the Holy Spirit.

There are souls that feel the truth naturally and accept it with joy and happiness as soon as they see it; these souls have more of the spirit of God than the great learned theologians who can arrive at it only by reasonings and deductions without end.

God has put in certain souls a spiritual and practical sense which contains more good sense and spirit of God than there is in the heads of the greatest scholars. Witness certain good peasants,

some good workmen, some good working women, women who understand the things of God at once and know how to explain them better than many others.

*He is not in exterior things.*

He is neither in lodging, nor in clothes, nor in riches, nor in titles, nor in positions low or high.

Nor even in exterior practices of piety, since the Pharisees fasted, prayed and gave alms, and Our Lord condemns all their justice, however great and rigorous it appears in the eyes of men.

Saint Paul himself says: If I distribute all my goods to the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing.

He is neither in titles, nor in places, dignities, honours; exterior things suppose the spirit of God but do not give it; one can be a priest, a canon, a bishop, a superior, a religious, and not have the spirit of God, because the spirit of God is not attached to titles, to honours, to dignities; they suppose it but do not give it.[6]

What a gross error is committed by those who believe they have the spirit of God, wisdom, vir-

tue, because they are decked out in a costume, a cassock or some dignity, and because, under this exterior, they can with impunity govern, command as they like, as it comes into their head, make the most of their title, their position, as if that made them wiser, more experienced, more enlightened and above all incapable of making a mistake. One sees especially young abbés acting without reserve and without prudence, without wisdom, and yet believing themselves infallible and demanding that everyone bow before them and submit to their authority, their government.

What an error! what folly! and how these sorts of people make themselves despised, and above all make the garb they wear despised.

How one must act with reserve and prudence, fear and trembling, especially when one is young and without experience, because one is exposed to doing many foolish things, and not believe that our cassock gives us wisdom and virtue.

It is only God who gives us his spirit, and one cannot have it without having bought it, even very dearly and at one's own expense.[7]

One must think charitably that all those who have a dignity, a holy habit or a high office have the

spirit of God; but those who have the habit and the dignity must fear not having it and take every means to acquire it more and more by asking it of God each day.

The spirit of God is not in that exterior regularity or discipline either, which is so much admired in our day; in those pedagogical exercises

that make of men veritable machines, which one makes turn or move by signals.

When you have put this whole exterior system of order, arrangement, mechanical regularity into your men, if you think the spirit of God is in it, you are mistaken; he may very well not be in it at all, for the spirit of God is not in the exterior, he is in the interior: *regnum dei intra vos est*[8]. Where is there more order, discipline, regularity than in a barracks, in a prison, in a communal school? and yet where is there less of the spirit of God?[9]

The exterior supposes the spirit of God but does not give it.[10] Here is a comparison that can make this point understood.

Here are two trees, one artificial and the other natural. They are perfectly alike.

The artificial tree was made by the hand of man: the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits are beautiful, of lovely colours, lovely forms; it resembles the natural tree perfectly, it is delightful in order, arrangement, form, colour and likeness; but this tree has neither root nor sap; it has no life, it is dead, it has only an artificial life, a life of resemblance.

It is man who made all that; God has put nothing of himself into it.

It is beautiful to the sight but has no interior life and has no true fruits; its fruits are not good to eat and the birds of heaven do not come to rest on it to feed.

In the natural tree, on the contrary, man has done little: man planted, pruned, watered, but it is God who made it grow.

There is an interior and mysterious sap which one does not see but which comes from God and gives life; it is this mysterious sap that produced the trunk, the flowers, the leaves, the fruits; and the fruits are good to eat.

There is, in this tree, an interior life which comes from God and which does not exist in the other: whatever the beauty of the artificial tree, it will

never be more than a dead tree and the other will be a tree of life.

It is the same with all this exterior work to which one applies oneself so much, especially in our day, and to which so much importance is attached in our houses, in our lay schools and even Christian ones; one occupies oneself far more with the exterior than the interior. One does not put in the life-giving sap, one makes artificial trees, one makes dead trees.

It is that it is far easier to make an artificial tree than a living one.

The artificial tree requires only a little care, work, firmness, exactness, regularity.

Whereas to make a living tree one must find the life-giving sap, one must communicate this sap to the souls one is instructing, and to communicate it one must have it, one must give grace, life, faith, life-giving love, and that is not given if one does not have it, and it is not acquired without pain and without God.

It is a spiritual work far harder than material work. In us, it is the Holy Spirit who must produce all the exterior.

One must begin by putting the spirit of God in us, and when he is there, he does like the sap of the tree, he produces in us all the exterior.[11]

One must occupy oneself far more with the interior than with the exterior, attach far more importance to the interior than to the exterior; put the interior into souls and the exterior will always come; put the exterior and you have done nothing.

It will be said that the exterior is the sign of the interior; not always; there are people who can contain themselves better externally than others and who are less agreeable to God than others who have less exterior and more interior, who have more good will, make more efforts.

Judge not according to appearance, according to the face, says Our Lord. To put the exterior without the spirit of God is a body without a soul.

To begin with the exterior is to build in the air, without foundation, it is to make machines, weathervanes.

One must, before all, put faith, the love of God, the interior sap. *Spiritus est qui vivificat, caro non prodest quidquam.*[12]

The exterior is like a garment with which one covers oneself; it can be beautiful, well made, give an elegant, graceful, noble air, but it does not give health; when the doctor wants to know if you are well, he does not look at your clothes, but he feels the pulse, looks at your tongue, makes sure of the regularity and strength of the blood; there is where health, strength, life are found.

The exterior is nothing and cannot establish our life, our health.[13]

It is not that one must neglect the exterior and demand nothing on that side. No, order and regularity are needed.

But one must lay as principal foundation the interior, the spiritual sap which must give life to the exterior; otherwise one does nothing solid, true, lasting.

*Haec oportuit facere et illa non omittere*[14], says Our Lord to the Pharisees, speaking of the two precepts, interior and exterior.

Is it not also what we notice in the conduct of Jesus Christ towards his apostles? He first chooses them.

(At the same time as he was giving them the great principles of the evangelical and perfect life, he made them practise it by putting them to action.

He gives them no other rule than this:

Follow me, I am your rule, your life, the exterior form you must imitate. There are some who begin with exterior rules, make many regulations; all that is nothing. The true rule to impose on others is this: Follow me, do as I do, I do not ask of you things harder than I do myself. Follow me: that is the great rule.)

During the three years he spent with them to form them in the evangelical and apostolic life, we do not see him at all applying himself to giving them exterior, regular, disciplinary forms; they lived according to the time, as they could.

But we see him constantly occupied with the interior transformation of his apostles. He instructed them ceaselessly, he reproved them at every moment, he put them to everything, formed them for everything.

To instruct, to reprove and to put into action, to make them act: that is the great method for forming people and giving them the interior life.

To instruct, to reprove, and to put into action, to have them do: that is life, the sap and the means of communicating it; but to frame people in a niche, to mould them in a form, is to force people, to drive back defects and not correct them.

(In the foundation of the Church, the greatest work of the Almighty, the most beautiful work in the world, Our Lord uses no exterior means; he takes one man to whom he communicates his life, his spirit, he chooses twelve whom he forms to the evangelical life; but it is neither by barracking them nor by making them march in step that he forms them; he does not build, nor beat the big drum, neither music, nor concert, nor theatre; on the contrary, he forbids them to use any exterior means; without money or fine appearance; I send you as lambs in the midst of wolves, *ite, docete*[15]; preach, instruct, heal; *virtus de illo exibat*[16]; exterior means come to nothing; the cross, suffering, grace, patience.)

One must let defects appear in order to have occasion to reprove and correct them. If one forces them to hide, one cannot know them and consequently cannot correct them.

By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.

That is the principle of all our actions: charity, love, the life of God;

the spirit of Jesus Christ is in charity: that is the principle of life which comes from the Holy Spirit, who is love by essence.

One must give oneself as a spectacle to the world, by lodging in a stable, by living on a cross, and by letting oneself be eaten every day, like Jesus Christ; then one will convert the world.

(Everyone ran to Jesus to hear him, to be healed and delivered from the devil;

people must come to us to hear us, to be healed and delivered from the evil spirit; that is what must bring the world, that is how we must attract to ourselves, and not by exterior means, which should come only long afterwards; there were more solid Christians in the catacombs than in our fine churches. There are some who wear themselves out employing exterior means to attract and they think they convert. How mistaken they are, and in contradiction with the Gospel! A warning, then, for the spiritual works that one may undertake.)

## Notes

1. Ms XI 545 — If we are of the world, if we think like the world, [with the] ideas of the world, we cannot receive [the Spirit of God]; one must strip oneself of oneself in order to receive and understand him.↩
2. The manuscript reads: *l'exemple* [the example]; we do not see how to interpret Father Chevrier's thought otherwise than by suggesting reading *l'Église* [the Church].↩
3. God has chosen the weak things of the world, that he may confound the strong. (1 Cor 1:27)↩
4. In Ms XII 12, Father Chevrier quotes 1 Cor 8:2: If any man thinks that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know.↩
5. "Often": here, as in the following paragraph, the tone is somewhat oratorical. It is a diatribe in the manner of Saint Paul in 1 Cor 1:17–31. In any case "often" does not mean "most often".↩
6. Father Chevrier speaks his mind frankly. One thinks of the medieval sculptors who did not hesitate to represent a bishop in the procession of the damned. (Cf. p. 226.)↩
7. Cf. p. 210.↩
8. The kingdom of God is within you. (Lk 17:21)↩
9. One may regret this enumeration and especially the mention of the communal school beside the prison. It is the climate of the period.↩
10. Ms XII 16 — What often happens is that as soon as you are out of your exterior, of this accustomed regularity, you are no longer the same, the mechanism no longer runs; then there is neither prayer nor study any more.↩

11. Ms XII 15… without him, we resemble artificial plants.↩
12. It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh profits nothing. (Jn 6:64 [Vulgate; Jn 6:63])↩
13. Ms XI 120 — The rule, regularity, is like a beautiful garment that covers us, but inside, underneath, there are wounds, ulcers, diseases; the garment covers, hides the wounds and does not heal them; the spirit heals the wounds and gives as ornament, as clothing, grace, charity.↩
14. These things you ought to have done, and not to leave those undone. (Lk 11:42)↩
15. Go, teach (Mt 28:19).↩
16. Virtue went out from him. (Lk 6:19)↩

↑ Contents

The love of God and of the neighbour: that is the principle and the life-giving sap of everything, which must produce everything in us; when that is in a soul, it has all that is needed.

Better charity without exterior than an exterior without charity.

Better disorder with love than order without love.

This is what the curé of Ars expressed in a rather droll way when, speaking of the little girls of his Providence who had been led according to these principles, since his daughter [Tr.: “sa fille” = his

helper] Catherine did not know disciplinary methods, and speaking of this kind of life and comparing it with the new manner that was introduced into his Providence, when once he had been forced to leave the helm to others, more skilful according to the world, he said that he much liked his little *bourdifaille* of former days. [Tr.: *bourdifaille* — a Lyon/Dombes dialect word for a rabble of small children, "the little bunch".]

That is to say that, in his time, the children acted from the heart and not by signal; they came to him, loved him and led a family life and not a regimental life.

Texts that support this doctrine.

*Regnum Dei intra vos est.*

*Caro non prodest quidquam, spiritus est qui vivificat.*

*Martha, Martha, sollicita es et turbaris erga plurima, porro unum est necessarium. Maria optimam partem elegit quae non auferetur ab ea.*

*Exercitatio corporalis ad modicum utilis est, pietas autem ad omnia utilis est.*

*Quinimmo beati qui audiunt verbum Dei et custodiunt illud.*[1]

Not to attach oneself too much to the bark; many think only of the bark, see only the bark, judge only by the bark; bark is needed to conduct the sap, carry the sap, but what is bark without sap? a dead tree; one must protect the bark of the tree but above all one must water, manure the tree to have a good, strong and life-giving sap, and the tree will be beautiful and magnificent.

Take care of the roots.

***The Spirit of God, or the good spirit, is in Jesus Christ.***

Jesus came to Nazareth and went in, according to his custom, to the Synagogue and stood up to read.

And the book of the prophet Isaiah was delivered to him, and when he had unfolded the book, he found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore he has anointed me, to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward. And when he had folded the book, he restored it to the minister, and sat down, and the eyes of all were fixed on him.

And he began to say: This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears (Lk 4:16).

Saint John, speaking of the Holy Spirit whom he had seen descend upon Jesus Christ after his baptism, while he was praying, says:

The heavens were opened; and then he saw the Spirit of God descending in a bodily shape, as a dove, and coming upon him and resting upon him, and a voice was heard from heaven saying: You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased (Mt 3:16 and parallels).

And elsewhere John says: I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven and he remained upon him, and I, John, knew him not, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me: He upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining, he it is that baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:32).

And elsewhere Saint John says: He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure (Jn 3:34).

The Holy Spirit therefore came upon him and remained upon him; he received him without measure, and he remained wholly in him.

Such are the testimonies of Saint John and of Jesus Christ himself.

It is because the Spirit of God is in him that he says nothing of himself, does nothing of himself, and that all his words and all his actions are conformed to the thought and will of the Father, being dictated by the Holy Spirit, who is the union of these two persons.

So he does not fear to say: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me (Jn 7:16).

He that sent me is true, and the things I have heard of him, these I speak in the world (Jn 8:26).

The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself, but the Father who abides in me, he does the works (Jn 14:10).

I speak that which I have seen with my Father, I, a man, who have spoken to you the truth which I have heard of my Father (Jn 8:38).

The word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me (Jn 14:24).

I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting.

The things therefore that I speak, even as the Father said to me, so do I speak (Jn 12:49).

As I hear, so I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me (Jn 5:30).

The Son cannot do anything of himself, but what he sees the Father doing; for what things soever he does, these the Son also does in like manner (Jn 5:19).

Thus in Jesus Christ and his Father there is but one Spirit, one way of thinking and acting; it is the same spirit that thinks and judges; the same spirit that always acts in union with the Father and the Son.

So that in hearing Jesus Christ it is the Father that we hear; he speaks the words of God, says Saint John.

In seeing Jesus act, we see the very actions of the Father, because the Son does nothing of himself and it is the Father who himself does his works.

What a beautiful harmony! What accord between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ!

What have we then to do?

To study Our Lord Jesus,

to listen to his word,

to examine his actions,

in order to conform ourselves to him and fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit.

Since all that Jesus Christ said, all that he did, was dictated by the Holy Spirit, we must therefore study his words and his actions, and conform our life and our words to what he said, to what he did, and then we shall act and speak according to the Holy Spirit.

We have thus a sure and certain rule to fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit and to act and think according to him.

The Gospel contains the words and actions of Jesus Christ.[2]

The Spirit of God is poured out through all his life, in all his actions.

His words, his actions are like so many lights that the Holy Spirit gives us from the crib to the calvary.

Each word of Jesus Christ, each example, is like a ray of light that comes from heaven to enlighten us and communicate life to us.

He who wants to fill himself with the Spirit of God must study Our Lord every day: his words, his examples, his life; that is the source where we shall find life, the Spirit of God.

In the little treatise on mental prayer, we speak of this study of Our Lord to receive, to acquire his spirit.[3]

***The Spirit of God is in the Church.***

***The Spirit of God is in our Holy Father the Pope.***

***The Spirit of God is in the saints.***[4]

***The Spirit of God is in a good rule drawn from the Gospel and approved by the Church.***

***The Spirit of God is in our superiors.***[5]

***How necessary it is that our superiors have the Spirit of God well.***

***The necessity of choosing as superiors only those who have the Spirit of God well.***

Consider neither science, nor skill, nor talent, nor wealth, but consider strong and enlightened

charity; do you love me? said Jesus Christ to Saint Peter, before giving him the government of his Church…[6]

As I hear, so I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me (Jn 5:30).

***How one can acquire the Spirit of God***[7]

By studying the Holy Gospel and praying much.

One must first read and re-read the Holy Gospel, be penetrated by it, study it, know it by heart, study each word, each action, to grasp its sense and make it pass into one's thoughts and actions.[8]

It is in the mental prayer of each day that this study must be made and that one must make Jesus Christ pass into one's life.

To recite one's rosary, to make one's way of the cross, to study the teaching of Our Lord: it is there that we shall find each day some light of the Holy Spirit and that we shall come little by little to conform our life to that of Jesus Christ.

Assiduous prayer is needed,

make well each day one's devotion to the Holy Spirit, that is, after breakfast, recite the *Veni Cre-*

*ator*, 7 Aves in honour of the 7 gifts and the prayer,

repeat often this invocation: My God, give me your Spirit! so that we may always act in union with this Spirit of Jesus Christ, our Master and our light.[9]

***Who are those who have the Spirit of God?***

They are those who have prayed much and who have asked for it for a long time.

They are those who have studied for a long time the Holy Gospel, the words and actions of Our Lord,
who have seen how the saints acted and how they conformed their life to that of Jesus Christ,
who have worked for a long time to reform in themselves what is opposed to the spirit of Our Lord.[10]

He who has the Spirit of God says nothing of himself, does nothing of himself;

all he says, all he does rests on a word or an action of Jesus Christ which he has taken as the foundation of his life; Jesus Christ is his life, his principle, his end.

It is no longer I who live, it is Jesus Christ who lives in me.

He lets himself be led neither by science nor by reasoning, but by faith and the Holy Spirit who acts in him.

And often one does not understand him, because the ways of the Holy Spirit are often unknown to men; the Spirit breathes where he will; one knows neither whence he comes nor whither he goes; he comes from above.

So the saints often did admirable things that men did not understand, because they were led by the Spirit of God and often became the subject of men's contempt and insults, because the carnal man does not perceive what comes from God; he would need a supernatural light to judge of it.

They drew all their inspirations and thoughts from the infinite love of God.

*Deus caritas est*[11], in the crib, the calvary and the tabernacle, which are the three great torches by whose light a true disciple must conduct himself[12].

*The Spirit of God is rare.*

Yes, the Spirit of God is rare, because it is very difficult to leave entirely one's reason, one's science, one's natural life, one's defects of mind, in order to be filled with the Spirit of God and to act only according to the Spirit of God[13].

It is difficult to be humble enough, little enough, docile enough, silent enough, to be able always to receive well and follow his inspirations.

His inspirations are so gentle, so fine, so imperceptible sometimes, not to say always, that it is difficult to grasp them, to understand them and to accept them.

Science, reason, the world, on the contrary, make so much noise around us, as do the habits of life, that it is very difficult to hear him and follow him perfectly.

To have the Holy Spirit, one must have left this natural life that envelops and conducts us.

One must have struggled for a long time against one's defects, spiritual and fleshly, one must

have studied the holy Gospel for a long time, one must have prayed for a long time to ask for him.

How rare are those who have fulfilled all these conditions.

Besides, natural life is so strong in us and spiritual life so lofty, so opposed to our nature, that one is tempted to regard the inspirations of the Holy Spirit as impossible, and to treat them as chimeras. The great teachings of the Gospel, the counsels, are regarded as impossible, and people prefer to follow the habitual way, the ordinary way, rather than embrace the lofty ways, often arid to nature, which come from the Holy Spirit[14]. And then, by reasoning, one destroys the whole Gospel; one always finds a way to arrange things and keep natural life.

Reasoning kills the Gospel and destroys all that is lofty, great, spiritual in the precepts and counsels of Our Lord; as regards poverty, detachment, charity, renunciation, mortification, penance.

So, when one finds someone on earth who has the Spirit of God, how he is sought after! how people run to him! they come to seek this spirit, these counsels that come from above; it seems then that one is with God and that it is heaven on earth; it is rare, and yet it would depend only on

us to have it, by filling ourselves with the Gospel and putting it into practice.

The Spirit of God! It is the greatest treasure God can give to anyone, to give it to him. It is also the greatest treasure God gives to the earth, to give his Spirit to some men so that the others may see them, consult them and follow them, profit by them.

Let us ask it of God and not cease to ask it for ourselves and for others.

---

**Notes**

1. The kingdom of God is within you. (Lk 17:21)

   The flesh profits nothing, it is the spirit that gives life. (Jn 6:64 [Vulgate; Jn 6:63])

   Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Lk 10:41–42)

   Bodily exercise is profitable to little; but godliness is profitable to all things. (1 Tim 4:8)

   Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it. (Lk 11:28)↩
2. Cf. Annex II, p. 514.↩
3. Ms XI 118 — Ms XI 545.

   The Spirit of God is therefore in the Holy Gospel, the word of God: there is where the Spirit of God is found, the truth.

In the little details of the life of Our Lord, his words, his actions; it is there principally that we find the Spirit of God. All the spiritual life is enclosed there, the thought of God is there. (Ms XI 118)↩

4. The saints were men filled with the Spirit of God. (Ms XI 239)↩
5. It is very important to join this proposition and the following one. The duty of seeking the Spirit of God from one's superior is always imperative. The superior cannot take advantage of it to believe that he has the Spirit of God. (cf. p. 219 note 1; p. 257)↩
6. Between this paragraph and the next there is a blank page in the manuscript.↩
7. Cf. Introduction, p. 210.↩
8. Cf. Annex II, p. 514.↩
9. Ms XI 546 — But one must ask it with the real intention of receiving it, with the will to do all one can to acquire it, with the will to make all the possible and required sacrifices to have and receive it; otherwise we cannot receive it and God cannot give it to us.↩
10. Ms XI 121 — One knows that someone has the Spirit of God by his words. The mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. Jesus Christ saying to Saint Peter: flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven; he had the Spirit of God on that occasion, but he did not have it on the other occasion when, reproving Jesus Christ, his Master, who was speaking of his passion, he said to him that it would not be so; those apostles did not have it either who wanted to bring down fire from heaven on Samaria. Jesus said to them: you know not of what spirit you are.[5]

[5] This part of Lk 9:55 is a variant regarded as inauthentic by many exegetes.↩

11. God is love. (1 Jn 4:16)↩
12. Cf. Annex I, p. 507.↩
13. Ms XI 18 — How rare it is! How sad it is to see so many souls, especially religious, priests, so little animated by this spirit, so touchy, jealous, spiteful, hateful, angry… seeking only their own interest and not that of the neighbour; acting by a natural and in no way supernatural principle, full of themselves, gluttonous, lazy, following only their own ideas.↩
14. Ms XI 241 — What a difference between this natural life and this supernatural life. Opposition between nature and the Spirit of God; most people find the Gospel itself impracticable, exaggerated, utopia, that it is from another world; that is how many fight against the Spirit of God, and sometimes even good priests; but people prefer to keep to routine, habit, the ordinary; they do not like persecution. *Via trita*[a]

    1. Beaten track.

↑ Contents

↩

***It is difficult to acquire and difficult to keep.***

Because one must continually struggle against one's nature, one's inclinations, one's reason, one's science sometimes, and also against the world, which does not understand it and never ceases to treat as senseless and mad those who act in opposition to it[1].

Those who follow the Spirit of God are often persecuted, exposed to the contempt and hatred of others, and to struggle constantly against oneself and against others, a great dose of strength and energy and grace is needed in order not to weaken and slacken in the ways of the Holy Spirit.

And the spirit of division which slips in everywhere and comes to fight against those who act solely for God!

***Marks by which one knows that a soul is filled with the Spirit of God.***

Saint Paul tells us that the Spirit of God bears particular fruits in us and that it is easy to recognize. The fruits of the Spirit, he tells us, are: charity, joy, peace, patience, humility [Tr.: Douay "longanimity"], goodness, perseverance [Tr.: "benignity"], mildness, faith, modesty, continency, restraint, chastity (Gal 5:23 [as printed; cf. 5:22–23]).

Explanation of each of these fruits, discretion, prudence.

A word on discretion:

Prudence, reserve in one's words,

he who is indiscreet speaks at random, reveals useless things, causes much trouble.

Put you on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another; even as the Lord has forgiven you, so do you also; and above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection (Col 3:12).

Whatsoever things are true,

whatsoever modest,

whatsoever just,

whatsoever holy,

whatsoever lovely,

whatsoever of good fame,

if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things (Phil 4:8).

Such are the fruits that the Holy Spirit produces in us.

Our words and our actions are so many holy and blessed fruits that come from within us and pro-

duce good effects, as a good tree produces good fruits and a bad tree bad fruits.

So it is with those who have the Holy Spirit and those who have not:

the one produces good fruits and the other produces only bad.

No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his charity is perfected in us. In this we know that we abide in him and he in us: because he has given us of his spirit (1 Jn 4:12).

For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body (1 Cor 12:13).

*How necessary the Spirit of God is in a community.*

If the Spirit of God is necessary for oneself, in particular to have wisdom and love, all the more is it necessary in a community.

To have the Spirit of God is everything.

It is everything for oneself.

It is everything for a community.

It is the Spirit of God who forms unity in a house, who puts fusion in minds and hearts, who makes all be but one.

*Ut unum sint.*

This was the ardent and often repeated prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ after the Last Supper.

That they all may be one in one spirit.

True unity is neither in stones, nor in money, nor in houses, nor in clothes, nor in living together, nor in the titles of brothers or sisters that one gives oneself; all that supposes unity but does not make it; all that is nothing at bottom.

True unity is in the union of one spirit, one thought, one love, and it is Jesus Christ who is its centre by the Holy Spirit.

Abide in me and I in you, that we may all be, so to speak, in one another, and that in seeing the one one sees the other too: that is the true family, the true community, the true union; the same thoughts, the same views, the same inspirations in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel gives us a true example of this union of mind and heart in the first Christians, who had all but one heart and one soul.

How harmful and to be feared in a house, in a community, are those who have not the good spirit! How they harm others by their words and

examples! They are constantly speaking ill of this one, of that one, of that woman; they resemble, as Our Lord says, those little vipers, those serpents who lie there spying for the moment when they can bite you, to spread the poison they carry continually in their bosom.

Words of blame, of criticism, words at random, useless, loss of time, buffooneries, etc., etc.

One should put a gag in their mouths until they are converted.

"Generation of vipers" (Mt 12:34), Our Lord said, speaking to the Pharisees, because

their heart was evil and they sought only to bite him and to spread their wickedness on him and his apostles.

And ordinarily it is these who want to dominate and who always seek to dominate by their spiteful and critical spirit; they are proud and always want to have sway over others.

One must watch these evil spirits and not keep them, because they are a plague and a venom that will always be harmful and deadly, and which not only hinder good but ruin houses and destroy them.

Such people in a house are like demolishers; they do more work in a moment than thirty others do in a morning. When there are some who seek to build and others who continually demolish, it is useless to waste one's time building; the demolishers will always go faster than the builders.

The best means of obviating these grave inconveniences would be to put them in solitude and make them keep the most perfect silence; that is the one and only remedy; but as these people are always very proud and domineering, they always want to talk and talk louder than the others and want to dominate everyone and submit to no one.[2]

The best means is to dismiss them; it is better to sacrifice one person than to sacrifice a whole community and see a house always going badly and living without union and without charity because of a few bad heads; one should put a gag on their mouth every day until they have lost their evil spirit.

Our Lord says this word: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation" (Mt 12:25).

"He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathers not with me, scatters" (Mt 12:30).

He who is not with his superior, even though, in appearance, he does nothing against him, who is content to be indifferent, not to approve him, is against his superior.

He who does works apart from his superior — good works, it is true, but if these works are not done by the superior himself, seen and sanctioned by him, in union with him — you do not gather with him, you scatter; that is, you work outside and you scatter the good and the works.

It is very hard for there not to be, in a house, little divisions, little oppositions of mind and of views and of ways of doing; each one has his

mind and his views, as each has his face; but one must make everything melt, one's mind, one's particular views, into the general views of a work, of a house, and know how to make the sacrifice of one's thoughts, of one's views, for the good, and never put oneself outside those with whom we are and ought to be, unless one leaves entirely those with whom one should be and forms a society apart, outside the community, but never inside. And when one cannot unite, it is

better to separate; that avoids much suffering on both sides.[3]

Saint Paul, seeing the quarrels and divisions that existed among the Corinthians, said to them: "adhuc carnales estis" (1 Cor 3:3); you are still carnal.

One can well say it to many others: you let yourselves be led by the flesh and not by the spirit of God.

***Summary: What is it to renounce one's mind?***

To renounce one's mind is to be well convinced first that we have many spiritual defects and that, if we act or judge according to our thoughts, our ideas, we can only be mistaken very often and do much harm.

(It is to keep silence for fear of saying things that are not in conformity with the spirit.

It is to renounce one's head, one's ideas, one's judgments, one's thoughts, to submit to the judgments and thoughts of another).

It is to say nothing and do nothing of oneself, after the example of Our Lord; but, before saying or doing anything whatever, to examine whether what we say or do is truly in conformity with the

thoughts and ideas of Jesus Christ, our Master, with his humility, his gentleness, his poverty, his charity.[4]

It is to ask counsel of one's superiors in doubtful things, if one fears to act by oneself.

It is to submit in mind and heart to all the decisions of the Church and of the Pope.

It is to submit one's mind and judgment to the decisions and judgment of one's superiors.

It is to be one with them, since they represent Jesus Christ to us on earth and we must be with them and for them in all circumstances.

It is always to lean on a word or an action of Our Lord Jesus Christ in order to speak or act.

*Practices*

We shall greatly distrust ourselves, our thoughts, our judgments, our ideas.[5]

We shall keep silence much, for fear of saying things contrary to the spirit of God, especially if we are young.

We shall study much the Gospel, which contains the actions and the words of Jesus Christ, in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt entirely.

We shall recite each day, after breakfast, the *Veni Creator*, 7 Hail Marys to ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of the Holy Spirit. (The "*Veni Creator*" is *ad libitum*; it will be recited on Sundays, feast days and days of retreat.)

We shall submit in mind and heart to all the decisions of the Church and of the Pope.

We shall submit to the decisions and judgments of our superiors, in whom we must recognize the spirit of God.

We shall avoid all schism and all division among ourselves, all working to have but one heart and one soul, one same spirit in Jesus Christ, who must be the centre of all our thoughts and all our affections, remembering these words that we say every day at Holy Mass: "*per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso*".[6]

---

**Notes**

1. Ms XII 18 — The spirit of Jesus Christ must be raised again in us and in the world. The flesh fights against the spirit and, unhappily, it is the flesh that almost always wins in this combat; it is easier to obey the flesh, to serve the flesh than the spirit. This spirit is preserved in fervent communities where poverty and suffering are maintained; but it is quickly lost as soon as these two

marks disappear, and in the world it is harder for it to be reborn.↩

2. Ms XI 723 — How one must keep silence and make those keep it who have not the spirit of God! and not allow them to speak, for the babblers, the talkers, have not the spirit of God; swift to hear, slow to speak; one must distrust those people who talk a lot, who know everything, who argue about everything, who doubt nothing; what is the spirit that makes them speak and act? One's own spirit, pride, and not the spirit of God… ↩
3. Ms XI 244 — This fusion of mind and heart is made in the knowledge and practice of one same rule of life founded on Jesus Christ, who must be the centre of our love; walking toward the same goal; the same means.↩
4. Ms XI 247 — Avoid asserting things one does not know for certain; always lean on a word of Jesus Christ or a decision of the Church or of one's superiors.↩
5. Self-distrust, in the spiritual sense, that is, placing one's support in God instead of shutting oneself up in oneself. Thus one trusts the nature that God has given us, one believes our intelligence capable of communing with the thoughts of God. It is something quite other than a morbid self-distrust.↩
6. Through him, with him and in him.↩

↑ Contents

## Renunciation of oneself — 3°) of one's heart.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Renunciation of one's heart concerns particularly what we call today affectivity.

However, there is in this chapter a certain confusion, for the word "heart" has multiple meanings.

In French, for example, "on dit prendre son travail à cœur" [Tr.: "to take one's work to heart"], that is, one sets to it with "courage"; one can also say of someone that he has a "good heart", that is, that he is indeed sensitive to the happiness and unhappiness of others; one also says "avoir mal au cœur" [Tr.: literally "to have a sore heart"] to say that one is nauseated; there it is a physiological state.

In the Bible the word "heart" is often used, but with still different senses. Thus it can mean what is most intimate, most profound, as when we say "to go to the heart of a question", that is, to the essential. The heart of man is his most intimate and personal secret, as in the saying of Jesus, "Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."[2]

Father Chevrier clearly sensed this multiplicity of meanings. For a time he even thought, it seems, of placing all the renunciations under the title "renunciation of one's heart". Indeed, if "the four ob-

jects which can attract our heart" are the goods of the earth, creatures (that is, men), oneself and God, then in treating of renunciation of one's heart one can speak of poverty, of renunciation of family and world and of renunciation of oneself.

Finally, Father Chevrier chose to introduce renunciation of one's heart simply as a part of renunciation of oneself. It is therefore specially a matter of our affective life, called here "the love of creatures". The subject is only sketched. Besides, the question was approached under another aspect in connection with chastity.[3]

It will be noted that to renounce one's heart is not to renounce loving, but to pass from a natural love to a supernatural love.

Unfortunately, here again we have a source of confusion, for Father Chevrier does not use the words natural and supernatural in a sufficiently precise theological sense.

Natural love designates the spontaneous inclination, the sympathy which can draw us towards others, in particular the spontaneous interest of a man for a woman and vice versa. This natural love, says Father Chevrier, is permitted to people of the world because it has an honest goal, which

is marriage.[4] It should be added that, according to God's will, this natural inclination can be lived in a supernatural manner, especially when there is the grace of the sacrament of marriage.[5]

In all this Father Chevrier is tributary to his period. "People of the world" seem reduced to a sad condition little favourable to the supernatural life. Happily we have learned to rediscover the supernatural greatness of the lay condition and of marriage. The lay Christian, like the priest, though in another style, is in the world without being of the world, as Jesus is not of the world.

But Father Chevrier's preoccupation remains true: whoever renounces marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of God renounces a certain type of relations between man and woman, for the dynamism of these relations leads to marriage. One must be logical with what one has willed.

Supernatural love does not consist, however, in an inhuman love, coldly rational, devoid of all affective impulse. We have already found this supernatural love described with the share that belongs to sensibility.[6] We shall find it again in a later chapter.[7]

When Our Lord Jesus Christ says that one must renounce oneself, he makes no exception: the heart, being an integral part of ourselves, is therefore included also in this renunciation that Jesus Christ requires of those who want to be entirely his.

*The heart is the seat of love.*

The heart is the seat of love, it is by the heart that we love. Love is an attraction, an inclination that draws us towards creatures or towards God. Now this inclination, this feeling, this attraction can be good, as it can be bad; this attraction needs to be led, directed, and it has its defects as the mind has its own.

By the very fact that the mind has its defects, the heart has its own too, because the heart follows the mind and ordinarily loves only what it knows, what it sees.

The heart has therefore also its defects, and grave defects, and it is these defects that must be avoided and renounced in order to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

The heart sins through lack of knowledge of the mind and also through impulse.

The heart needs to love; it is its life, it is a necessity for it to love; it is its life as it is the life of the mind to think and the life of the body to act. The heart must therefore be directed in its affections and made to renounce every affection that is not according to God.

*The four objects of the love of our heart.*

Our heart has four objects towards which it can be drawn.

It can be drawn

towards money, the goods of the earth,

towards creatures,

towards oneself

towards God.

Those are the four objects that can attract our heart and become the object of its love:

love of money,

love of creatures,

love of oneself,

love of God.

We have therefore to examine what defects can slip into the love of these objects in order to renounce them and make true love reign in us.

*1°) Love of money.*

Under this word is understood love of the goods of the earth.

Our Lord condemns this love of money and of the goods of the earth

when he says that no man can serve two masters; either he will love the one and hate the other; or he will hold to the one and despise the other; you cannot serve God and mammon (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13).

Which can be applied also to the love of creatures, and to the love of oneself.

For where your treasure is, there also is your heart.

*By what do we know that we have love of money?*

We know it when we are desirous and eager to acquire it,

When we are anxious in possessing it and sad, in despair, in losing it.

*Explanation.*

Eager to acquire.

Anxious while possessing.

And sad in losing it.

*Bad effects that this love has on ourselves.*

He who is avaricious and possessed by the love of money is anxious, gloomy, worried; hence cold, insensible to the misfortunes of others.

*The excuse of the miser.*

Economy, prudence.

*Another defect opposed to the love of money.*

The defect opposed to the love of money is carelessness and prodigality; without economy, without order, he squanders the goods of God, abuses the gifts of God.

People who have never earned their living, who do not know what it is to live, as is said in the world; they are spendthrifts, lavish without reason; they ruin houses, they bring their defect of prodigality into the houses where they are and ruin the houses they are in as they ruined their own, if the superiors do not put order; prodigal with money, prodigal with food, with linen, with

heating, lighting; prodigal with workmen, they have things done and undone without reason, without motive, at most for a little show. They call that largeness, charity; one must call it disorder and prodigality… Lets things lie about, cares about nothing, picks up nothing, careless, the opposite of the miser.

"*In medio stat virtus*".[8]

The virtue of poverty must direct our conduct with regard to the goods of the earth.[9]

***2°) Love of creatures.***

By the word creatures is understood the neighbour, that is, the beings that the good God has created like us, whom we must love as ourselves and in relation to God.

In the love of the neighbour many defects can slip in

One can love the neighbour

in a natural manner,

in a passionate manner,

in an interested manner,

in a supernatural manner.

Hence four kinds of love:

natural love,

passionate love,

interested love,

supernatural love.

*Natural love.*

It is to love someone because of his natural qualities.

There is love of the family, of father and mother for their children and of children for their parents.

To love someone because of his interior or exterior qualities.

The natural love of creatures among themselves who are of the same kind and the same family.

Natural love for the unfortunate.

Love [… of gratitude].[10]

The natural love that slips in among people who live together.

The natural love that slips in especially between persons of different sexes.

*Nullity of this love.*

This love is not evil in itself; it is on the contrary good, natural, honest.

But it is null for salvation because it does not proceed from a principle of faith and charity, and as long as it remains in the state of nature it is null for heaven.[11]

*Danger of natural love.*

It is perhaps even dangerous, especially when it exists between persons of different sex, because of our tendency to evil, and because natural love, not being guided by faith and true charity, can only degenerate and become, little by little, a passionate love, if one does not take care of oneself and of the temptations it can give rise to in us.

To obviate all these temptations, to avoid the danger: practical means.

One knows that natural love degenerates and becomes too natural, that is, comes close to passion, when one thinks too much of the same person, when one likes to be together, when one seeks her company, when time drags on not being with her, when one worries too much about what she is doing; one must therefore watch over this natural love and make it supernatural, in order to

make it useful for salvation and to avoid the falls it can make us commit when we let it grow too much in us.

This article is very important. It is because one does not watch enough on this point that many fall into evil.

This natural love, which can be permitted to people of the world because it can have an honest and permitted goal, which is marriage, is not so for priests and religious sisters, who have renounced marriage and who consequently must repress in themselves every natural feeling that could end in such a goal. Say what one will, natural love tends to a more sensible love; one cannot stop on the road of love.

1° Between persons of the same sex.

2° This natural love slips easily in between persons of different sex in connection with service: confessor and penitent, reciprocal attraction *inter*…) in connection with: confessor and penitent (female), priest and religious sister, persons who have the occasion to see each other often in relation to an employment, master and domestic, maidservant; illnesses; afflicted and consoler…

Natural attraction, persons who take to each other at once: superior and inferior; service; kinship, direction, relation of character; natural qualities…

Marks of this attachment: thought, exterior testimonies, frequent letters, temptations, emotions.

False excuses that we know how to find to legitimize this natural love; the spiritual good of souls.

***Rules to follow to avoid, not to fall into, this natural love***

***Passionate love.***

It is a love that seeks the satisfaction of the senses.

It is a love that cannot exist without sin.

***Sensible and passionate love.***

---

**Notes**

1. The principal manuscript is interrupted here, to resume at the following chapter. Nevertheless, there are several studies concerning renunciation of one's heart, announced in the Plan of the True Disciple; this one has been chosen though it remained unfinished. XII (39–44)↩
2. Mt 6:21.↩
3. Pp. 177–182.↩
4. P. 242.↩
5. Cf. p. 151, note 1.↩
6. P. 152.↩

7. P. 419.↩
8. Virtue stands in the middle. (Adage)↩
9. Ms XII 46 — We shall find in evangelical poverty the rules to follow that destroy love of money.↩
10. Uncertain text.↩
11. For the difficulties that this paragraph and the next may raise, remember that Father Chevrier is addressing people who make profession of consecrated celibacy. (Cf. p. 238.)↩

↑ Contents

## Renunciation of oneself — 4°) of one's will

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Why is it that in communities so much stress is laid on obedience? It seems that Father Chevrier asked himself the question.[1]

Very commonly, indeed, in priestly communities and religious communities, obedience has been made a central theme. There has even been a tendency to treat this theme by isolating it from the rest of Christian life, to the point that obedience could appear to supplant charity or to replace it purely and simply.

Two main arguments have been given to motivate the importance given to obedience: it is the

shortest road to spiritual perfection and, besides, he who obeys is never mistaken. Father Chevrier takes up these explanations without discussing them.[2]

At the present time we can no longer bear such simplism. We know too well how "truth held captive by injustice"[3] could be maintained by demanding of the unfortunate an unconditional submission, supposedly willed by God, to those who hold power. We know too, only too well, that some have committed crimes against humanity and have claimed to excuse themselves by declaring that they were only the executors of orders from higher up.

Moreover, the situation has changed. For example, the cloistered nun goes out from time to time to exercise her right to vote. In doing so she does not obey her superior; she exercises the share of authority she holds as a citizen under the constitution of her nation. In determining her vote she is left to her own responsibility before her conscience as citizen and Christian. Her fidelity to God cannot therefore be reduced purely and simply to religious obedience.

Times have changed also in another respect. An apostle, today as yesterday, must take initiatives, but the coordination, the harmonizing of these initiatives cannot be done by simply observing the laws of the Church and the directives of superiors.

All who work on the same ground must associate to discover together the action to be carried out, the initiatives to be taken.

In such conditions, is this chapter of the True Disciple devoid of interest for us? No, for it is centred on the search for the will of God, and obedience properly so called is thus put back into a whole without which it is not authentic.[4]

For Father Chevrier the decisive importance is not at the level of obedience but at the level of the dependence willed, sought, with regard to the Spirit of God. If someone lives in this dependence, he will engage in obedience in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, which is why the most important article remains that of renunciation of one's mind.

It is therefore a matter of seeking a spiritual understanding of obedience, of which here are the main aspects.

Obedience takes its place in a wider search for the will of God. It is not the only means, for the will of God is manifested also by other ways. But obedience has a privileged place, for it guarantees the sincerity, the truth of our search, the authenticity of our charity. "Obedience is the greatest mark of our love of God."[5]

Obedience is an adherence to God and to the authority of superiors because of God, out of love of God and not out of affection or fear of the superiors in themselves. One must obey with faith.[6]

One must know how to put in order the various types of authority, for only one authority is total and absolute, that of God, and in each situation one must ask whom to obey.[7]

One does not submit to God if one grants a superior more authority than God grants him. But in these conditions one can well say that the duty of obedience must come before everything.[8] Indeed, we cannot behave as if God had constituted us supreme authority to judge all the others.

One must keep constantly in view the goal of obedience, especially in apostolic life: it assures the cohesion of forces for the service of the work of God; it gives us the assurance of being collab-

orators of God. That is the sense of what Father Chevrier calls a "rule" (*règlement*).[9]

Moreover, this conception of obedience is first of all a call to those who hold authority. They are at the service of the authority of Christ and at the service of each. They must be much more concerned to submit to Christ than to obtain the submission of others. "How difficult it is to be a superior."[10]

Finally, one must not forget that obedience will always be more or less costly, painful, crucifying even, one day or another, for him who truly seeks the accomplishment of the will of God. So it was for Jesus, "obedient" to his Father "unto death, even to the death of the cross", not wanting to please the High Priests, nor Pilate, nor himself, but the Father alone.[11]

This is the fourth act of renunciation that we have to make to arrive at perfect renunciation of ourselves.

*Doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ on this subject.*

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me!" (Mt 16:24)

Now, what is there more ourselves than our will, since our will is the expression of our thought, of our judgments? It is the exterior translation of our soul.

In ordering us to renounce ourselves, Our Lord therefore asks the renunciation of our will.

*What is it to renounce one's will?*

It is not to act according to one's own will, but to submit one's will to that of another.[12]

*Why must one renounce one's will?*

Because our will is subject to all the defects of our mind, to all the passions of our heart; we will and do only what our mind knows, understands and what our heart desires.

And as our mind and our heart are full of defects, it follows that our will is conformed to our mind, to our judgments and to our desires.

And as long as our heart is not entirely pure, as long as our mind is not entirely enlightened by the divine light, our will will be evil and

subject to all the errors of the mind and to all the passions of the heart, [Tr.: the French repeats this phrase] and our actions will be in keeping with these different passions; we must therefore sub-

mit our will to a higher will so as not to expose ourselves to many faults and miseries.

*What are the defects of our will?*

Our will being subject to our mind and to our heart, we can say that it has all the defects of the heart and the mind, since the will is the mind acting, the heart acting; if the mind is evil, the will will be evil; if the heart is evil, the will will be evil.

If our mind is proud, haughty, light, inconstant, spiteful, narrow, exaggerated, false, capricious, our will will be the same.

If our heart is jealous, touchy, passionate, self-interested, our will will also be jealous, self-interested; it will perform actions in conformity with the passions of our heart.

Among the particular defects of the will, however, one may note the defect of weakness, of stiffness, of inconstancy, of domination…

own will, wavering, undetermined, indecision.

Defects of the will:

weakness, inconstancy, indecision,

stiffness, domination, softness.[13]

*Importance of this renunciation.*

It is of great importance to renounce one's will, because renunciation of one's will entails with it renunciation of one's mind and renunciation of one's heart.

When one entirely submits one's will to one's superior, to someone, one submits to him by that very fact one's mind and heart, and the renunciation then becomes complete and perfect by the sole fact of the renunciation of one's own will.

It is the shortest road to arrive at perfect renunciation, but it is also the most difficult, because the perfect sacrifice of one's will is made with difficulty; it is nevertheless what one should do to arrive surely and more quickly at perfection.

That is also why, in communities, so much stress is laid on obedience, because it is the shortest road to arrive at perfection; but it must

also be said that one can make only slaves and … [14] if there is not, before all, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the faith and the love of God; but when there is faith, love of God and truly Christian submission, then there is truly obedience.[15]

*In what does obedience consist?*

True obedience consists not only in saying, but in doing.[16]

Not every one that says to me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven; many will say to me in that day: Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and done many miracles? And then will I profess to them: I never knew you (Mt 7:21–23).

"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass; for he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that has looked into the perfect law of liberty and has continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas 1:22–25).

"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom 2:13).

The parable of the two sons: one says yes and does nothing; the other says no and does; it is the

latter who did the will of God and will receive the reward.

***How Our Lord Jesus Christ himself practised obedience.***

Our Lord Jesus himself gives us the greatest examples of obedience and teaches us thereby how we must obey ourselves;

***He did not come on earth to do his own will.***

"I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jn 6:38).

***He offered himself to his Father to do his will and not his own.***

"Behold I come, O my Father, to do your will" (Heb 10:9).

"Sacrifice and oblation and holocausts for sin you would not, nor are they pleasing to you, which are offered according to the law; then said I: Behold I come, O my Father, to do your will" (Heb 6:7 [as printed; Heb 10:5–9]).

"*Erat subditus illis*" (Lk 2:51).[17]

"My food is to do the will of my Father" (Jn 4:34).

*He does not seek to do his own will*

"I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jn 5:30).

It is difficult not to seek to do a little of one's own will, even when asking permissions; one seeks, one manages to obtain, so that we may be left to do it.

*He does nothing of himself.*

"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father doing" (Jn 5:19).

"I cannot do anything of myself" (Jn 5:30).

*He submits entirely to the will of his Father.*

"Not my will but yours be done" (Lk 22:42).

"Not what I will, but what you will" (Mk 14:36).

*He obeys without reasoning.*

"As the Father has given me commandment, so do I" (Jn 14:31).

*He seeks not what pleases himself, but what pleases his Father.*

"I do always the things that please him" (Jn 8:29).

*He always acts in union with him.*

"My Father works until now, and I work" (Jn 5:17).

"He is always with me, because I do always the things that please him" (Jn 8:29).

"He that is not with me is against me.

"He that gathers not with me, scatters" (Lk 11:23).

*Obedience has become his food*

He answers his apostles who tell him to eat,

"I have meat to eat that you know not of; it is to do the will of my Father" (Jn 4:32).

*He puts obedience to his Father before everything.*

"Why is it that you sought me?

Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Lk 2:49)

*He is obedient even in the smallest things.*

"I am not come to destroy the law but to fulfil it. One jot shall not pass till I have fulfilled it" (Mt 5:17–18).

*He carries obedience to the point of doing things at the hour and moment indicated by his Father.*

"My hour is not yet come" (Jn 2:4).

"The hour is come" (Jn 17:1).

"This is your hour" (Lk 22:53).

***He does not seek to be delivered from obedience because of the sufferings that follow from it.***

He goes voluntarily to the garden of olives, although he knows well what he must suffer there.

He sharply rebukes Peter, who seeks to defend him, and tells him that, if he wished, he could well call twelve legions for his defence, but it must be so.

"As the Father has given me commandment, so do I" (Jn 14:31).

***He sees in his judges and executioners the action and authority of his Father.***

He answers Pilate, who tells him that he had the power to release him and to crucify him: "You should not have any power against me unless it were given you from above" (Jn 19:11).

***He carried obedience even to death and to the death of the cross.***

"He became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8).

He lays down his life of himself, no man takes it from him; this is the commandment he received from his Father.

---

**Notes**

1. P. 252.↩
2. Pp. 252, 259–260.↩
3. Rom 1:18.↩
4. Cf. p. 251, note 1.↩
5. P. 259.↩
6. P. 258.↩
7. P. 256.↩
8. P. 256.↩
9. P. 257.↩
10. P. 257.↩
11. Phil 2:8; Jn 8:19; Rom 15:3; p. 255.↩
12. Ms XI 124. In what does this renunciation of one's will consist? In no longer doing what I will, but doing what God wills.↩
13. Ms XI 254 — Defects of the will:

    Stiffness, no submission, doing only what one wants; whims, acting by whim; not wanting to submit to anything; saying I will, I won't.

    Our will must be subject to that of Jesus Christ, of the Church and of our superiors.

    Own will: that does not yield to the general good.

    Weak: that yields to every wind, to please; firmness, inconstancy.↩

14. Space left blank in the manuscript.↩
15. Cf. p. 248.↩
16. Ms XII 24.

    In what does it consist, obedience?

    Sacrifice of one's will… entire. "Not what I will, but what you will." (Mk 14:37 [as printed; 14:36])

    In the entire offering of one's will. "Your will be done and not mine. Behold I come, O God, to do your will." (Heb 10:9)↩
17. He was subject to them.↩

↑ Contents

***He knows better than anyone what obedience costs.***

"Although he was the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb 5:8).

Saint Paul said to the [Hebrews]: "You have not yet resisted unto blood" (Heb 12:4).

***Rules of obedience.***

From the words and examples of Our Lord Jesus Christ we see how a true disciple of Jesus Christ must practise obedience, and no surer or juster rules can be established than those he practised himself.

In following Our Lord, therefore, our Head and our Model, we must know and engrave well in our heart these things,

- That we have not come here to do our own will but to do the will of God and of our superiors.
- That after the example of Jesus Christ, our Master and our Model, we must offer ourselves and devote ourselves to do the will of God and of our superiors.
- That we must not seek to do our own will.
- That we must do nothing of ourselves.
- That we must submit our will entirely to that of God and of our superiors.
- That we must obey without reasoning.
- That we must not seek to do what pleases us, but what pleases God and our superiors.
- That we must always act in union with our superiors.
- That obedience must be our spiritual food.
- That the duty of obedience must come before everything.

- That we must be obedient even in the smallest things.
- That we must be obedient even to doing the things commanded at the hour and moment indicated by the rule.
- That we must not seek to withdraw from obedience because of the sufferings we may meet in it.
- That we must carry obedience to death, in cases of persecution and of salvation.

Such are the different rules of obedience that we deduce from the conduct and words of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

***Whom must we obey?***[1]

Jesus Christ, the Church, our superiors and our rule.

Jesus Christ is the great Master; it is he who has manifested to us the will of God on earth and had it set down in the Holy Gospels.

He is our King, our Master, our Head and our Model.[2]

The Church, which is composed of Our Holy Father the Pope, infallible in his decisions, and to

whom we owe obedience because he represents Jesus Christ himself and communicates to us the decisions of heaven; [of] our bishops…

who are the representatives of God on earth and who, united to the Pope, also manifest to us the will of God on earth.[3]

Our lawful superiors.

Lawful superiors, that is, those who have been designated by the authority of the Church, of the bishop and of the Pope, have the power to command in his name and we owe them obedience, because they represent the Church and represent Jesus Christ himself, who commands us by the mouth of his representatives: "He that hears you, hears me; and he that despises you, despises me" (Lk 10:16).

How difficult it is to be a superior: a superior must be filled with the spirit of God, a superior must know the will of God at every moment and have it carried out by his inferiors. What a task! What a responsibility! What union with Jesus Christ this man must have, in order to say and have done only what Jesus Christ wants and desires to see accomplished in his members![4-5]

*The rule.*[6]

A rule drawn from the Gospel and approved by the Church is again the expression of the will of God for us.

There is the general rule of the Church, which is for all the faithful and which is found in the commandments of God and of the Church; every Christian is obliged to follow this rule of conduct imposed by God under pain of damnation.

But besides this general rule, each order, each house, each community has a particular rule, because each house, each community has a particular goal which tends, in a different manner, to the glory of God and [the] salvation of souls.

When, therefore, one leaves the world to enter a community, while retaining the obligation of the commandments of God and of the Church, one imposes upon oneself,

in addition, the obligation of following the rule in use in the house. A serious and important obligation; and although this obligation is not always under pain of sin, it is nevertheless indispensable to our sanctification, to good example, and non-fulfilment can only bring about the ruin of a house and of all those who compose it.

When, therefore, one has accepted a rule of life in a house, one must make it a duty to fulfil it; and if one did not want to fulfil it, one would do much better to withdraw, for one can then be only a subject of scandal and disorder for all the others and contribute to the ruin of the community.

One must regard the rule as the expression of the will of God for us.

And, in obeying the rule of a house from morning till evening, one is sure to do the will of God and of one's superiors, to work out one's salvation and to walk in the way of perfection, because the rules of communities are all made to make us walk in the way of evangelical perfection.

Let us therefore have great respect, great affection, great love for our rule, regarding it as the expression of the will of God for us.

To have the spirit of one's rule, not to be content with the letter, that is, to do things from love and not from fear or by force, for fear of being punished.

*How must we obey?*

We must obey with faith, submission and love.

*With faith.*

Remembering that our superiors hold the place of God, that they command us in the name of God and that in obeying them or our rule we obey God himself,

"He that hears you, hears me,

"he that despises you, despises me" (Lk 10:16).

*With submission.*

Interior, prompt and entire submission.

We must submit our mind and our judgment to our superiors, not only an exterior submission but an interior submission of our soul.

Prompt submission, which does not argue, which does not seek to slip away, to find means of not submitting.

And entire, by doing all that is commanded us, in the manner commanded us and at the time commanded us.

To become as little children. Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Saint Paul says: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them; for they watch as being to render an

account of your souls, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for this is not expedient for you" (Heb 13:17).

*With love.*

This is what Peter recommends to us when he says: "Chastening your souls in the obedience of charity, with a brotherly love, from a sincere heart love one another earnestly" (1 Pet 1:22).

It is for our good that we are commanded.

It is for our good that we must obey.

*Excellence of obedience.*

"Obedience is better than sacrifices and holocausts" (Mk 12:33; Heb 10:8).

*Obedience is the greatest mark of our love for God.*

Our Lord himself assures us of it:

"He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me" (Jn 14:21).

"For this is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments; in this we know that we love God, when we keep his commandments" (1 Jn 5:2).

"But he that keeps his word, in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected" (1 Jn 2:5).

And Our Lord himself says: "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has given me commandment, so do I" (Jn 14:31).

***Obedience is also the surest mark of the respect and love that one has for one's superiors.***

***Obedience is the shortest means of arriving at perfection and renunciation.***

By making the sacrifice of one's will, one makes by that very fact the sacrifice of one's mind and heart, since the will is the expression of the thoughts of the mind and the attachments of the heart.

***Obedience is the shortest means of establishing order and union in a house, and also strength.***

*Strength*

"He that hears the word of God and puts it into practice is like a man who builds upon a rock; nothing can shake it… He that hears and does not, builds upon the sand" (Mt 7:24–26).

It is the same with communities.

"*Funis triplex non rumpitur*" (Eccl 4:12).[7]

*Obedience is the only true mark of salvation.*

"Not every one that says to me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in your name, and cast out devils in your name, and done many miracles in your name? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you, depart from me, you that work iniquity" (Mt 7:21–23).

*Obedience is also the surest means of establishing in us peace, tranquillity of mind and heart.*

"Peace to men of good will!" (Lk 2:14)

"He that sent me is with me, and he has not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him" (Jn 8:29).

"An obedient man shall speak of victory" (Prov 21:28).

"As I hear, so I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jn 5:30)

He who obeys puts himself beyond all responsibility before God and his conscience.[8]

***Obedience is also the means God uses to raise us to higher degrees.***[9]

"Well done, good and faithful servant, because you have been faithful over a few things, I will place you over many things" (Mt 25:33 [as printed; Mt 25:21]).

***The most beautiful promises are made to the obedient man.***

"He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me; and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him" (Jn 14:21).

"And my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him" (Jn 14:23).

"If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (Jn 15:10).

***It is the meditation of the just.***

"*Mens justi meditabitur obedientiam*" (Prov 15:28).[10]

*Practical conclusions.*

---

**Notes**

1. Only obedience in the Church is in question here, because it is directly a matter of apostolic work. Elsewhere Father Chevrier evokes the question of obedience to our civil masters. (Ms XI 125)↩

2. Ms XI 125.

   For us, it is above all important to know the will of Jesus Christ, our Master; he has made it known to us in his Gospel. It is there that he dictated to us everything we have to do. With what respect, submission and love must we not read and study the Holy Gospel, in order to fulfil it!↩

3. Obedience to the Church.

   The text gives the impression that the Church is composed of the Pope and the bishops. One should say obedience *in* the Church, to those who have received authority, the hierarchy. This way of designating the hierarchy by saying "the Church" was very common in Father Chevrier's time.↩

4. Ms XI 722; XI 256.

   How difficult it is to be superior of a community! to be a priest to give the good spirit to others, to command according to Jesus Christ, to direct according to Jesus Christ, to lead according to Jesus Christ: each house, each person, each soul in particular. Everything one says, commands, must be in conformity with the thought, the spirit of Jesus Christ. How a superior must study Our Lord, his spirit, his doctrine! (Ms XI 722)

To become as little children who have no other will than that of their father. (Ms XI 256)↩

5. Cf. p. 226 (note 3).↩
6. On this question of the rule, cf. p. 265.↩
7. A threefold cord is not easily broken.↩
8. "To be beyond all responsibility": that is, God does not hold guilty him who has obeyed, even if he has the impression that, in his superior's place, he would have given another order.↩
9. Ms X 253.

   We shall make obedience our principal virtue, as being the one that can contribute most to the glory of God, the good order of a house and the sanctification of our souls.↩
10. The mind of the just shall meditate obedience. [Tr.: Vulgate Prov 15:28 — "Mens justi meditatur obedientiam."]↩

↑ Contents

## (Conclusion of renunciation of oneself)

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* With the concluding pages on renunciation of oneself, the tone does not soften. The word of the Gospel is taken up again: to hate one's own life.

It would be a baneful error to understand that one must have feelings of hatred for oneself. This

morbid behaviour would bring nothing good to the work of God.

A person's self-denial is not judged at the level of the feelings he has towards himself but by the way in which he goes his road.[1]

He who entertains feelings, flattering or hateful, towards himself is folded in on himself. He thus does the very opposite of what the Gospel asks. This is the "unhappy state of those who have not renounced themselves."[2]

Father Chevrier indicates a number of means to be taken to arrive at this renunciation.[3] He only takes up the means generally prescribed or recommended at the time, notably in seminaries and above all in religious communities. Some of these ways of doing things are hardly current any longer today. Other ways have been established which aim at the same goal; but they are better adapted to what we are.

One may note Father Chevrier's special attention to a communal effort to progress together in evangelical life. For this he sought how to make effective, for the advancement of a house, the classic exercise of the *coulpe* (the public avowal of external faults).[4]

As for the rule (*règlement*),[5] it is useful to know that Father Chevrier composed and recomposed many rules for his house. He was not looking for the definitive rule. He wanted everything to proceed, as far as possible, in unity and each one to know well what he had to do. But he found it normal that the organization proper to a group

be left to the common responsibility of that group. He did not hesitate to write to the four Prado seminarians, alone in Rome:

I have received your rule of life; try to be faithful to it; modify it according to necessity and let charity be your great rule.[6]

***Our Lord wants us to carry this renunciation of ourselves to the point of hating ourselves.***

"If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother…

yea, and his own life also,

he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26).

One must therefore hate oneself, one must hate one's body, one's earthly thoughts, one's natural affections, this perverse will: hate all that comes from oneself and not from God.

*"He that loves his life [Tr.: French "âme", soul] shall lose it" (Jn 12:25).*

Soul and spirit, the difference between the two, according to the sense of Scripture.

The spirit comes from God.

The soul is what is in us, what clings to us, what shares in our miseries, our inclinations, our passions; it is the animal, earthly life.

The soul is oneself, with its miseries, its passions; the soul shared in Adam's sin, it receives from Adam the stain of sin and has all its baneful effects; whereas the spirit is that spirit of God that we receive in our baptism and our confirmation and which makes us live from above. He who loves his soul — that is, who loves his soul by following its desires, its inclinations, its passions; who loves his soul by clinging to his ideas, his whims, his earthly judgments — is lost.

Those who love themselves are lost, because they love themselves against the will of God, against duty, in spite of their conscience, and prefer their pleasure, their satisfaction to the will of God.

*"He that hates his life [soul] in this world keeps it unto life eternal" (Jn 12:25)*

[he who hates his soul in this world, that is:] his passions, his inclinations, his earthly and worldly ideas, opposed to the Gospel and to the Christian virtues,

all that comes from oneself, from one's heart, spoiled, corrupted,

who makes his body walk in penance, fasting and prayer, who knows how to command his body and make it obey…

*"He that will save his life shall lose it" (Mt 16:25).*

He who wants to save his life at the expense of the law of the Gospel, of God, of religion, of the rule of life, for the useless care of his body, by softness, negligence, laziness, gluttony, excessive cares, loses his soul.

*"He that shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Mt 16:25).*

By work, penance, mortification, sufferings, death, as so many saints did, who were martyrs at every moment through the continual sufferings of life that they endured for God and for souls;

they will find again the life they will have lost, a better, happier life…

*Happy effects that renunciation of ourselves produces in us.*

It purifies us of our defects.

Renunciation of ourselves frees us from all that is evil in us, purifies us first of our defects, of our passions; put off the old man.

This first work is the essential basis of the evangelical life, without which there can be nothing good in us.

*It makes us fit to practise virtue.*

By renunciation of ourselves we become fit for virtue; then virtue no longer finds any obstacle in us.

We can practise easily, with the grace of God, humility, gentleness, charity, poverty.

He who has renounced himself and who has carried renunciation to hatred of himself will not find it difficult to abase himself in his own eyes and in those of the neighbour; he will not find it difficult to bear humiliations, the contempt of the world, to be regarded as the filth of the streets, the sweepings of the world, since he already hates

and despises himself; he has renounced all that can honour him, be agreeable to him; if he is struck on the left cheek, he will willingly present the right.

He who has renounced himself will not find it difficult to practise poverty; on the contrary, he will like to be poor, to make himself little, to be deprived of many things, to be in the rank of the poor; he has renounced glory, the esteem of the world, all that shines in the world.

He who has renounced himself will not find it difficult to practise charity; not clinging to himself, he will not fear to put himself out, to devote himself for others, to go two thousand paces when he is asked for one thousand, to serve others, since he considers himself the last of all.

*It makes new men of us.*

"If any man be in Jesus Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away, behold all things are made new" (2 Cor 5:17).

Renunciation of ourselves makes us capable of receiving the abundant graces that are necessary for us to become other creatures in Jesus Christ; the old man is destroyed little by little, the new man

is formed in us more and more, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.[7]

*True children of God.*

Because, by destroying the old man, we are born to a new life, and this word of the Saviour is accomplished: "Unless you become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of God" (Mt 18:3); what prevents us from becoming little children is our natural defects; by destroying them we are born again. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (Jn 3:6); we destroy in us what is of the flesh to acquire the spirit of the children of God.

*Wholly heavenly men.*[8]

"As the first man is earthly, says Saint Paul, his children are earthly, and as the second is heavenly, his children are heavenly; as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor 15:47–49).

"With Christ I am nailed to the cross, and I live, or rather it is no longer I that live, it is Jesus Christ that lives in me; and that I live now in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself for me" (Gal 2:19–20).

"Reckon that you are dead to sin and alive to God alone in Jesus Christ Our Lord" (Rom 6:11).

As for us, we already live in heaven.

"*Nostra conversatio in caelis est*" (Phil 3:20).[9]

When we have rid ourselves of ourselves, we are light

and we rise to heaven by mind and heart, no longer held back by earthly thoughts and affections.

Our conversation is wholly heavenly.

What a difference of ideas, of thoughts, of conversation, between a soul that has renounced itself and a soul that is full of itself.

"For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory" (Col 3:3–4).

"If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live, for whoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom 8:13–14).

He who has renounced himself is troubled by nothing; he pays no attention to injuries, contempt, abandonment, to all those miseries that so trouble the soul that is full of itself.[10]

Nor is he affected by praises and honours and eulogies; he is indifferent to all that and always keeps peace, tranquillity of soul and heart; he clings to nothing, neither to himself, nor to creatures, nor to the goods of the earth; he lives in complete freedom of spirit with regard to everything, and he has the entire liberty of the children of God.

"*Ubi Spiritus ibi libertas*".[11]

***Happy is the house where the members have renounced themselves.***

When this true renunciation reigns in a house, one no longer finds souls that occupy themselves only with themselves and with others [Tr.: sic]; everyone occupies himself with God and with souls, to bring them to God and save them; then reign peace, joy, charity, union, strength and the impulse to good, and love.

When, on the contrary, in a house there is not this renunciation of oneself, then there are the works of the flesh of which Our Lord and Saint

Paul his apostle speak; and these works are: impurity, softness, avarice, theft, wickedness, fraud, the evil eye, pride, folly, enmities,

divisions, jealousies, wraths, quarrels, divisions, dissensions, sects, envy and others still, which make of this house a house of the world and not a house of God, because it is no longer the reign of God that exists but the reign of self, and when one sees that, one can say with truth, as Saint Paul said to the Corinthians:

"*Adhuc carnales estis*" (1 Cor 3:3).

"You are still carnal", that is, you conduct yourselves according to the flesh and not according to the spirit of God.

This house is not the reign of God.

***Unhappy state of those who have not renounced themselves.***

He who has not renounced himself is always in trouble, agitation, anxiety; he reflects continually on what goes on around him, he thinks of what is said, of what has been done to him, and always believes that something has been said or done against him. He is continually in a state of jealousy, touchiness, suspicion; he always believes

that more is done for others than for him; he occupies himself continually with others and with himself; he is always on the alert to complain and seek consolations and satisfactions, because he is always in boredom, trouble and anxiety; these troubles, these anxieties are at bottom nothing but little nothings that would be dissipated by a single thought of faith and love of God, of humility; but because there is in these souls neither faith, nor humility, nor love of God, nor strength, nor action, they can bear nothing, and these little nothings are mountains for them and they regard as insupportable what others would pay no attention to; all this comes from love of self, from attachment to self.

How unhappy these souls are, who continually seek themselves, who occupy themselves only with themselves!

What an insupportable life for themselves and for others and for those who govern them![12]

A little renunciation of themselves would make all that disappear and put peace and contentment in their souls, which will never exist so long as they let themselves be led by attachment to [themselves].

It is God who taught us this, and when the Master speaks, he speaks the truth.

My God, give us all this true renunciation of ourselves so that, detached from ourselves, we may love you and serve the neighbour and never be stopped in the ways of justice, of devotedness and of charity.

***Means to be taken to arrive at this renunciation of ourselves.***

One must:

1°. Ask God sincerely for the grace to know oneself, one's dominant defect, one's particular defects, and have a true desire to correct oneself of them.

2°. Choose a true friend who makes us know our defects and warns us charitably when we fall into some faults.

3°. Make each day one's particular examination on one's dominant defect, on the part of renunciation that concerns us and on the virtue opposed to this defect.

4°. Make to our superior (or to the one we have chosen as monitor) the avowal of our principal faults of this kind and always ask a penance.

5°. Make each week one's *coulpe* or the public avowal of one's exterior failings.

6°. Hold the chapter each month, where one must receive with humility the reproaches or remarks that may have been made on our exterior conduct.

7°. Go to confession each week and prepare for it seriously, to obtain perfect contrition and a true amendment of one's life.[13]

---

**Notes**

1. Cf. p. 270, note 1.↩
2. P. 271.↩
3. P. 272.↩
4. P. 274.↩
5. P. 257.↩
6. LP no. 106, end of November 1876.↩
7. Ms XI 131 — XII 19.

   "Put off the old man and put on the new, which is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him that created him" (Col 3:9–10). Before putting on, one must strip. (Ms XI 131)

   When one has stripped, one can put on the new man. (Ms XII 19)↩
8. On the sense of "heavenly," see p. 142.↩
9. Father Chevrier himself translates: Our conversation is wholly heavenly (cf. p. 270). This considerably narrows

the sense of this sentence of Saint Paul. Today it is better translated, "Our citizenship is in heaven."↩

10. Ms XI 132, Ms X 193.

    He who has renounced himself is troubled by nothing; he pays no attention to all those little miseries of the world, to injuries, contempt, insults, blows even. He goes his way. (Ms XI 132)

    It is because one has not renounced oneself that one is always in sadness, boredom, discouragement. (Ms X 193)↩

11. Where the Spirit is, there is liberty. (2 Cor 3:17)↩

12. Ms XII 51.

    Love of self. True love of self, for one's good, for the glory of God; we belong to God and to the neighbour, we do not belong to ourselves exclusively. Love of self, when it reaches a certain degree called egoism, is the most terrible of diseases. The great defect of this love is egoism. There is the egoism that comes from the heart and the egoism that comes from the pride of the mind. The egoist refers everything to himself, sees only himself, seeks only himself; he wants everything to come back to him, he is jealous, touchy, spiteful, demanding, rancorous, suspicious, curious.↩

13. The cult of the self.

    He is always seeking whether he is loved or not loved; he is ill from a lack of regard, from a courtesy shown to another; he does not want others to make some effort, for fear that they too be rewarded.

    No devotedness.

    He cannot bear that anyone work for him.

He complains of everyone, for fear that he himself be blamed or that others be esteemed more than he.

He loves nobody, he loves only himself.

He seeks only himself in all he does, in all he says; one sees that he seeks himself, that he seeks only satisfactions of the heart; he is content to see others humiliated because it seems to him that it raises him up; he is sad to see others honoured and doing well, because he believes that it lowers him.

He is glad of the evil that happens to others and sad of the good that happens to them.↩

↑ Contents

### [1]*The coulpe.*

The *coulpe* is the public avowal of one's exterior faults, not interior ones; interior faults concern the confessor.

The exterior faults that form part of the *coulpe* are faults:

against the rule

against one's employment

and defects of character.

There is certainly a great grace attached to the public accusation of one's exterior faults, if it is done as it should be.

To do it humbly and with fruit, one must do it kneeling and, after having said what one knows,

ask one's brothers or superiors to tell us what they may have noticed in us that is opposed, contrary to the good example and edification that we owe one another mutually, for the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbour, and ask a penance.

The *coulpe* must be made every eight days and a day and hour fixed for this exercise, so that it may be done regularly, because it is very important. This exercise keeps us from falling into laxity, forces us to pay attention to ourselves and puts a public sanction on our faults, which is no little stimulus for the weak, that they may pay more attention to themselves.

To make the *coulpe* and the particular examination easier, we have made little cards on which are indicated the different articles of the rule and the various points that can form the subject of our examination and of our accusation; one can and should use these cards to note down each day one's failings and accuse them on the day of the *coulpe*. This is the latest way of doing it; this means should be used only when the house is going well;

another means indicated, longer but more effective:

Before making the *coulpe*, one begins by reading the summary of the rule, in order to be renewed in the spirit of the work, to see summarily one's obligations and so prepare oneself with humility for the avowal of one's faults and for the penance that is to be imposed on us for our failings.

***Means of making the coulpe useful to individuals and effective for the advancement of a house.***

Means of making the *coulpe* effective and useful to the whole house:

Besides the general rule of the house, the employment and the character, which must form the ordinary subject of each week's *coulpe*, it will be good to fix for a month, or for longer, a particular subject, beginning with the first article, renunciation of family and the world, then of oneself, that is, of one's body, mind, etc.; one stays on the same subject until a good general result has been obtained, and when this result has been obtained, one passes to the following subject; thus one can run through all the articles of the True Disciple of Jesus Christ and so arrive at some happy result for the whole community.

This means seems long and laborious but it seems also surer and easier. The superiors must be firm and persevering; begin by showing the necessity of a virtue, of such an act of renunciation, and when everyone feels its necessity, each one must work with all his courage to attain it.

One can, even one must, read before the *coulpe* the article that relates to the subject of examination, each time, as long as one has not come to fulfil it exactly; without that, one will never arrive at anything solid and lasting; things are done without enough seriousness and one cannot arrive at that union of mind and heart which is found in the pursuit of the same virtues, the ensemble of one same life.[2]

---

**Notes**

1. What a sad state is love of self, to be an egoist! what a misfortune! what a sad life he leads! always in anxiety, boredom, grief. So you see him: he is never in one place, he is always running, always uneasy, always unhappy.

   "He that loves his soul shall lose it." (Jn 12:25)

   "He that hates his soul keeps it." (Jn 12:25)

   "He that loses his soul shall find it." (Mt 16:25)

   To such people one must always say fine things; one cannot tell them the truth, because the truth will kill them; they believe that one exaggerates, that one does not know them; it is always the others who are wrong

and never themselves; they have no time to occupy themselves with anything but themselves; their duty is neglected.

The remedy for all that is humility and charity.↩

2. Here ends the principal manuscript of the True Disciple.↩

↑ Contents

## Third condition: Renounce the goods of the earth[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* The chapter that follows is one of the most extensive of the True Disciple. Further on, the subject will be taken up again under the title "Follow me in my poverty."[2] In the annexes one will find yet another text: "Thoughts on poverty — The priest, a stripped man."[3]

This corresponds to the place held by poverty in the thought and life of Father Chevrier.

For a time he thought of speaking of poverty in the wide sense, the sense found in the Gospel: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."[4] Under the general title of poverty one finds this fragment:

"Now, we possess three kinds of goods: the goods of the earth, creatures, and ourselves."

To belong to Jesus Christ, one must therefore renounce these three kinds of goods.[5]

Notebooks were prepared with this in view, but Father Chevrier corrected them and the general title of poverty disappeared. The word is reserved for poverty in the strict sense, in relation to material goods.

Why this, when the Gospel invited him to keep the wide sense? It is that Father Chevrier strongly felt a danger. By dint of speaking of poverty in the wide sense, of interior poverty, the Father's first disciples came to conclude that they could very well live like all the surrounding clergy. But the Father thought that God had made the Prado so that there should be poor priests.[6] Priests really, visibly poor, because there are always poor among us, poor who have neither the leisure nor the taste to cultivate a purely interior poverty,

poor who are defrauded of their share in the goods of the earth and whose cry reaches the ears of the Lord.[7]

He writes from Rome in April 1877:

"As for our young abbés, I feel that my authority is very weak. Duret and Delorme seem to enter better into our thoughts and to understand better

poverty and the life of the Prado. Broche and Farissier have many reasonings; Broche especially says nothing and seems to have other settled ideas; he reasons, he is learned; the authority of Messrs. Jaillet, Dutel and the seminary carries weight with them. We must pray."[8]

On the manuscript entitled "Follow me in my sufferings,"[9] these lines are added at the beginning:

"Our Lord bore outwardly the character of poverty and suffering. Those who have it only inwardly run a great risk of not having it at all."[10]

Finally, on the very notebook where he treats of renunciation of the goods of the earth, he scribbles a few words at the beginning of the notebook. These words are the outline of a preliminary talk which is probably summed up thus:

We must agree well on one same orientation of life in order to act in unity; this will be our strength.

What we are going to say about poverty rests on the knowledge of Jesus Christ, on his word and his examples. In proceeding thus, we build on rock.

This putting of poverty into practice is perhaps not very widespread, but it must be precisely the particular character of our family, as other things may characterize other groups.[11]

One readily imagines that at the moment of approaching this thorny question of poverty with the seminarians, feeling his authority very weak, he feels the need to return with them to the fundamental convictions which alone can bring about a deep adherence to the life of poverty. Father Chevrier felt his authority very weak with his first disciples. Yet on this question of poverty he speaks with authority. He speaks frankly of the lack of poverty in the clergy. He deplores that enslavement to little things, like fashions in clothing, even ecclesiastical, prevents one from going on greatly.[12]

He does not mince words in saying that the collector who grows rich in this way is a deceiver, and even that to collect without necessity is a theft.[13]

He denounces the apostolic consequences of this situation: it creates an obstacle

to the proclamation of the Gospel to the poor, who see in religion a religion of money.[14]

Whence does this authority come to him? It comes from experience. All that he recommends, he has lived. He tested this way of life before proposing it to others. He applies here the principle of formation that he gave: Follow me, do as I do; I do not ask of you things more difficult than I do myself.[15] The best description we can have of Father Chevrier's life in the midst of the poor, in the Prado quarter, is found in this chapter.

And one finds there at the same time the life the poor of the quarter led. He speaks from experience because he knew how to make himself close to the poor, to listen to them, to love them, to understand them. He knows that there are things that make the world of the poor cry out, and he is sensitive to this cry.[16] He knows that a voluntary religious poor man will never suffer as much as the poor of the world.[17] He knows that, for the people of his quarter, to wear rubber-soled shoes, or even a gold medal, is a luxury reserved for the privileged.[18] Times have changed, but the lesson remains.

So Father Chevrier speaks with force because he defends the right of the poor to hear the Gospel. It is in order to create no obstacle to the Gospel that he wants to be content with the necessary in

churches and that he desires to exercise the functions of the ministry free of charge.[19]

Antoine Chevrier's authority comes to him from experience; it comes still more from his faith. He speaks because he believes.[20] All that he says on the poverty of the priest shows with what seriousness he counts on the wage promised to the labourer of the Gospel who does his work: God has promised it.[21] The word of God is there and he wants us to have confidence.[22]

This faith of Antoine Chevrier is simple. It is great. It sees the greatness of the apostolic mission, of the priest's ministry,[23] the greatness of the work to be done, which must be regulated not according to the quantity of income we have but according to charity.[24]

This faith engenders a poverty generous towards others, the poverty of one who judges that the sweat of the workman and of the poor is never paid enough.[25]

A poverty respectful of justice, which will not buy or have work done unless one can pay at once;[26] a realistic poverty which does not proclaim offhandedly "God will pay well,"[27] which knows that a bird in the hand is worth two in the

bush;[28] a poverty that is a source of peace and balance, because it unifies life around the One thing necessary, the important, essential thing that must be done well, after which the rest also goes well.[29]

Father Chevrier speaks with authority also, and above all, because he speaks for the Prado. It is quite clear that his spiritual authority is not engaged in the same way in everything he says. It is one thing to know whether one should wear a grey or brown woollen tunic and another to know whether one should be content with the necessary in clothing.[30] Yet even the details of application that are unsuited to our present situation have a meaning that must be discovered and kept. A priest who wished to live among the poor, no longer in the suburbs of Lyon but in the suburbs of a great city of Asia, was able to write: "How much I rediscovered the whole force and the whole timeliness of the True Disciple, even in its details. The details on poverty in lodging, poverty in clothing, which end by seeming to us almost petty in Europe where we are accustomed to a high standard of living, find here all their realism."

To understand Father Chevrier's thought deeply, one must know something of the life of the poor who surrounded him. On this point J. F. Six makes an irreplaceable contribution.[31]

Father Chevrier's judgment on the "Providences"[32] — those workshops "that make the world cry out"[33] — is quite understandable when one knows what they were. These sorts of convent-workshops, where children, young delinquents or repentant girls were taken in, worked for far lower wages, thus taking work away from the workmen.[34]

When there is question of temporal affairs,[35] the point is to characterize the real purpose of an enterprise. God knows whether the Father knew the labours and cares of a bursar! He did not idly unload on others all that had to be done so that everyone should be fed, lodged and clothed in the house of the Prado, which numbered about a hundred persons. But he never forgot the purpose of the Prado: to teach catechism well was the purpose of the House of the Prado; to evangelize the poor[36] is the purpose of all the communities of the Prado.

To maintain this orientation firmly, he imagined the institution of temporal fathers and mothers, whose role he sketches.[37] The idea had come to him during his stay at the Cité de l'Enfant Jésus, where he had seen an apostolic work in danger of turning into an enterprise of cheap housing. This project of Father Chevrier does not seem to have been worked out. What is most certain is that he wants to keep all his freedom as an apostle in the use of revenues[38] and that he consents to use revenues only for the houses of formation, which he calls "schools and choir-schools."[39]

The question of free exercise of the ministry was not without difficulty. He saw its importance; he found clear directives in the preface of the Roman Ritual, a document issued by the Holy See; and he ran up in practice against a contrary custom.[40] The precise contradiction between the dispositions of the ritual and the custom has perhaps not been sufficiently noticed.

According to the ritual, under certain conditions the minister may receive a gift made on the occasion of the ministry performed, but the bishop is acknowledged to have the power to forbid even this concession and thus to impose a strict gratuitousness.

The custom met by Father Chevrier establishes, on the contrary, the general principle of the offering, according to an official tariff. This time, the power of the bishop imposes non-gratuitousness and an exceptional permission must be sought to exercise the ministry free of charge. In the abstract, the moralist theologians managed very well to show that there was, in all cases, gratuitousness. The matter was less clear in the minds of the users, or rather it was too clear. For every act of ministry one had to pay.

In practice, when Father Chevrier wished to exercise the ministry free of charge in the parish entrusted to him in the neighbourhood of Lyon, the diocese of Grenoble, on which the parish depended, refused permission. This was in 1869.[41]

We have here perhaps the reason why Father Chevrier modified the plan of the chapter on poverty. Originally he had foreseen a special part entitled: "4°. Exercise the ministry free of charge."[42] This title was struck out in several plans and the subject introduced under the more general title: "Ask nothing of anyone." That is more discreet. But the Father does not give up his idea and he takes care to tell us that Pius IX had found it "good."[43]

The word of Antoine Chevrier is still authoritative for the Prado today. We are well warned that, in this vocation, "riches and treasures ruin houses; poverty preserves them and maintains them in vigour and charity."[44]

The general rise in the standard of living is no reason that can turn us away from poverty. On the contrary. For when "luxury is at its height, when everyone seeks well-being, convenience, comfort, the priest, on the contrary, must seek poverty."[45]

At all times and in all latitudes it will remain true that "to be content with the necessary… comprises the whole ensemble of the evangelical life,"[46] that the spirit of poverty consists in not considering ourselves "as masters and owners of anything," but in looking on "all things as belonging to God and the poor."[47]

And the directives have been summed up in such a way that they are engraved for ever in our memories:

"If you do not follow the rules of poverty, of wisdom, of prudence, God owes you nothing. He will take care of you as long as you are truly poor and suffer in silence — Be called by God — Seek

the kingdom of God — Work — Be poor — Make no imprudence."[48]

The directives are clear. But Father Chevrier's sentence remains ever true: "We are going to begin to see the practice: there it is that there will probably be some difficulties."[49]

There is also another difficulty. In delivering these directives to the public, everyone can then call the Prado to account; all the poor especially, if they knew them, could say to us: Where do you stand? What are you doing? Alas! we are far from the mark; but God has shown himself extraordinarily faithful towards very unconscientious workmen.

Necessity of a rule

Union

Strength

Our rule is Jesus Christ,

his word, his examples.

Solid, unshakable foundation.

This is what characterizes a work,

a congregation.

True disciple of Jesus Christ,

found…[50]

***How we must renounce the goods of the earth.***

By studying seriously the doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the apostles on renunciation of the goods of the earth,

we find that, to practise evangelical poverty, one must:

1°) Renounce the goods of the earth in mind and heart.

2°) Be content with the necessary.

3°) Give to him who asks.

4°) Not meddle in temporal affairs.

5°) Ask nothing of anyone, except in the cases provided for by the rule.

6°) Not be anxious about the future.

7°) Count on God alone.

***1°) Renounce in mind and heart all the goods of the earth.***

This is the formal condition that Our Lord requires of anyone who wishes to come to him.

"Whosoever of you does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:33).

This is the express condition that he requires of that rich young man of the Gospel who asks to be perfect; he had fulfilled the whole law and Our Lord says to him: "One thing is still wanting to you; if you will be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mk 10:21).

"But he, hearing this, was sad at the saying, and went away sorrowful, for he was very rich and had great possessions."

"And Jesus, seeing him become sad, looked round about and said to his disciples: How hard it is for them that have money to enter into the kingdom of God!"

(Riches make salvation very difficult, almost impossible; this is why one must renounce in mind and heart, if not in fact.)

"Amen, amen I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:23).

"The disciples were astonished at this saying.

"But Jesus, answering again, saith to them: I say it to you again, my beloved, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of

God. For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Hearing this, his disciples wondered the more, saying: Who then can be saved?

And Jesus, looking on them, saith: With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God" (Mk 10:24–27).

---

**Notes**

1. Ms XII 71–128.↩
2. P. 403.↩
3. Annex III, p. 517.↩
4. Mt 5:3.↩
5. Ms XI 609.↩
6. LP cited p. 14.↩
7. Cf. Jas 5:4.↩
8. LP no. 82.↩
9. P. 473.↩
10. P. 477.↩
11. P. 283.↩
12. Cf. p. 293, note 1.↩
13. P. 311.↩
14. P. 315.↩
15. P. 222.↩
16. Ms XII 184.↩

17. Annex, 522.↩
18. P. 294.↩
19. Pp. 297, 311.↩
20. Cf. 2 Cor 4:13.↩
21. P. 309.↩
22. Cf. p. 318, note 1.↩
23. P. 309.↩
24. P. 319.↩
25. P. 302, note 2.↩
26. P. 301.↩
27. Cf. p. 321, note 2.↩
28. P. 320.↩
29. P. 299.↩
30. P. 293.↩
31. Cf. p. 6.↩
32. P. 304.↩
33. Ms XII 184.↩
34. P. 304.↩
35. P. 299.↩
36. LP no. 117, 22 May 1877.↩
37. P. 305.↩
38. P. 305.↩
39. P. 309.↩
40. P. 313.↩
41. Six, 294.↩
42. Ms 175.↩
43. P. 314.↩

44. P. 319.↩
45. P. 291.↩
46. P. 290.↩
47. P. 269.↩
48. Ms XII 199.↩
49. LP no. 83, April 1877.↩
50. To understand this page see p. 278.

    There follow 4 pages which reproduce the text on the 5 conditions that we found, pp. 133–137.↩

↑ Contents

***One cannot serve two masters.***

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other" (Mt 6:24).

"You cannot serve God and mammon" [Tr.: Chevrier's French has "l'argent", money] (Mt 6:24).

"Where your treasure is, there is your heart also" (Mt 6:21).

***Thorns.***

Riches are thorns that choke the good seed of the word of God.

*Source and root of all kinds of evils, afflictions and sorrows.*

"They that will become rich fall into temptation and into the snares of the devil and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition.

"The desire of money is the root of all evils, which some coveting have erred from the faith and have entangled themselves in an infinity of afflictions and sorrows" (1 Tim 6:9–10).[1]

*Sell what one has and lay up a spiritual treasure.*

"Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom" (Lk 12:32).

"Sell what you have and give alms."

"Make to yourselves purses which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not: where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth" (Lk 12:33).

This is why Our Lord asks of those who want to follow him this great renunciation of all the goods of the earth and to be disposed to follow him, who has not a stone on which to rest his head.[2]

*The Son of man has not where to lay his head.*

A young man, filled with admiration for Jesus Christ, had formed the desire of following him and said to Jesus: "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

"Jesus said to him: The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Lk 9:57–58).

*One must no longer think of returning to the world, even for one's affairs.*

He answers another, who asks permission to go and settle his affairs before following him: "No man, putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk 9:62).

*Saint John.*

This was the practice of Saint John in the desert.

What real poverty he had, living in the desert! "He had his garment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey; then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea" (Mt 3:4–5).

*The apostles.*

This was the practice of the apostles, who had left all things and followed him.

"Behold, we have left all things and have followed thee" (Mk 10:28).

*The first Christians.*

It was also the practice of the first Christians; we see in the Acts of the Apostles that "the multitude of believers had but one heart

and one soul; neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them.

"For neither was there any one needy among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things they sold and laid it down before the feet of the apostles, and distribution was made to every one according as he had need" (Acts 4:32, 34–35).

It was also the counsel of Saint Paul to the Christians, saying: "The time is short; it remains that they that weep be as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as if they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as if they used it not, for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor 7:29–31).

*All that is mine is yours.*

And Our Lord expresses very well in two words how we must conduct ourselves with regard to the things of the earth, when, speaking of the relations of goods that he has with his Father, of this community that exists between him and his Father, he says: "All my things are thine and thine are mine" (Jn 17:10).

To enter into this disposition of mind, we must look on all things as belonging to God and to the poor; we are masters of nothing, owners of nothing before God; we are only the good God's stewards and the distributors of the goods of the poor.

We may use them according to our necessity, but we must be disposed to give them to anyone who has need.

It is this first disposition of soul that destroys in us that spirit of ownership, which is so opposed to charity, to poverty, to devotedness and to sacrifice.

What is more shocking, indeed, than to hear at every moment, in a house of brothers in Jesus Christ and of true poor men: this is mine, this is my room, this is my bed, this is my watch, this is my table, it's mine, I don't want you to touch it.

He, on the contrary, who enters into this spirit of Jesus Christ clings to nothing, neither to his goods, nor to his lodging, nor to his furniture, nor to his clothes, nor to his money, nor to his purse, nor to anything; nor to any of those earthly things to which the world clings so much; his motto is this: all that is mine is yours. If someone comes and is poor and has need of something, he says to him: here it is, here is my room, here is my bed, here is my garment, here is my purse; all that is mine is yours.

How beautiful is this man who clings to nothing and who says to the good God's poor: all that is mine is yours! and who thus strips himself until he becomes as poor as the poorest; like the saints, who could not bear to see men poorer than themselves and who gave everything until they had nothing more to give; then they gave themselves.

*Rules concerning this first article.*

To put into practice, then, this first evangelical counsel of poverty, we shall not regard ourselves as masters or owners of anything, but we shall regard all things as belonging to God and to the poor.

We shall put in common all that we have, to use it or give it to the poor according to the will of our superiors.

There will be a common room where we shall put all that we have, and when we have need of something we shall ask for it from the one who is charged with giving it to us.

We shall have no private purse; we shall receive nothing for ourselves personally; there will be a general box where we shall deposit all offerings.

*(Each month.)*[3]

We shall take nothing without permission; we shall keep only what is necessary for our personal use, and from time to time our wardrobe, our room and our cupboards will be inspected, to see whether there is anything contrary to poverty and detachment.[4]

One keeps ownership of real property, lands, houses, but loses enjoyment of the revenues.

At 40 years, or after ten years in religion, we may distribute our goods and make three parts of them: one for the family, the second for the poor and the third for the works.

To put in common the revenues one can draw from one's patrimonial goods or elsewhere.

The community must provide for all the personal and exterior needs of each member, and one must make it a happiness and a duty of charity to help one another, to provide joyfully for all the needs of one's brothers, and even for those of the family in the first degree, when this is judged necessary.

Our motto is this word of Our Lord: All that is mine is

yours and all that is yours is mine, according to the rules of charity, prudence and obedience.

One may have for others, but never for oneself.

The priests will keep the stipends of their Masses, not for themselves, but for the poor; because it is fitting that priests be able to give something to the poor when they are asked.

N.B. The priests are left the stipends of Masses for the needs of their families, when they have poor relatives to support. The community supplies the remainder when that is not enough, and when it is more than enough, the surplus is returned to the community; it may not be used for oneself, but for the poor.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" (Mt 5:3)

*2°) Be content with the necessary.*

Here is a very important article: it comprises the whole ensemble of the evangelical life.

This is what Our Lord recommends to Martha when [he was] in her house; she complained that her sister Mary did not help her prepare the meal; and Jesus rebukes her, saying: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things; but one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Lk 10:41–42), giving her to understand thereby that one must not torment oneself so much about the things of the earth, but rather occupy oneself with the things of heaven; but that for earthly things one must be content with the strict necessary. "*Unum necessarium*" (Lk 10:42).[5]

It is again what Saint Paul tells us clearly when, writing to his dear son Timothy, he says to him: "We brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out; but having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content" (1 Tim 6:7–8).

To conform ourselves, then, to this teaching of Our Lord and of Saint Paul, we must be content with the necessary.

This necessary relates to lodging, food and clothing.

*The necessary in lodging.*

The stable of Bethlehem at the birth of Jesus Christ could not be a poorer lodging. The house of Nazareth, as one still sees it at Loreto, was poor.

During his public life Our Lord often had no other lodging

than the solitude of the mountains, the garden of olives; and he says that "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Lk 9:58; Mt 8:20).

Saint Paul says that he has no permanent dwelling. "*Non habemus hic manentem civitatem sed futuram inquirimus*" (Heb 13:14).

To enter into this spirit of poverty of Our Lord, we shall cut away from our lodging everything that smells of luxury, vanity, the superfluous, the useless.

We shall admit into our rooms neither tapestry, nor panelling, nor mirror, nor armchair, nor marble, nor gilding, nor painting, nor any ornament that can please the eye or the taste or content vanity, self-love or well-being. Everything must breathe the simplicity, the poverty and the suffering of the stable;[6] rough walls or plastered with mortar;

two or three chairs of grey straw or of wood; a table, a desk of plain wood, without ornament;

a crucifix of painted wood;

a simple prie-dieu that could serve as a cupboard if need be;

a simple cupboard if necessary or a few wooden pegs covered with a curtain, or even without a curtain;

a bed made of two trestles supporting three fir planks,

a straw mattress, one or two sheets, a bolster; but never a silk or worked fabric; one may fasten at the head a little wooden crosspiece to hold up the bolster; one may put a blanket on the straw mattress, if one needs it; in case of sickness one may have a mattress;

a few pictures, with a plain wooden frame, without colour, glass or painting;

a few shelves on the table, to put books and note-books;

if necessary, curtains of green or blue lustrine at the casements;[7]

When one enters our room one must find and breathe there poverty, simplicity and suffering.

We must cut away everything that smells of the bourgeois, of well-being, of comfort; on entering our place one must not be able to say: it's nice; it's not bad; one must be able to say: he suffers.[8]

Today, when luxury is at its height, when everyone seeks well-being, convenience, comfort, the priest, on the contrary, must seek poverty and suffering, that he may be an example in the midst of the world.

"*Vos estis lux mundi*" (Mt 5:14).

"*Ut videant opera vestra bona et glorificent Patrem*" (Mt 5:16).[9]

One must take great care not to make oneself poor in order to be seen by men and to attract their compassion and to appear wise; woe to him who would have such intentions!

But one must do this out of love for Our Lord, to imitate his holy poverty and to go in opposition to the world, since we are here to enlighten the world and to oppose its maxims and its customs.

*The necessary in food.*

It is rather difficult to treat this article, seeing that the needs of each vary according to age, temperament and circumstances, and appetite.

Each one must have his necessary and take it with simplicity and freedom of conscience.

Charity makes it our duty to give it and wisdom forbids us to judge anyone as regards the needs of our brothers;

one takes more, another less; each must consult his conscience and his needs and keep the rule of the necessary according to his temperament.

To observe the rule of the necessary in general, we shall cut from the table everything that smells of luxury, good cheer, gluttony.

The table utensils will be of ordinary metal; never of gold or silver, nor silver-plated.

The plates and dishes of earthenware or faience, not porcelain.

The table will be plain and clean, without cloth or ornament, except on days when we receive a bishop at our table.

As far as possible wine and water will be served in an earthen pot and not in bottles.

Each will have his place setting and his napkin.

In the morning: a soup, with one or two desserts.

At dinner: [two][10] dishes and two desserts; one may serve a broth beforehand, but it is not a rule.

In the evening: soup, one dish and two desserts.

We must abstain from liqueurs, coffee, fine wines.

It is only in extraordinary cases that these things are permitted: cases of receptions or necessary invitations.

(This article can be placed under that of charity.)

We must count it an honour and a happiness to receive at our table the poor, the needy, remembering the words of the Master: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours who are rich, lest perhaps they also

invite thee again and a recompense be made to thee.

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind; and thou shalt be blessed because they have not wherewith to repay thee; for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just" (Lk 14:12–14).

(This article can be found under renunciation of creatures and the world.)

One must avoid going to dine at other people's houses without very great necessity, and making invitations, for these dinners are always occasions, losses of time, useless chatter, often evil and contrary to charity, and also of foolish expense and gluttony that a true poor man of Jesus Christ must not permit himself.

To give hospitality and a place at table to those who present themselves, to those in need, to weary travellers, to the poor, yes; when charity is the motive of our actions one can always do it, but when they have no other motive than our glory, our satisfaction, our gluttony or a pastime, never. See the article on gluttony… simplicity and poverty.

## Notes

1. Ms XII 243.

   Luxury and wealth, in a religious or a priest, are the scandal of the peoples, the ruin of souls and the greatest obstacle to salvation.↩

2. Ms XII 160.

   If we cannot sell our goods, we must at least renounce them in mind and heart; look on our goods and all that we possess, even the smallest things, as not belonging to us but to God and to the poor; putting into practice what Saint Paul tells us: "The time is short; let those who weep be as though they wept not, those who rejoice as though they rejoiced not, those who buy as though they possessed not." (1 Cor 7:29–30)↩

3. Marginal note. It is a matter of indicating a rhythm for this inspection of everyone's personal affairs.↩

4. Ms XII 251.

   Quite ready to change lodging, books, clothes, if it is judged fitting, if it is useful to others, out of charity, propriety; to cling to nothing in order to be wholly God's. One often clings to a nothing, one does not want to part with it, one holds to it. By the fulfilment of this article one destroys in oneself all attachment to the smallest things and finds oneself disposed to give, to lend, to render service to whoever has need, and to practise that community of goods which existed among the first Christians and which we ought to revive in our houses.↩

5. This passage of Saint Luke gives some difficulties to exegetes. Various translations of it are proposed, for ex-

ample this one: "You worry and fret about many things; yet few are needed, indeed only one."↩

6. The stable. Understood: of Bethlehem. This is a reference to the Crib, mystery of poverty.↩
7. *Les croisées* are the windows.↩
8. MANUSCRIPT Ms X 249. We shall insist that our room be as close as possible to that of the poor.↩
9. "You are the light of the world. (Let your light shine before men) that they may see your works and glorify the Father." (Mt 5:14)↩
10. The manuscript has "two", which has been struck out, and above it is written "three", also struck out.↩

↑ Contents

### *The necessary in clothing.*

In the beginning, grace alone was our garment; but after sin, shame became our lot and God gave us, to humble us, a garment of skins of beasts. Clothing was therefore given to us to cover us and not to make us proud.

Unfortunately, clothing is too often, for a great number, an occasion and a source of vanity, of seeking satisfaction, of self-love, of ostentation, of pride.[1]

To avoid all this and enter into the spirit of Our Lord, we must be content with the necessary in clothing, as Saint Paul says, and not make of it a matter of vanity or self-love.

Be content with a poor and simple cloth.

Put no refinement in the cut; avoid everything that smells of the fine, of

taste, of refinement, beauty, elegance; all that is useless and serves only to content self-love and to please men.

To avoid all this, then, and to please Jesus Christ poor and simple, imitating the saints, in particular Saint John the Baptist and Saint Francis:

We shall cut from our clothes everything that smells of luxury and vanity.

We shall wear no fine or precious fabrics, neither silk, nor velvet, nor embroidery, nor piping, nor fringes, nor any fancy of the world.

Our cassock will be of serge cloth, ample and wide, without a train and without a pronounced waist; buttons of the same cloth and set apart.

Our belt will be of wool, without fringe; or better still, if we are permitted, a thick black cord that will take the place of the cord of Saint Francis.

A cloak of the same cloth as the cassock, with straight collar and sleeves, reaching to the knees.

A plain hat.

A tunic of grey or brown wool, to conform to the rule of Saint Francis.[2]

All other garments will be of grey or brown wool or of serge.

We shall wear no exterior ornament such as a watch-chain or even exterior devotional objects.

We shall have a little pocket on the left side to carry our crucifix and to use it in need.

In summer one may wear a small capelet of the same cloth.

One must avoid wearing shoes or slippers of cloth or fabric, embroidered velvet, etc.; this footwear breathes delicacy, pretension, refinement; ordinary shoes, laced, without rubber; sandals would be much preferable.

Each one's wardrobe:

two cassocks,

three shirts,

twelve pocket handkerchiefs.

***Be content with the necessary.***

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3).

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" [Tr.: Chevrier's French: "It is a great wealth, the piety and moderation of a mind that is content with what suffices for the needs of the present life"] (1 Tim 6:6).

This is a very important article and one must be thoroughly penetrated by it in order not to

depart from true poverty, because true poverty and the spirit of poverty are enclosed in this word:

To have the necessary and to know how to be content with it.

It is because one does not know how to be content with the necessary that one fails against poverty.[3]

One begins well with poverty, but little by little one finds that it is not convenient enough, not sufficient, not solid enough, not clean enough… that it does not last enough, and a thousand other specious reasons; and then one adds, one changes, one embellishes, one finds it more suitable, that it lasts longer, and little by little one finds oneself with a convenient room, at ease, where nothing is lacking; with a comfortable table where one finds more than the necessary; with suitable

clothes that last longer, that are more solid and better in line with the tastes of the world; from change to change, one comes to do as the world does and to lose the spirit of poverty.

The world never ceases to say: Ah! how badly lodged you are, badly bedded, badly fed, badly dressed! do like this, do like that.

It is for us to answer the world as Our Lord answered Saint Peter: "Go behind me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God but that are of men" (Mt 16:23).

He who has the spirit of poverty always has too much, he always tends to cut away; he who has the spirit of the world never has enough, he is never content, he always needs something more.

The true poor man of Jesus Christ is always cutting away, diminishing.

He who has the spirit of the world is always growing, increasing.

He who has the spirit of poverty says to himself: I have still more than I need; there are so many poor who do not have as much as I, so many poor who suffer and lack the necessary; and I, what

right have I to be better lodged, better fed, better clothed than the good God's poor?

Where there is nothing to suffer, there is no true poverty.[4] It is by being penetrated with this spirit that, little by little, one strips oneself of all that is not necessary; one has a horror of everything that smells of luxury, vanity,

[5]the glittering, the showy, and one always chooses what is poorest and simplest. Provided it covers me, provided it holds, that is all that is needed. It can still last, let us keep it.[6]

It is an error to believe that exterior things, great, beautiful, distinguished, conspicuous, give of themselves esteem, confidence or authority; that it is by these that one attracts the world and wins souls to God or to oneself; it is [an] error!

These exterior things can indeed strike for a moment, designate outwardly those who command, those who have authority and those to whom we owe respect and obedience, but these things do not give them of themselves. It is virtue, it is charity that really inspire the confidence and love of the peoples.

One must not believe that because one has fine robes, fine cloaks, fine houses, fine furnishings,

fine ornaments, one will attract the world and win its confidence. No, it is virtue.

If these exterior things had been necessary, Our Lord Jesus Christ would have used them; but no. He cast them far from him. He had for a house only a stable, for a bed a little straw, for parents poor people and, to die, a rough cross. And he said: when I shall be lifted up on the cross, I will draw all things to myself.

It is not, then, by luxury and grandeur that he drew the world, but by poverty and suffering.

Did the saints use other means?

Saint John the Baptist in his desert had only a camel's skin on his

shoulders and a leather girdle about his loins, and all Judea came to him.

And Saint Francis of Assisi, who ran barefoot with a sack on his back, did he attach importance to these frivolities? and yet how many souls he drew to himself! in his lifetime he counted ten thousand religious who had embraced his life.

It is virtue that draws souls and wins hearts to God.

There are some who speak of rank, of dignity, and who, under this specious pretext, would think themselves degraded and lowered by making themselves poor, by dressing like a poor man, by living like a poor man, by frequenting the poor, by doing as the poor do.

They would think themselves dishonoured by taking the form of a poor man, and yet this is what Our Lord did.

He made himself poor and that is precisely what the Pharisees reproached him with when they said to the apostles: "Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" (Mt 9:11)

*[The necessary in churches.]*

We must carry this spirit of poverty and simplicity and be content with the necessary even into our churches and the objects of worship.

There must be nothing in our churches and in our ornaments that excites the curiosity or the jealousy of the faithful.

Our churches, our altars, our ornaments must be simple and modest.

The most beautiful ornament of a church is the priest.

The most beautiful chandelier of a church is the priest.

The most beautiful bell of a church is the priest.

The most beautiful piece of furniture in a church is the priest.

Put a holy priest in a wooden church, open to all the winds, and he will attract and convert more people in his wooden church than another priest in a church of gold.

It is the priest who gives life; it is neither the stones, nor the chalices, nor the ornaments, nor the chandeliers, nor the beautiful altars, nor the beautiful pulpits that convert; they attract out of curiosity, they do not convert, nor heal.

And yet today people work far more to make beautiful churches, beautiful presbyteries, than to make saints.

It is that it is easier to make a beautiful church than to make a saint.

And holiness can never be replaced by the most beautiful exterior things.

One day the apostles were showing the temple to Our Lord and making him admire the beautiful stones of which it was composed, and Our Lord

told them that this temple would be destroyed and that there would not remain stone upon stone. It is the

destiny of all great things. Only virtue remains and has good roots and produces good fruits.

Our Lord had none of all these exterior things, neither temple nor house. The trees, the mountains, the seashore, that was his shelter, and yet everyone ran to him to see him and hear him.

It is that "*virtus de illo exibat et sanabat omnes*";[7] he drew all his power from himself, from his virtue, his holiness; "*virtus de illo exibat*" (Lk 6:19).

Let us not attach importance, then, to all these exterior things; let us use them, but without adding too much importance to them, and let us not put the accessory before the principal, the stones before virtue, the ornaments before holiness.

"*Martha, Martha, sollicita es et turbaris erga plurima*"[8] (Lk 10:41)

We shall be content with the necessary, even for the objects of worship; poor, simple and clean; nothing of what is showy, of what is tinsel, elegant, what excites curiosity; everything must be

grave, modest, solid. The beautiful and the great can be very simple: thus a gold chalice can be very simple and yet it will be beautiful and great. Nothing above all that excites the curiosity or the envy of people, nothing that smells of profusion.

One easily puts vanity, refinement, elegance into albs, surplices, vestments, ornamentation. One looks for what is pretty, graceful; one quickly leaves simplicity, because those who work these things, not having the spirit of poverty, put their taste, their worldliness into them; if one did not correct them, one would at once leave the spirit of simplicity and poverty and be dominated by the ideas of the merchants or of the world. Surplices and albs must be of strong and solid linen; they must be starched very little, with only a few pleats put in; embroidered albs should very rarely be used, only on the very great solemn [days], and even then it is not necessary. People always say: but it is for the good God, it must surely be beautiful; illusion! the good God cares little for our beauties and above all our knick-knacks; God must be served in spirit and in truth; that is the essential, and ordinarily, the more exterior things one puts in, the less there is of the interior; the more one occupies oneself with exterior things,

the less interior depth there is. To instruct the world, that is the essential.

We must represent the crib and Calvary; let us leave to others the care of representing the glorious mysteries.

For ourselves, let us be content with littleness and poverty; that is our lot and we must not leave it; the poor must not leave their rank, even for the good God. Not to expose oneself to acting from ostentation and pride, and rather to satisfy one's vanity than to please God.

Let us become saints; that will be worth more than all the rest.

And, by becoming saints, all the rest will come to us without our worrying…

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" [Tr.: as above, Chevrier's wording] (1 Tim 6:6).

*"Unum est necessarium."*

"Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her."

This one necessary thing for us is to catechize well and to pray; the rest is nothing. Much importance is attached to these nothings, and these exterior things always become causes of dispute,

of quarrels: one wants it one way, another another way; no matter. Oh! how we would keep peace and union and charity if we applied ourselves before all to the only necessary thing, the love of God. "*Pietas ad omnia utilis est; exercitatio corporalis ad modicum*" (1 Tim 4:8);[9] this exterior is little, "*caro non prodest quidquam*" (Jn 6:64);[10] so whether it be white or black, no matter, provided it does not prevent loving the good God.

We must remember that we are poor, that we live on alms; we must not do like the rich, who can make expenditures without wounding poverty; to want to do like the rich would be to leave our rank; we would resemble those poor who wear fine clothes and have nothing underneath; we must keep our rank and glorify Our Lord in our poverty, as the rich man must glorify him in grandeur and opulence. Let us always take and keep what is simplest and poorest; between two things, always choose what is simplest and poorest. Let us not have this manner of always wanting to do something new, of always seeking to beautify, to adorn, to deck out; one wastes one's time occupying oneself with these things and leaves the solid and the one necessary thing: to become saints and instruct the world.

One thing alone is necessary: to love God, for each one of us; to instruct the poor, for priests and those destined to be so. To instruct and to heal, the rest is nothing. People rack their brains, rub each other raw over nothings. One wants one thing, another wants another; one wants it one way, another another way; and they quarrel, they sulk over (nothings).

Let us not occupy ourselves, then, with these useless things; one thing alone is necessary: to do one's catechism well. When one important thing is done well, the rest also goes well.

---

**Notes**

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms X 646. It is luxury and vanity that invented all these refinements, the fashions in clothing, even ecclesiastical. We must seek what is simplest, quickest made, and we must seek in nothing vanity, refinement, good cut, the fine. People of the world, tailors, always put something of this world into what they make, a little tone, a little grace, a little seam here, a little stitch there, to make it hang better. Is a man of God to attach himself to that? All that must be avoided, and one must go on greatly, not cling to little things, remembering that clothing is to hide oneself and not to show oneself off.↩
2. Father Chevrier was a member of the Franciscan Third Order. He had found no other juridical framework for

the Prado, which was on the whole attached to the Third Order.↩

3. MANUSCRIPT Ms X 698. To be content with the necessary, an important article. Reflection on this article. How difficult it is to be content with the necessary! One always seeks to beautify, to adorn, to make easier, more comfortable. What makes easier, more comfortable, is no longer the necessary, and it is easier to beautify than to remain in the necessary, in that just mean which constitutes virtue, than to raise oneself up. The necessary in clothing, lodging, food: it is [better] to stay short of it than to go beyond, it is [better] to suffer than to be at ease… in the ornamentation of churches and places… "*regnum Dei intra vos est*" (the kingdom of God is within you; Lk 17:21). The poor man often lacks the necessary.↩
4. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 248; X 721. Observation: It is because one does not wish to be content with the necessary that one fails↩
5. very often against poverty and that one makes or has made many useless expenses. How many useless things, not necessary, which one could very well do without! but unfortunately one seeks one's ease, one's comforts in lodging, clothing, food, and then one leaves this way of poverty, so pleasing to Our Lord. On the slightest pretext one has things enlarged, embellished, arranged, and then this holy poverty disappears and it is no longer the necessary, it is the beautiful, the comfortable, the agreeable. Before doing anything whatever, one must always ask oneself and others: can I do without it? is it absolutely necessary? And then, if one can absolutely do without it, not do it. Do the poor of the earth themselves always have the necessary? Do not the poor have

to suffer? Where there is nothing to suffer, there is no poverty; true poverty is a suffering. (Ms XII 248)

Rules of poverty:

"The disciple is not above the Master." What right have I to be treated better, lodged better, fed better than Jesus Christ, than the apostles, than the poor themselves? Does not the poor man who works put us to shame? What! we eat good morsels and the others will have only black bread; what right have you? The others will work all day long painfully, and you, you will do nothing; what right have you before God? (Ms X 721)↩

6. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 249. One will not fear to mend one's clothes, to make do with what is poorest and simplest.↩
7. From him went out a power that healed them all.↩
8. Martha, Martha, you worry and fret about many things.↩
9. Godliness is useful for all things; bodily exercise is of little use.↩
10. The flesh profiteth nothing.↩

↑ Contents

### *3°) "Give to him that asks." (Lk 6:30)*

In his instruction to his apostles, Our Lord, wishing to inspire them with charity as much as with detachment from the things of the earth, says to them:

"If one take away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.

Give to everyone that asketh thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again" (Lk 6:29–30).

"Lend, hoping for nothing thereby, and your reward shall be great and you shall be the sons of the Highest, for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil" (Lk 6:35).

See how far Our Lord wants us to carry detachment from the things of the earth: to the point of giving to whoever asks of us as long as we have anything of our own, to the point of not asking back our goods from him who carries them off.

Could he have carried further the spirit of detachment and of gentleness?

How much detachment, gentleness and charity these words contain! how much the fulfilment of these words, or rather the spirit of them, puts us beyond reach of every feeling of trouble, of rancour, of the annoyance of lawsuits, of agitation, of hatred, and maintains us in calm, in peace of soul!

It is almost always attachment to the goods of the earth that makes us refuse alms to those who ask of us.

Among those who ask of us, we distinguish: the poor, the workmen who have worked for us, the merchants, borrowers, quibblers and thieves.

Our Lord himself enters into all these details and marks out for us the conduct we must hold in these circumstances in order to be true disciples of Jesus Christ.

(Poor of parishes for which one is not responsible.)[1]

As for the poor, we must never refuse to give to any poor man who asks us for alms, and give him all that we can in money, clothing, food, and also lodging if necessary.

Our Lord makes no exception: "Give to him that asketh" (Lk 6:30).

The pretexts that are often taken for giving nothing, saying that they are lazy, that they could work, that we do not know them, are only pretexts to disguise our attachment and our avarice; give to him that asks, according to your power, according to your means; but refuse no one, and if you have no money or we can give nothing, we must give spiritual alms and say like Saint Peter: "Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, I give thee" (Acts 3:6), by giving them some small

thing: a holy picture, a rosary, and praying to God for them.

To fulfil this precept of the Lord, there will be in each house a

priest charged with distributing the alms, and when we go out we shall always have a few sous in our pocket to give to the poor we meet.

As for creditors and the workmen who have worked for us, it is only just to pay them, not only when they ask but even immediately after their work: "*Dignus est operarius mercede sua*" (Lk 10:7; Lev 19:13),[2] and it is a fault to make them wait, and one must never either buy or have anyone work unless one can pay them at once. It is better to suffer and wait oneself than to expose oneself to making others wait or suffer.[3]

As for borrowers, one must lend them what one can, and without interest. "Lend without interest" [Tr.: Chevrier's wording; cf. Lk 6:35], says Our Lord.

But it is much better to give than to lend; one gives what one can and then all is finished, especially when it is a matter of money; as a rule, people who borrow cannot repay, and then come a thousand pains, a thousand difficulties.

If one counts on what one has lent to pay or to meet some business, one then finds oneself in embarrassment and harms others for having done a service to someone; and often this service you rendered to your neighbour becomes a cause of coldness and estrangement, if it does not go as far as a quarrel and spite; if you ask back what you lent and he cannot give it back to you, as almost always happens, he receives you badly and finds it very wrong of you to ask back so soon… and misfortune only embitters…

When someone asks [you] to lend 100 francs, it is much better to give 50 francs or 20 francs, if one can, and have nothing more to claim; by this means one does a good action, one is not obliged to ask back from these poor people who cannot repay, and one preserves friendship and charity with everyone.

If it is not a matter of money but simply of particular objects, such as utensils, clothing or another object, it does not have the same inconvenience; and even so one should really lend only what one really intends to give, so as not to have the disappointment of never seeing it again.

However, the fulfilment of this word helps us greatly to practise perfect poverty, and if one really wants to arrive at becoming truly poor, one has only to lend to all who ask and to give all that is asked: you are sure soon to have nothing of your own.

As for quibblers, Our Lord says to us: "If any man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him" (Mt 5:40).

See how far we should carry the spirit of detachment in the world to avoid all contention with the world about the things of the earth.

Nothing is more opposed to the spirit of poverty than those daily contentions that happen in the world and very often even among pious and Christian persons; people quarrel over nothings, over a rag, over a farthing, over a sou they fall out and keep hatred and rancour till death; is not this what happens in a great number of families, especially at divisions of inheritances?

Oh! let us carefully avoid this spirit of rapacity and avarice and let us always recall in these cases these words of the Master: "If one would take away thy cloak, give thy coat also" (Lk 6:29),

rather than quarrel and wrangle over things so small, so base, so earthly.

Great and spiritual souls have their mind above the earth and their heart is in heaven: "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also" (Mt 6:21).

To enter into this spirit of detachment and contempt for the things of the earth, we shall avoid all contestations, all disputes concerning the things of the earth; no lawsuits with anyone.[4]

It is also opposed to the spirit of detachment to haggle too much with merchants, to bargain too much, to quibble over farthings;[5] must not the workman and the merchant earn [their] living? Let us ordinarily give, or about, what is asked of us;[6] one must have a little confidence in those who sell to us or supply us. If we have no confidence in them, let us not go to them. If we know that they cheat us, let us not go back there; let us try always to deal with good people.

There are also those who never want to rely on the workmen; there must always be third parties to examine, to measure; is it not better to come to an understanding amiably and do things in good faith? All these precautions come only from lack of confidence and good faith; so much the worse

for those who cheat us! they will carry nothing into the other world.

Let us act with simplicity and good faith; let us have a little confidence in others, even if they should not deserve it.

It is better that it be said of us: he's a simpleton, I did him nicely, he paid dearly for it, than that it be said of us: he's a miser, he's a quibbler, there's no end to dealing with him; he would hang himself for a sou.

How harmful to religion, and opposed to the spirit of Jesus Christ, are these remarks that are unfortunately made too often about religious persons!

In everything one must be broad and generous and not fail in charity.

There are some who, under pretext of the spirit of poverty, the virtue of economy, good management, know-how, running the household well, are always haggling, calculating, running hither and thither. All that is often only a pretext to hide avarice, attachment to the things of the earth, or the fear of lacking and mistrust of Holy Providence.

Let us be towards others as you want the good God to be towards you: generous and merciful.

It is the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that gives souls this wisdom to hold the just mean by which one practises detachment and at the same time preserves the interests of God and his poor.

As for thieves, one cannot take much from him who has nothing and who clings to nothing; this counsel of the Saviour: "Of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again" (Lk 6:30), is to make us avoid lawsuits, hatreds, tribunals, disputes, unjust suspicions, rash judgments, to make us preserve peace within ourselves and make us practise gentleness and charity and detachment, even when our goods are taken. By this one avoids troubles of mind, useless inquiries, loss of time, lies, for he who has stolen will not wish to admit it.

If something is taken from us, we must think that those who take it needed it and needed it more than we; that they did not dare ask us for it; and that the good God permits it to force us to practise detachment and charity.

All must turn to good for the just man.

If the thief comes to be discovered, we must give him what he stole, if we can, and especially if he cannot return it, telling him that he would have done better to ask us for it, that we could well have him punished but that, for the love of God and the good of his soul, we forgive him and give it to him so that he may not be damned for it.

By this means one avoids a great deal of trouble, misery, anxiety; the Lord is glorified; we have done a great act of virtue and we shall probably have won our brother to God, because examples of gentleness, detachment and charity convert souls far more than prosecution and severity.

Our Lord, after giving us these rules of conduct, so lofty, so opposed to our earthly ideas, adds: "If you do these things, you shall be

the children of the Most High, who is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, and maketh his rain to fall upon the just and the unjust" (cf. Lk 6:35; Mt 5:45).

*4°) Not to meddle in temporal affairs.*

The ministry of the priest is a wholly spiritual ministry.

When Our Lord sends his apostles, he does not send them to occupy themselves with the world, to work, build, trade; but he sends them to preach and to heal; these are the two great missions that Jesus Christ entrusts to them: "to preach and to heal." "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you" (Jn 20:21).

The apostles, who had received the Saviour's teachings, give us the example of this duty, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles, regarding the care of the poor as an occupation that absorbed them too much and took a time that ought to be wholly employed on the spiritual. They established deacons to occupy themselves with the poor and kept for themselves prayer and preaching as being their only and true occupation: "*nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus*" [Tr.: printed "oratione et praedicationi"] (Acts 6:4).

Saint Paul says so formally in his epistles to Timothy: "Let him who is enrolled in the service of God not entangle himself in the affairs of the world, so as to occupy himself only with pleasing him to whom he has given himself" (2 Tim 2:4).[7]

One must therefore not entangle oneself in temporal affairs.

That is to say, one must set aside every occupation with goods, lands, cultivation, business, sales, purchases, trading, everything that smells of commerce or is done to earn money; everything that brings one into relation with men of business; these things must be left to the laity: priests must not touch them even with the tips of their fingers.[8]

Good laymen must be employed for everything concerning temporal affairs. To conform to this spirit of the Gospel, we shall avoid creating houses or "providences"[9] where one occupies oneself with manual labour; the priest at the head of these houses of work is obliged to occupy himself with all sorts of things, with carpentry, ironwork, shoemaking, sales, purchases, to have correspondence, dealings with men of business, to have shops, depots; one would truly say a merchant on entering the room or the house of these directors.

Our purpose must be wholly spiritual and we must take children, like grown persons, only to instruct them, to teach them their religion, and not to make them work.

No one finds fault that a child of a good family, or even of simple workmen, spends three years, four years, ten years at school or in boarding-schools doing nothing, only for his instruction or his education; and fault will be found with us for keeping poor children five months to form them to the Christian life, to teach them their duties, without making them work.[10]

One would have to understand little of the importance of education or instruction to reproach us with this short time which they spend without working… a time which we ourselves do not always find even sufficient.

We do not, however, disapprove of a little occupational work for a moment in the course of the day, useful occupational work… useful to the house, moral, fitted to occupy their body and to teach them to get themselves out of difficulties, such as mending, preparing meals, cleaning, washing, making rosaries, digging a little garden, etc. We have no servants and we must do our own work; that is our work: to be carpenter, mason, plasterer, sweeper, to wash, to mend; but we reject every trade: factory, manufacture, work for outside, all work that smells of commerce, that is

done to earn money. All this is the business of good laymen and not the business of priests.

It is also to conform to this spirit of poverty and of distance from everything that smells of the world that we shall possess neither lands, nor goods, nor houses, apart from the houses we inhabit.

We shall see to it that we have only the necessary in the way of habitation: house, yard and garden, so as not to have to occupy ourselves with cultivation, a farm, workmen, servants or farmers. All these things always bring with them many inconveniences and embarrassments and are opposed to evangelical poverty and throw us into all sorts of embarrassments that must be avoided.

If the good God sends us goods for our Providences, our schools and our works, we shall establish temporal fathers or mothers, who will possess these goods, make them productive in their own name, have the direction and management of them, and give the revenues to the superior general, who will distribute them himself to the different works, without these persons having to meddle in the use of these revenues.[11]

All this must be done under the general direction of the ecclesiastical superiors of the congregation.

One must distinguish the work one does out of humility, out of obedience, out of necessity, to earn one's living, as Saint Paul did, and a work that smells of commerce, that is done to earn money and brings with it embarrassments of business, dealings, disturbances altogether opposed to the ministry.[12]

There is a work that is in the spirit of poverty, that is even necessary, useful and in conformity with the evangelical spirit, since Jesus Christ says "that he came not to be ministered unto but to minister" (Mt 20:28); the poor man must work and do what he can to earn his living.[13]

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. This practical question came to Father Chevrier's mind; he noted it in the margin, no more.↩
2. Note a. The workman is worthy of his wage.↩
3. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 253. It would be a grave failing against poverty to refuse to pay one's debts, to put them off to another day (…) one must try always to pay cash for what one buys, because the supplier may need his money; and not to pay at once, when one can, is to keep money that does not belong to us and to fail against poverty and against charity, because the supplier may have need of it.↩

4. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 254. Never go to law over such things, unless things altogether unjust are evidently demanded and over which one has no right. But never take anyone to court oneself; wait until one is taken to court oneself.↩
5. Note a. *Liarder* is to discuss, to haggle to save a *liard*, a sou.↩
6. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 253. To gain a few sous, one loses esteem, charity; one is treated as miser, ambitious, egoist. Let us be generous with the workman who works; he has his troubles; the sweat of the workman and of the poor is never paid enough.↩
7. Note a. This translation of 2 Tim 2:4 is no longer accepted today. This text of Saint Paul has only a very distant relation to Father Chevrier's concern; it can at most furnish a comparison. It is now translated: In the profession of arms, no one burdens himself with the affairs of civil life, if he wants to satisfy the one who enlisted him.↩
8. Note b. In Father Chevrier's thought it is a matter of businesses, properties that would have been given him and which would have had to be exploited, made productive so that the revenues would keep the Prado alive. He does not refuse to put his hand to the dough to make the house of the Prado go. His life showed it. (Cf. p. 280.)↩
9. Note c. For the Providences see p. 280.↩
10. Note a. Why did this Abbé Chevrier not transform his Prado into a convent-workshop? He would have had assured revenues; people would gladly have supplied him with work (…for a pittance!). He knew that such criticisms were made of him.↩

11. Note b. On this idea of Father Chevrier see p. 281 and LP no. 22, June 1959 [sic; the date is as printed in the digital copy, evidently an error].↩
12. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 185. Thus to make the Latin students work in order to teach them to practise humility, to make them understand what it is to earn one's living, the trouble others have to make the fruits grow, to keep their linen clean; on the contrary, all the work of the house must be done out of humility and poverty: cleaning, washing, whitewashing the walls… employ outside workmen as little as possible, do the work oneself.↩
13. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 151. "But that we might give ourselves a pattern unto you, to imitate us, by working in order to eat." (2 Thess 3:9) Small humble jobs, useful to the houses, to give the example of work and humility. Jesus worked.↩

↑ Contents

*5°) Ask nothing of anyone.*

When Our Lord Jesus Christ sends his apostles into the world, he says to them: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt 28:19).

"Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses; nor two coats, nor shoes, but sandals" (Mt 10:9; Mk 6:9).

"Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house" (Lk 10:5).

"Eat and drink such things as they have; for the workman is worthy of his hire and of his food" (Lk 10:7).

And elsewhere: "Be not solicitous, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things" (Lk 12:30).

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt 6:31–33).

When, therefore, the Master sends his workmen, apostles, into the world, he does not send them to beg, to ask, to build, to construct, to establish themselves in the world; he sends them to teach, to instruct and to baptize. That is the great end.

And if they work for him, he promises to give them their wages.

When one has a workman work, one must pay him; the workman is worthy of his hire; since it is God who sends, he takes charge of his workmen.

When, therefore, we go to any place whatever, the first thing to

do is to instruct, to teach catechism, to baptize, to heal, to render service to everyone; that is our

first mission. If we begin by building, arranging, aligning, buying, asking, begging, we are not doing God's work: we are doing the material work.

One must begin with the spiritual work. The material work comes only afterwards.[1]

When the apostles travelled the world, they did not begin by begging, asking, constructing and building houses and churches. No.

They began by planting a cross and, at the foot of this cross, they instructed the people; or they instructed in the synagogues, in houses; and when the people were converted, the faithful themselves built the churches because they felt the need of them.[2]

The conversion of the world comes before all.

We must not leave souls to run after stones; what use are stones when one has no souls? One must therefore put the spiritual work before everything; to instruct, to catechize, that is the first duty to fulfil.[3]

If we do not have what is needed, no matter. Did Our Lord have what was needed when he came on earth?

Did he have what was needed in his journeys in Galilee, Judea, [Decapolis]?

Did he have what was needed when he was on his cross?

If there is something to suffer, so much the better! God's work will only be the more solid and

will only succeed the better; one attracts more and wins more souls to God by poverty and suffering than by well-being and riches.

The faithful will give to us far better, or rather will be far better disposed to give to us, when they see us poor and suffering.

If the good God does not send us resources, it is a proof that he wants us to suffer and to merit, by suffering, what we need.

How we lack prudence and wisdom by going too fast! presumption.

It is perhaps also a proof that the good God does not want this work or that we are not worthy to do it, to establish it, to conduct it well; and that it is better not to undertake it than to want to do it by force.

Every work of God must first bear the stamp of poverty and suffering.

Besides, do not collections bring great inconveniences with them? must one not lose much time going to one and to another, to reach Monsieur, Madame, to do the drawing-room, to say many useless words, sometimes even lies; to boast of what one does and often even of what one does not do? to recount the troubles one has or has not, to hear flattering words, praises? and one often comes back only with the spirit of the world and filled with trifles; in acting thus, is one doing God's work? and does the good God attach the success of his work to things so vain and so childish?

It will be said that there is great merit in collecting. Yes, no doubt, there are pains, affronts, humiliations; but there is also merit in suffering and in expecting everything from Providence.

And are not worldly people very often tired of seeing collectors continually at their door? and one gives to them often only with regret, and people do not fail to blame and criticize these perpetual beggars.

Besides, it is neither lands, nor houses, nor gold, nor silver that make God's works. It is men, generous, devoted men who know how to suffer, an-

imated by the spirit of God. That is what is needed to make works.

Give me a soul that is generous, devoted, that knows how to suffer: it will be worth more than a million; and when, beside this soul, another joins it with the same desire and walking towards the same goal, and united together by the love of God, the work is founded.[4]

It is the Holy Spirit who says it: "Blessed is the man that is found without blemish, and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money and treasures. He hath done wonderful things in his life" (Sir 31:8–9).

When one does the spiritual good, the temporal always comes. God has promised it.

If we give an ounce of spiritual goods, God will give us a hundred pounds of temporal goods. That was our motto when we began the Prado.

One understands that laymen doing a work should ask alms to do it, to continue it, to enlarge it.

But the priest, so rich, so powerful, who possesses all the heavenly treasures, who distributes

God's gifts, has he need to go running after money for himself or for others?

Everyone has need of him, the poor and the rich even more than the poor. He is the physician of souls, the consoler of everyone; he gives to everyone the gifts of God; people have more need of him than he has of others; he gives more than anyone will give him; and what is given to them is nothing in comparison with what he himself gives; he is richer than all the rich of the earth, and the rich have more need of him than he has of the rich.

If, then, the priest knows his riches and knows how to distribute as he should the graces of God, he will never lack the goods of the earth.

And to run after the goods of the earth is to announce publicly one's spiritual poverty; it is to admit that he does not work according to God, since God does not pay him; it is to admit that he gives nothing to the world since the world gives him nothing.

The priest who gives the world spiritual life has no need to occupy himself with temporal things. God will send them to him in abundance. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and

all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt 6:33).

The priest who works for God will first be fed and maintained by the poor, and then afterwards will come the rich; that is the rule.[5]

*Practical indications.*

To observe this rule of poverty, of faith and of confidence in God, we propose first of all to occupy ourselves exclusively in everything with God's works and to put God's work before all; never to begin with the temporal but to begin with the spiritual; not to solicit worldly people to give us anything whatever; never to employ any of those human means rather commonly used in the world to get money, such as lotteries, concerts, evening entertainments, meetings, sermons and others where collections are made. All these means of attracting money do not smack of charity, confidence, humility; one must not draw money, nor force people to give it to us.

On the contrary, all the money or goods we receive must be altogether Providence's money and the faithful must give it to us freely, voluntarily, affectionately, spontaneously. We may make our needs known to those who ask us for them, but

not to those who do not ask us. We may go to those who tell us to come to them to fetch something,[6] but not to those who do not know us or say nothing to us. We may take up the collection in church, saying for what purpose; each gives what he wants. We may go to the door of a church, like the poor, to ask alms.

(It is strictly forbidden to make people pay for our services, to solicit the parents whose children we have, to ask them anything whatever; that would be to lose one's freedom of action, to expose oneself to base behaviour, to lose one's dignity and to go against the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is happier to give than to receive; render service to everyone without self-interest.)

In every case it is Providence's money and not solicited, badgered money, which is often given only with regret and to be rid of us. We may still, from the spirit of poverty, humility and penance, go and ask alms for ourselves, like a poor man, begging from door to door or on the road, saying nothing… there is the collection of the poor man who asks for bread when he is hungry… This one is not forbidden when it is really necessary and is for oneself.

When we have nothing, we must first work like Saint Paul so as to be a burden to no one, and when we cannot provide for our needs, we must reduce our expenses and sell what we have in excess. It often happens that one has many useless things, that one has abundance, that one is not really poor, and that is why one does not receive; then sell what you have in excess and work to earn your living and God will send you what you lack.

It is only when one has sold all that one has in excess and works like true poor men that one may go and ask, if one really lacks the necessary. And when one asks, always do it with humility, reserve and prudence, and always remember well that no one owes [us] anything. There are, unfortunately, some who believe that because they are doing a work, because they have such or such a charge, everyone must help them, receive them well,

give to them; those are only proud men; they deserve only blows with a stick and are not worthy to do God's work. Collectors are often people sacrificed as to the spiritual and to their vocation.

It also happens that one gets used to collecting and often one no longer collects to have the strict necessary but to enlarge, to arrange, to accommodate oneself, to enrich oneself. Then one is no longer doing God's work: it is the devil's work, because God said: "Woe to you that are rich!" (Lk 6:24), and he who becomes rich by collecting is only a deceiver and falls into the snares of the devil.[7]

Receive only things in keeping with poverty.

Receive nothing for oneself in particular but for the works and the houses.

Do not receive without permission, and if one receives anything, hand it over to the superior, who disposes of it as he judges fitting and gives it to whom he thinks he ought to give it.

***Ask nothing of anyone in the functions of the holy ministry.***

Our Lord, giving his instructions to his apostles, also says to them these words: "Freely have you received, freely give" (Mt 10:8).

This counsel of perfection that Our Lord recommends to his apostles, Saint Peter also recommends to the priests of the Church, and Saint

Paul puts it into execution in all its rigour in his conduct towards the faithful of Corinth, of Thessalonica, of Ephesus and of all Achaia, and the Roman Ritual speaks of it in its preface addressed to priests.

Saint Peter, writing to priests and bishops, says to them: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly, according to God; not for filthy lucre's sake, but voluntarily" (1 Pet 5:2).

Saint Paul expresses himself with vigour and clearly on this point and shows us how far he pushes detachment and charity on this point.

Here is what he says to the Corinthians: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, why not we rather? Nevertheless, we have not used this power, but we suffer all things, lest we should give any hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (1 Cor 9:11–12). "The Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel; but I have used none of these things, neither have I written these things that they should be so done unto me; for it is good for me to die rather than

that any man should make my glory void" (1 Cor 9:14–15) [Tr.: Chevrier: "to preach the Gospel without charge"].

Writing at another time to the same faithful, he says to them again: "Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not the things that are yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls, although loving you more, I be loved less" (2 Cor 12:14–15).

In his farewell to the bishops of Ephesus, he says: "Watch, keeping in memory that for three years I ceased not, night and day, with tears to admonish every one of you; and now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace" (Acts 20:31–32).

"I have not coveted any man's silver, gold or apparel, as you yourselves know; for such things as were needful for me and them that are with me, these hands have furnished. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring you ought to support the weak" (and remove from them every occasion of believing that one preaches for gain)

"and to remember the word of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive" (Acts 20:33–35).

He writes again to the Corinthians: "For I suppose that I have done nothing less than the great apostles. Or did I commit a fault, humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God freely? I received from other churches what was needful for my ministry towards you, and when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was wanting to me, the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied, and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and will keep myself so. The truth of Christ is in me, that this glory shall not be broken off in me in the regions of Achaia" (2 Cor 11:5, 7–10); and let it not be said that I have received anything from those to whom I announced the Gospel.

Writing to the Thessalonians, he recalls to them again his conduct towards them, saying: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nothing, but in labour and in toil we worked night and day, lest we should be chargeable to any of you; not as if we had not power, but that we might give ourselves

a pattern unto you" (2 Thess 3:8–9), to imitate us, by working yourselves to eat.

And elsewhere he says again to the Corinthians: "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode, and we labour, working with our own hands; we are cursed, and we bless; we suffer persecution, and"

we bear it. "We are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now" (1 Cor 4:11–13).

"In many labours, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor 11:27).

That is how the great Saint Paul conducted himself.

See how far he carried devotedness, poverty, charity.

Where do we stand?

What a difference between our life and his!

---

**Notes**

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 262. We must therefore begin works and parishes by evangelizing, catechizing, praying, spreading spiritual life, leaving to God the care of

sending us money or houses; what use are houses and money if one does not do God's work? Is it not putting the accessory before the principal to begin with houses, collections, visits?… What do you know whether God is calling you to this work? What do you know whether God wants this work you are contemplating? whether you are worthy of this church you want to found, this work you want to build? Begin first with souls.↩

2. Note a. The description is a little hasty and romanticized. Father Chevrier has in his head popular images showing the apostles at the foot of a cross. One must not forget the place held by the collection in the epistles of Saint Paul… but the Father nevertheless understood well the example of the great Saint Paul. (Cf. p. 313.)↩
3. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 264. What to think of those who think only of building, of beautifying their presbytery, their church? who, for that, do nothing but run to the mayors, the prefects, the gentlemen, the ladies? Alas! they leave souls to run after stones. One does not need so much fuss to convert. We are not sent to build but to convert. Today there have never been so many churches and presbyteries built and never so little faith and religion. One should build or do exterior things only when one is forced to and when one has ample means to provide for it without disturbing oneself.↩
4. Note a. A fine sentence that expresses a strong conviction.↩
5. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 266. Is not the priest sent to relieve and to heal? Now how many sick, how many poor in the world… (…) Let us seek God and not worry about the rest; let us live poorly and in charity and we shall become far too rich…↩

6. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 264. …and even so we shall do well to send other persons there…↩
7. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 210. To collect without necessity is a theft; it is to enrich oneself, to build. To collect from habit: it becomes a routine.↩

↑ Contents

***Prescriptions of the Roman Ritual.***

Opening the Roman Ritual, which gives us, in its preface, the rules that we must follow in the administration of the sacraments, we find these words:

"*Illud porro diligenter caveat ne, in sacramentorum administratione, aliquid, quavis de causa vel occasione, directe vel indirecte exigat, aut petat; sed ea gratis administret, et ab omni simoniae atque avaritiae suspicione, nedum crimine, longissime absit.*" "*Si quid vero, nomine Eleemosynae aut devotionis studio, peracto jam sacramento, sponte a fidelibus offeratur, id licite pro consuetudine locorum accipere poterit, nisi aliter Episcopo videatur.*"[1] (Rituale Rom., Preface.)

***Exercising the holy ministry free of charge.***

One cannot find anything clearer, more precise, on this article, and if the contrary usage has prevailed in France, it is only by a concession drawn from the distressing circumstances in which the clergy found itself after the Revolution.

In 1864, being in Rome, we addressed to His Holiness Pius IX a petition to ask him for permission to exercise the holy ministry free of charge. Here is the text of the petition and the reply of His Holiness.

Petition to His Holiness

Most Holy Father, Abbé Antoine François Marie Chevrier, of the Third Order of Saint Francis, humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, sets before him the desire that several priests have to unite, as far as diocesan authority will allow them, to lead a regular life and to exercise the Holy ministry without any other remuneration than what the faithful will spontaneously offer them.

He asks for himself and his priests the blessing of His Holiness.

Rome, 1 October 1864

Here is the reply which His Holiness addressed to us through Father Piscivillo, secretary of His Holiness and editor of the *Civiltà cattolica*, who had kindly presented our petition to the Pope:

***Reply of His Holiness, through Father Piscivillo***

My respectable friend,

At the audience of the 12th of October, I presented your petition to His Holiness. He deigned to read it with all attention. He put questions to me and asked me about several small things that might concern your manner of life. I answered as best I could and as I was able.

After these explanations, His Holiness said to me: I cannot sign anything; it is a matter of the gravest kind in which the Holy See proceeds with all slowness and prudence.

I bless with all my heart Abbé Chevrier and his companions, and I charge you to transmit to them my blessing.

The work is good, but before approving it the years must pass, the bishops must testify to its timeliness and its success; for the moment I can only approve the intentions and bless the persons, which I do with all my heart.

Rome, 1 November 1864

Charles Piscivillo

The Holy Father says that the work is good, but that, to approve it, bishops must be found who will receive us and admit us with this manner of life, and bear witness to the success; that for the

moment he can only approve the intentions and bless the persons.

We could not have had a more favourable and at the same time a wiser answer.

We therefore ask permission to exercise the ministry free of charge and to receive, in our holy functions, only what the faithful will be pleased to give us freely and spontaneously, and never to demand anything for the functions of the holy ministry, in order to put into practice this word of Our Lord: Freely have you received, freely give; and to conform our conduct to that of Saint Paul, who worked with his hands rather than ask, and who made it his glory and happiness to evangelize without charge.[2]

We shall therefore put a box in the sacristy and in the church, destined to receive the offerings of the faithful on the occasion of the administration of the sacraments and of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.[3]

We shall have a brother or a sister pass through the church, after the services, to receive the alms on the occasion of the chairs. We shall avoid placing in our churches and sacristies those notices,

those tariffs which fix the price of holy things, of burials and of chairs.[4]

The faithful who have faith understand this duty towards the priest and give readily to priests who have performed a holy function. But what do you want to ask of the impious, of people who already despise the priest, who regard the priest as a miser and a lover of good cheer, of people who come to church only three or four times in their life: at marriages, baptisms and burials, and who, every time they come to church, hear from the priest or the sacristan these words: you owe so much, and that with authority and insistence.

These ways of acting only turn people away from the church, and they go off swearing, criticizing religion and calling religion a religion of money.

It is a certain fact that very few people give their money to priests with a good heart, and one usually parts with it only while uttering some insulting words.

It is for this reason that Saint Paul would receive nothing from the Corinthians, Thessalonians and others, and that he received from the Macedonians, to show us that one must not ask of those who are not firmly established in the faith, to give

them the example of detachment and not to put any obstacle to the Gospel.

How shall we destroy these bad impressions in the hearts of the peoples? how shall we make confidence and respect for the priest revive there? It will be by detachment and poverty that we shall find our place again in the hearts of the peoples.

How people generally love a disinterested priest, even the most wicked! and how they despise a miserly, interested priest! The poorer and more disinterested we are, the less demanding we shall be, the more we shall be friends of the people[5] and the easier good will be for us.[6] It is better to say: Give what you will, than to say: "you owe me so much, it's so much."

Does it not look like a business when one says: You owe me so much? and when the faithful ask you: "How much is it? how much for the Mass?" And then, how difficult it is not to do things a little for money! not to have regard for those who give more! not to prefer a better-paid Mass or other function to another function less remunerated! and to be tempted to ask or to desire to receive more! "I have not desired gold, nor silver, nor anything" (Acts 20:33).

How money tempts! how it generally arouses desire, and how difficult it is not to commit some fault of this kind, not to imitate Judas: "What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" (Mt 26:15), I will give?[7] With what vigour Our Lord drives the sellers out of the temple; it is a sin that grievously afflicts his heart; one must cut out of holy things everything that smells of money, commerce, traffic.

Is it not often to punish our avarice and our attachment to the goods of the earth that God sends revolutions and has us stripped by the faithful themselves of all that we possess? It is the first thing the revolutionaries do: strip us, make us poor.

Would one not say that the good God wishes to punish us for our attachment to the goods of the earth and thereby force us to practise poverty, since we do not wish to practise it voluntarily? And it is sometimes very fortunate that it happens, because we would fall asleep

in riches and well-being and no longer occupy ourselves with the things of God.[8] When God says: "Woe to you that are rich" (Lk 6:24), he says it still more for his ministers than for others, be-

cause if anyone ought to practise poverty, it is above all the priests, his servants.

*6°) Not to be anxious about the future.*

Our Lord wants us to banish from our heart all anxiety about the future, and he does not fear to speak at length of this confidence that we must have in God and to enter into long details, to show us that God wants to be truly our Father and that it would be doing him a grave injury to be anxious when one works for him.[9]

Let us hear what he says to us: "I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on."Is not the life more than the meat and the body more than the raiment? "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?"And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? "And for raiment, why are you solicitous?"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin; and I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. "Now if God so clothe the grass of the field, which is today and

tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O ye of little faith?"Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? "For after all these things do the heathens seek."But your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things" (Mt 6:25–32). "Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow, for the morrow will be solicitous for itself; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof" (Mt 6:34; Lk 12:22–30).

In the prayer of the Pater, we say: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt 6:11). Elsewhere, he says to us again: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume" (Mt 6:19–20). "Take heed and beware of all covetousness," says Our Lord Jesus Christ, "for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Lk 12:15). Then Our Lord tells us the story of a rich man who, having made great harvests, has his barns enlarged, puts his fruits in them and says: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer" (Lk 12:19); and behold God asks his

soul back from him that very night. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God" (Lk 12:21).

When Jesus sends his apostles on mission, he says to them: "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor script for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff" (Mt 10:9–10). "Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money, neither have two coats" (Lk 9:3) [Tr.: Chevrier adds "for your defence" after "staff"].

By all these discourses, Our Lord wants to banish from our soul all anxiety about the future. We are his children, his workmen, his servants: he will take care of us. "The workman is worthy of his hire" (Lk 10:7).

If he takes care of the little birds, how much more of us who are his privileged creatures, his workmen whom he sends to work in his vineyard. One does not have a workman work without paying him.[10]

By delivering us from all anxiety for the future, Our Lord preserves us by that very fact from all avarice. It is because one is afraid of lacking the necessary in the future that one economizes, that

one spends only the strict necessary, that one seeks to earn as much as possible, to put aside, to spend as little as possible, to put aside, to amass treasures.[11] He who is afraid of the future is narrow, petty, he is always afraid of lacking the necessary later; he is neither generous nor charitable: he is a miser. It is precisely against this unhappy defect that Our Lord wants to put us on guard by giving us this confidence in him.

The miser heaps up his gold and silver; he puts something aside each month, each year; he heaps up as much as he can so as to enjoy it later. He loves to see his treasure; he counts his money from time to time; he invests it to make it yield and swell his interest. One no longer works for God, one works to acquire money. What a misfortune to come to that! When one is rich and has enough to suffice, besides losing the spirit of poverty, one no longer counts on God as when one is poor; one no longer prays as well, one no longer keeps oneself in humility to ask for one's daily bread; one trusts in one's treasures, one becomes negligent, lazy at work. One has enough to live on: one becomes a bourgeois. One sits down and counts one's money, one's revenues; one then regulates one's works by one's revenues, and it is

no longer charity and devotedness that are the principle of our works of charity but the quantity of revenues we have.

Poverty keeps us in humility and confidence in God.

Riches and treasures ruin houses; poverty preserves them and maintains them in vigour and charity.[12] To conform to this spirit of poverty that Our Lord asks, who does not want us to amass treasures but to have confidence in him for the future, we renounce personally everything that can create a future for us, such as annuities, farms, lands, securities, properties.

We shall keep strictly to what the Church asks and requires for the clerical title. We undertake to spend what will be given us, using it for the needs of the poor and the good works of the community, without seeking to accumulate.

To live as far as possible from day to day, asking God for our daily bread, to live in humility and poverty. We shall even avoid having in the houses those large and too abundant provisions which are sometimes a cause of profusion and loss.

We shall possess only the goods necessary to live, such as houses, gardens, yard, homes for the aged and infirm, retreat houses.

The goods possessed by the temporal mothers are for the schools and the choir-schools[13] and are not for priests. The priests must support one another.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. "Furthermore, let the minister take careful heed, in the administration of the sacraments, not to demand or request anything, for any reason or occasion whatever, directly or indirectly; but let him administer them free of charge, and let him be absolutely free from every suspicion — much more from every charge — of simony or greed. If, however, after the ceremony the faithful spontaneously offer something by way of alms or pious attention, it is lawful to accept it according to local customs, unless the bishop judges otherwise."↩
2. MANUSCRIPT Ms X 700… remembering that if we must do charity, it is above all in spiritual things, and that Our Lord died for us.↩
3. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 256 — …in order to leave greater freedom to the faithful and that there be no occasion to reply to their question: How much is it? — putting aside those notices and tariffs which smack of commerce and announce to the people that they must pay at Masses and services.↩
4. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 257 — …To be content with what is given us: "Eat such things as are set before you"

(Lk 10:7), says the Lord. It is this demanding attitude of priests in the churches, in their functions, that angers the people, turns them away from God and from the Church.↩

5. Note a. Another manuscript has this same sentence, with the expression "beloved of the people" and not "friends." (Ms XII 180)↩
6. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 257 — I do not deny the right that God has given the priest to live from the altar. But Saint Paul gave up this right in favour of the bad Christians of Corinth and made it his glory, and he loved to remind them that he asked them for nothing and that, what is more, he worked with his hands so as to be a burden to no one and not to harm the Gospel; why then today should we not see men revive who are detached like Saint Paul, animated by his zeal for souls, to the point of yielding their right in favour of poor sinners, to bring them back to the Church and give them back faith and esteem for the priest, the love of Jesus Christ? Saint Peter says to Simon the magician, who asks him to sell him the power to give the Holy Spirit… (Acts 8:20)↩
7. Note b. The comparison is biting.↩
8. Note a. This opinion on the beneficial result of the spoliations carried out by the revolutionaries cannot have been very widespread in a clergy still in great majority royalist.↩
9. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 261; X 650.

   He does not want us to distrust him by amassing treasures for the future; besides, we do not know whether we shall be able to enjoy them, since God says that he comes to ask back the soul of that rich man who had made great reserves; and, besides the fact that these

treasures are a subject of worries and cares for those who possess them, they still expose to attachment and avarice. One attaches oneself to what one has amassed, one likes to see it and think of it, and the fear of losing it fills our thought and troubles our rest. (Ms XII 261)

Poverty of spirit excludes concern for the future, anxiety; excludes the desire to acquire, every care, every envy, every desire; it is content with what it has and is not troubled by what it has not. This poverty of spirit gives freedom of soul for good and frees us from all anxiety. (Ms X 650)↩

10. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 261. Can God abandon his servant who works for him? and does he not promise the hundredfold to him who has left all for him? Does he not know what we need? and can one think that he who has exercised charity towards others will be deprived of this same charity when he has need of it? No. The word of God is there and he wants us to have confidence.↩
11. MANUSCRIPT Ms X 701. …and amass for whom? often for strangers who will make merry with it and laugh at our avarice…↩
12. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 261. Why does Jesus Christ recommend poverty so much? Poverty keeps us under God's hand, in humility, work, submission, fear, piety, prayer. Riches, on the contrary, put us in well-being, give us our ease, our comforts, make us live as bourgeois. Little by little one gets used to a more comfortable life, one fears to be disturbed, one needs nobody, one has enough to live on. One can do without everyone, even God. Poverty is the strength of the priest, the power of…, a source of good example and encouragement for others.↩

13. Note a. *Maîtrises* designates a kind of clerical school, a minor seminary (cf. p. 281).↩

↑ Contents

*Count on God alone.*

One must not count on the world: today it is for us; tomorrow it will be against us.

The world is variable and changing: today it promises you, tomorrow it withdraws its promise; today you suit it, tomorrow you will displease it; it hangs on a nothing; you do not do as it wishes, it turns away from you.

Woe to him who builds on promises; he will find himself in misfortune and ruin. One must not put one's confidence in such or such a person, either because she is rich or because she is devoted.

One must lean neither on learning nor on wealth.

One must count on no one in the world, not even on those who are with us, unless they have given certain proofs of fidelity and perseverance, and these proofs are in suffering.

"You are they who have continued with me in my temptations" (Lk 22:28), Our Lord said to his apostles.

Suffering is the only proof of fidelity. When you have suffered, I shall count on you. This is why one must never engage anyone in anything before he has given certain proofs of fidelity to the work by suffering.

It is a great error to say: such a person is rich, she will give to me; such a person is generous, she will give to me; such a person esteems me, is fond of me, she will give to me. The world loves its money even more than you and your works. Let us not count either on promises that may be made, nor on deposits that may be made with us, even when we are told that it will belong to us after their death. The proverb is true: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush [Tr.: "un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l'auras"].

Do not accept gifts made by halves; it is only an embarrassment, a worry, and it can also be an occasion of constraint for them and for us.

One must never lean on shaky foundations.

One must count on God alone.

Provided that we truly do God's work, that we really have God's vocation to do his work, God will be for us; it is his promise.

*Conditions for having God's support*

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt 6:33).

The first condition is to be called by God to work at his work.

Then one must seek the kingdom of God before all and his justice, and God will give us the rest.

It is quite certain that if we seek to establish ourselves, if we seek our ease, our comforts, to put up constructions, we are not seeking God but are seeking ourselves, and sometimes the kingdom of God comes only after our own.[1] One must work, and work for God; the ploughman must work to gather grain. God rewards and pays only those who work for him. "The workman is worthy of his hire" (Lk 10:7). One pays only those who work. God also pays only those who work for him. One must work for God and with God, that is, with his spirit. If you overstep the limits of what God wants; if, instead of remaining in the suffering and poverty that God always asks in the works that belong to him, you go outside those limits, you occupy yourselves with too many exterior things, you leave simplicity,

poverty; you venture, you do more than you ought, than you can, you embellish, you spend uselessly. If, in blind presumption, you say: God will pay well — no. The good God does not pay for stupidities, for imprudences, and sometimes he abandons us and lets us fall when we want to do more than he wants, especially in material matters.[2]

It is necessary, therefore, to act in everything with prudence, moderation, wisdom, to know how to be poor, to suffer.

When one has not, never engage in useless expenses and beyond one's strength. One must count on Providence but not tempt Providence, and never undertake anything that one is not sure of being able to pay for.

When the good God sends, act in proportion to what the good God sends. "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want anything? But they said: Nothing" (Lk 22:35).

God sends his apostles in poverty and gives them the necessary, but they do not occupy themselves with building, with temporal affairs.

God promises the hundredfold in this world, when one works for him and really does God's work.

"There is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Mk 10:29–30; Lk 18:29).

How beautiful is this man of God, whose feet scarcely touch the earth!

"*Quam pulchri pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona!*" (Rom 10:15; Is 52:7)[3]

Neither the hands, nor the heart, nor the head touch the earth. And the feet themselves are beautiful, because they only brush the earth.

What freedom, what power this holy and beautiful poverty of Jesus Christ gives to the priest!

What strength he acquires to struggle against the vices of the world!

What an example he is for the world, this world that works only for money, thinks only of money, lives only for money!

And beside this material, sensual world, a wholly spiritual man who does not live for the earth, who despises money and the goods of this world, who wants nothing of these things of the earth and who says to the world: keep your gold and your silver, my treasure is in heaven, my life is Jesus Christ.

Who is content with the strict necessary, who asks nothing of anyone, who works only for God alone, does not quarrel either for his coat or for his cloak; who lets his cloak be carried off and does not ask back what has been taken from him; and who abandons himself into the hands of divine Providence.

How beautiful he is! how great! how admirable is this man!

And how the world must turn round on seeing him and admire in him the power of faith, of love and of confidence in God.

Where are they, these men? they will do wonderful things, says Wisdom [Tr.: cf. Sir 31:9].

O poverty, how beautiful thou art!

Jesus Christ, my Master, found thee so beautiful that he espoused thee on coming down from heaven,

that he made of thee the companion of his life and that he wished to die with thee on the cross.

Give me, O my Master, this beautiful poverty.

May I seek it with solicitude,

may I take it with joy,

may I embrace it with love,

to make of it the companion of my whole life[4] and to die with it on a piece of wood,

like my Master!

"*Hoc fac et vives.*" (Lk 10:28)[5]

---

**Notes**

1. [Empty in the French digital copy. The two notes printed below the body text as loose paragraphs "1." and "2." — Ms XII 198, 267, 266 — appear to belong to notes 447 and 448 and are placed here accordingly.]

   MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 198; Ms XII 267; Ms XII 266. One must be really poor and occupy oneself seriously only with God's work. Without these two conditions, God cannot take charge of us. If we want to live as bourgeois: good table, fine drawing-room, fine furnish-

ings, riding in carriages, having fine clothes, and do God's work negligently, it is quite certain that God is not bound to feed that sort of people. (Ms XII 198) … This is why, resting on these two principles, we want to leave neither foundations, nor annuities, nor goods. If you are saints, you have no need of all that; you will have nothing, and it will be well done because you will not deserve it and would make bad use of it, and it is better to let works perish if they do not contribute to the glory of God and if there is not the spirit of God. (Ms XII 267) If, then, we are truly God's workmen, we shall have our wage, God will send it to us. Is not our house a proof of this great truth? Where are our resources? Where are our revenues? And yet God feeds nearly two hundred persons each day; is not this an evident proof of God's Providence over us? and that if we continue to live as we began, we shall always have God's support and his help.↩

2. [Empty in the French digital copy; see the preceding note.]

   MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 266. The two principles of life for any house whatever are poverty and charity. Join to this the prudence which makes one not go beyond what one can do, so that one must not tempt Providence, that is, do things beyond what we are called to do and say: the good God will pay, as one sometimes hears. Then it is tempting God. But he who waits, who does only what he is forced to do, only what he can do, without exposing himself, he may go on.[^449]↩

3. Note a. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring peace, who bring good news.↩

4. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 200. …Like Saint Francis, my Father, the true poor man of Jesus Christ.↩
5. Note a. Do this and thou shalt live.↩

↑ Contents

## Fourth condition: carry one's cross[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Fourth condition, announces Father Chevrier, but he refers us back to the preceding conditions: "the cross is poverty, renunciation of creatures and of oneself."[2]

In his thought, however, the cross does follow the preceding conditions, for here he draws our attention to the consequences of the renunciations.[3] The accent is placed on one point: the evangelical life puts our patience to the test.

With the grace of God, it is relatively easy to decide on poverty, for example. In the beginnings, indeed, one is generally carried by a certain enthusiasm. One readily agrees that "where there is nothing to suffer there is no true poverty"[4] and that "if there is something to suffer, so much the better! God's work will only be the more solid."[5] These first steps are costly, but they carry their reward with them. On the contrary, when the road lengthens, as time passes, enthusiasm disappears,

and it is then that one must carry the cross each day, that is, "every day be poor."[6] Because of this, "many accept, take the cross and do not carry [it]."[7] What is proposed to us is a meditation on the carrying of the cross, that we may be armed with patience to go to the end. "It is constancy in trial, so dear to Saint Paul. Thus tribulation produces constancy, constancy a proven virtue, proven virtue hope. And hope does not disappoint…"[8]

In having the Way of the Cross meditated in the chapel of the Prado, Father Chevrier liked to say that each one has his cross to take.[9] He recalled it briefly to his

hearers at the second station of the Way of the Cross, the one where, traditionally, one looks at Jesus receiving the burden of his cross.

> "This life is strewn with crosses… all, in all conditions, the palace and the cottage… where one least thinks it, a cross of wood, a cross of gold for the rich man, no less heavy, brilliant in appearance. Poverty, work — crosses in your wife, husband, children. Calumnies, slanders — losses of time, of relatives, disappointments, lack of success.

> It is our human condition — consequence of sin, of sickness.
>
> Wherever we go, whatever place we live in, inevitable."[10]

This kind of meditation is found several times in his notes on the Way of the Cross or on the Mysteries of the Rosary. In the True Disciple, the conclusion is that the priest, and every apostle in general, must not be surprised to share the common lot — on the contrary, for he has wished to take up the cross of the evangelical life.[11]

The end of the chapter may leave us perplexed. After an evocation of apostolic patience, of the constancy of Saint Paul, we fall back on a very exterior practice: the use of a crucifix, to be worn on the left side, 9 to 10 centimetres in length.[12] We find here precisely an example of the way in which Father Chevrier proceeds.

He has his fundamental intuition about the priest. For this intuition not to remain in the realm of ideas, it must be realized in a way of life. To find this way of life, before having sufficient personal experience, Father Chevrier looks for what he could take from others.

In the present case, he thinks of borrowing the usage of certain religious and above all of missionary societies. The point is to have constantly with oneself a cross large enough to be able to use it,[13] that is, an instrument destined for catechism, for the proclamation of Jesus Christ crucified. But this cross is also a reminder: to fulfil this ministry, one must resemble Jesus Christ carrying his cross.[14]

In fact, if we do not always carry a crucifix on us, we often have occasion to have one before our eyes, in church, on a work table, on the wall of a room. Is it for us routine or humble apostolic practice?

The fourth condition for being a true disciple of Jesus Christ is to take up one's cross.[15]

*Doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ on this point.*

Our Lord says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).

"He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:38).

"Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:27).

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk 9:23).

We see from these words of Our Lord Jesus Christ that, to be his true disciple, one must first *take up one's cross.*

That if one does not take it, one cannot be his disciple: an essential condition.

That one must not only take it, but also "carry it."

One must, thirdly, carry it each day.

All this is well explained in the preceding texts.

***What is the cross?***

It is the sign of suffering.

A general sign that includes every kind of suffering.

Sign of salvation, sign of redemption, sign of the Christian and above all of the true disciple of Jesus Christ.

The cross is poverty, renunciation of creatures and of oneself.[1] It is the pain there is in observing the law of the Lord, the yoke of the Lord. It is the yoke of the Gospel that we see in this book. It is

the knowledge of this life so different from that of other men.

This cross, it is Jesus who presents it to us and says to us: "Take up my yoke upon you; for my yoke is sweet and my burden light" (Mt 11:29–30).

"*Ubi amatur non laboratur aut si laboratur labor amatur.*"[a]

It is the rule of a house.

It is the persecutions of the world that are foretold, the hatreds of the world, the thorns.

The cross is salvation, it is glory.

How glorious the cross has become since Jesus Christ took it and carried it!

Jesus presents his cross to generous souls.

***One must take up one's cross. Accept. Take voluntarily.***

When one becomes a priest or a religious, it is therefore not to lead an agreeable life, more comfortable than others, than people of the world. No, far from it; on the contrary, it is to take up a heavier cross than that of people of the world, to lead a stricter, more perfect life, one more painful to nature.[2b]

One must take up one's cross, take the cross that Jesus gives us.

A cross in a strict and rigorous life, the evangelical life.

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XI 36–39. After following these three degrees of renunciation, one must take up one's cross, that is, one must accept the consequences of these three acts of renunciation: when one has left all one's goods, one is poor, and poverty is a cross; when one has renounced creatures, the world, one has not the help of men, their friendship, their protection, their affection — privation — then there is the cross of this isolation from the world, from the joys and commerce of the world, it is a cross. When one has renounced oneself, that is, the enjoyments of the mind, the affection of the heart, the comforts of one's body, the acts of one's will, one has to suffer, it is a cross.

2. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 288. When one becomes a priest or a religious, a disciple of Jesus Christ, it is not to amuse oneself, live as a bourgeois, make a position for oneself, pile up money, have a good time, be happier than in the world. No. It is to take up the cross, it is to suffer, it is to

work, it is to follow Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ scourged, persecuted, poor, crowned with thorns.

Note a. Where one loves, one does not toil, or if one toils, the toil is loved. This is a distorted quotation of a sentence of Saint Augustine taken from a work on widowhood. (*De bono viduitatis,* XXI) [Tr.: the French prints "XXVI"]

Note b. *Painful to nature.* This means conditions of life that are not necessarily granted to our spontaneous inclinations. The word "nature," in this kind of expression, does not have a philosophical or theological sense.

And this condition is so essential that Our Lord says that he who does not accept this cross, who does not take up his cross, cannot be his disciple. So, if one does not wish to accept, to take this cross offered by Jesus Christ the Master, one must give it up.

To take up the cross is therefore to take the evangelical life as Our Lord gives it to us, it is to accept the sufferings attached to this life of poverty, of renunciation (renunciation of creatures, renunciation of oneself), of sacrifice, of devotedness. If one does not accept this, one cannot be his disciple.

If anyone does not take up his cross, he is not worthy of me. God does not want him for his disciple.

Our Lord therefore wants with him courageous, generous souls. One must have the courage to accept this cross that Our Lord presents to us, or else give it up, because Our Lord does not want us.

"*Non est me dignus.*" (Mt 10:37)[16]

***Invitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to take up the cross.***

Our Lord invites us to take up his cross.

"*Jugum meum suave est et onus meum leve.*"[17] (Mt 11:30)

He took it himself for us.

We must take it up in his footsteps. He himself presents it to us.

"*Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*"[18] (Lk 1:38)

***Each has his cross in the world. Different crosses for each position.***

Each has his cross to take.

Cross of the Christian, of the soldier, of the priest, of the disciple, of the ploughman, of the father of a family.

*One must carry one's cross*

It is not only a matter of taking it.

One can take a thing and not carry it. One can accept a thing and not use it.

But Our Lord dots the i's.

"Whosoever doth not carry his cross cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:27).

One must not only accept it but carry it. Many accept, take the cross and do not carry [it].

To carry the cross is really to bear the sufferings of the cross. There are some who take the cross and who cast it off as soon as it hurts a little. That is not it. One must carry it.

*"Tollite jugum meum super vos."*[19]

That is to say, one must bear the inconveniences of the apostolic life. One must bear the sufferings which are the consequences of poverty, of renunciation of creatures, of oneself; of the hatred, of the contempt of the world, of the persecutions which are the consequences of our life opposed to

the world. Consequences of a more serious rule of life, of a life of detachment, of renunciation and of sacrifice.

One must carry one's cross, that is, bear all that with humility, patience, resignation.

With joy and love since it is the good God's cross, and it is by the Cross that we go to heaven, that we glorify God on earth, that we save souls.

It is by carrying his Cross that Jesus Christ saved us and that he himself entered into glory.

"*Oportuit pati Christum et ita intrare in gloriam.*"[20] (Lk 24:26)

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (Jn 12:32).

One must therefore carry the Cross, and carry it with joy and love, thinking that it is by the cross that we glorify God and win souls.

"*Tollite jugum meum super vos.*" (Mt 11:29)

One must bend the shoulders, and load oneself with it.

"*Super vos.*"[1] (Mt 11:29)

***Carry one's cross every day.***

Our Lord adds lastly:

"Let him carry his cross every day!" (Lk 9:23)

How he thinks of everything; how well he determines our duties!

We must carry our cross every day; every day we must begin again.

1 MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 290. Encouragements of Our Lord to his disciples: Take up my yoke upon you… and learn… (Mt 11:29). The disciple is not above the master (Mt 10:24). Blessed shall you be when… (Mt 5:11); "they that suffer persecution for justice' sake" (Mt 5:10). Jesus carried his Cross.

How we must carry it: — With submission — it is the will of God… it is our duty as disciples. Who takes not up his Cross (Lk 14:27); as a duty since one must fill up in one's flesh what is wanting to the Passion of Jesus Christ (Col 1:24). Sheep in the midst of wolves (Mt 10:16). — With patience — When they strike you on the right cheek (Mt 5:39). Bless them that curse you, pray for them that persecute you (Lk 6:28). Not to resist evil (Mt 5:39). Overcome evil by good (Rom 12:21). "Fear not those who kill the body" (Mt 10:28). — With joy — Thinking that it is by the cross that we resemble Jesus Christ, that we win Heaven, and that we convert souls. To suffer with

gentleness, patience accompanied by joy (Col 1:11, Vulg.) thinking of the fruits that flow from the Cross. When I shall be lifted up on the Cross I will draw all things to myself (Jn 12:32). I die daily to acquire for you glory [Tr.: cf. 1 Cor 15:31] (1 Cor 15:31). Always bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus (2 Cor 4:10).

When one leaves it off in the evening, one must take it up again in the morning and carry it as on the day before and better than on the day before.

Every day,

without growing weary,

with perseverance,

if one lets it fall,

one must take it up again to the end.

One must not be discouraged on the way of the cross.

There is always something to suffer, until death, and one will have to die on the cross, let oneself be fastened to the cross as Our Lord; to fall sometimes but to rise by prayer and continue one's march.

Perseverance is needed.

Our Lord tells us this word because poor nature often revolts and often grows weary and wants to leave the cross.

But no. Once one has begun, one must persevere and carry one's cross every day.

Every day teach catechism,

every day be poor,

every day bear with the neighbour, the world,

resist the weariness of nature with the grace of God.

The cross was the love of the saints, and of Saint Paul above all, who loved the cross so much: he made it his glory.

"*Mihi absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi*" (Gal 6:14)[21] (a).

"I bear imprinted on my body the wounds of my Lord Jesus" (Gal 6:17)[22]

He delighted in the cross.

He rejoiced in the cross.[23]

*The cross is the love of the saints.*

*Practice.*

To remind ourselves of this word of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the duty this word imposes, we shall wear on the left side a blessed and indulgenced cross, 9 to 10 centimetres in length (a Christ), to remind us of this great truth; we shall kiss this Christ, especially morning and evening and also during the day.[24] (a)

Note a. Cf. p. 328.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 277–282.↩
2. P. 329.↩
3. Cf. p. 330, note 1.↩
4. P. 295.↩
5. P. 307.↩
6. P. 333.↩
7. P. 331.↩
8. Rom 5:3–5; 2 Cor 6:4 and 12:12.↩
9. P. 331.↩
10. Ms VI 251.↩
11. P. 331.↩
12. P. 334.↩
13. Cf. p. 334, note 1.↩
14. Cf. p. 334, note 1.↩

15. Note a. In going through this chapter one will see that we are certainly still far from a definitive drafting.↩
16. Note a. He is not worthy of me. (Mt 10:37)↩
17. Note b. My yoke is sweet and my burden light.↩
18. Note c. Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.↩
19. Note a. Take my yoke upon you. (Mt 11:29)↩
20. Note b. Ought not Christ to have suffered, and so to enter into his glory?↩
21. Note a. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Gal 6:14)↩
22. Note b. This translation is a little forced. Saint Paul does not necessarily speak of the wounds of Christ. It is better to translate simply: the marks of Jesus.↩
23. Note c. The parallel Ms, XII 281, quotes Saint Paul abundantly (Rom 8:36; 1 Cor 4:9; 2 Cor 4:8; 2 Cor 5:1; 2 Cor 6:4; 2 Cor 11:22 ff.; 2 Cor 12:7; 2 Tim 4:6). Ms XII 279 begins a study "Examples of Jesus Christ…"↩
24. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 287; Ms XII 293.

    It is to express this thought, this word of the Saviour, that all religious wear the cross outwardly, to remind them that above all they must carry it inwardly and resemble Jesus Christ carrying his cross. (Ms XII 287)

    To wear a simple cross but large enough to be able to use it; to have a small pocket on one's left side to place it in, and to remember that the cross is the sign of suffering and that the sight of this cross always leads us to love and bless suffering. (Ms XII 293)↩

↑ Contents

## Fifth condition: follow Jesus Christ[a]

↑ Contents

Note a. Ms XII 295–299.

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* "Last condition to be fulfilled."[1] When one speaks of following Jesus Christ, can one still speak of a condition? Are we not at the goal itself? Yes, no doubt, but Father Chevrier does not forget the term towards which our efforts must converge, the term of God's design. This goal will be reached only when "God shall be all in all."[2] Thus, following Jesus Christ in the present life is still a creation.

However, the pages that follow describe a summit of spiritual and apostolic life, impossible to surpass on earth; it is holiness accomplished as far as can be in the present human condition.

We shall often find again the same themes as in all that precedes, because Father Chevrier never keeps rigorously to a plan. But these themes are also taken up again because they must be seen in a new light, in the state of one who is "freed from all that can stop our march,"[3] fully free in the Holy Spirit.

Then he can "go, travel about, walk, go up" with Jesus Christ, "never leave him."[4] These pages put

us in communion with the mystery of the passage, of the Passover of the Son of God among us. Come from God, he returned to God and draws his disciples behind him. Is not that the whole Gospel?[5]

What is the use of considering a state to which no one will dare to think himself arrived? Precisely, it is necessary to think of it, for if we do anything good, it is in the measure in which we aspire to this state. Follow me, says Jesus in calling his disciple,[6] and even if he says explicitly: "Sell what thou hast," he always adds:[7] "Follow me."[8]

Moreover, Jesus said to his disciples: "You who have followed me." Yet many things still had to be purified in them. But it is true, this state so perfect in itself is already secretly present and at work in us.

Thus, even if in a manner still visibly very wretched, we can without further delay strive to follow Jesus Christ, "without having fulfilled the other conditions," provided that we have the essentially required disposition: "to have a serious and effective will to fulfil them and to be disposed to make all the sacrifices to fulfil them."

For the chapters of this last part of the True Disciple, one can find again a model plan which in fact inspired earlier parts of the book.

Here is this plan:

Examples of Jesus Christ.

Teachings of Jesus Christ.

Summary.

Examples of Saint Paul.

Teachings of Saint Paul.

Summary.

Practices, that is, applications for us.

This plan is, so to speak, never followed completely because, as we have already said, Father Chevrier never obliges himself to keep exactly to his plan. It must also be said that most of the chapters that follow remained unfinished. They are rather brief and the corresponding introductions will be so too.

The general order of this last part is worth noting. This order is not without importance for grasping Father Chevrier's thought.

One begins with the fast and prayer of Christ: it is, in fact, on the sojourn in the desert that what

is called the public life of Christ opens. It is a matter of following Jesus Christ announcing the Gospel. Indeed, this whole last part is ordered around the chapter "Follow me in my preachings."

Fasting and prayer precede the work of the preacher.

Gentleness, humility, poverty are essential dispositions of one who wants to announce the Gospel to the poor.

It is in communion with the charity of Christ for men that this ministry must be accomplished.

One must also prepare to sustain the struggles, persecutions, sufferings that are the inevitable consequences of announcing the word, for it will be with the disciple as it was with the Master.

And all this leads one day, for the disciple, to following his Master in his death in order to pass with him into glory, to the Father.

1. Mt 19:28

2. P. 339

3. Pp. 441–452.

4. Jn 15:20.

*[Follow Jesus Christ]*

This is the fifth and last condition to be fulfilled in order to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord always places this condition last, to show us that one cannot fulfil it without having fulfilled the others, or at least having the serious and effective will to fulfil them and being disposed to make all the sacrifices to fulfil them.

For indeed, how could one follow Our Lord, so lofty, so perfect, who is the spiritual and divine man, if we are still wholly carnal, wholly attached to matter?

How follow a man who walks so fast and climbs so high, if one is oneself encumbered with all sorts of exterior, temporal things and if one is not oneself freed from all that can stop our march?

And he always puts this condition after having pointed out the others, and it is the one he repeats most often.

Every time he speaks of the others, he always adds this one, to show us that this one must always follow the others and that it is the crowning of the others and that it is the principal one and the goal towards which we must tend:

To follow Jesus Christ.

"*Ego sum via.*" (Jn 14:6)[9]

"Follow me — Follow me — Follow me"

It is this condition that most glorifies God on earth and that is most useful to the neighbour and that leads most directly to heaven.

"*Ego sum via, veritas et vita.*" (Jn 14:6)[1]

When Jesus chooses his apostles, "he made that twelve should be with him" (Mk 3:14), not leave him, follow him everywhere.

***What is it to follow Jesus Christ?***

To follow Jesus Christ is to go everywhere he goes, it is to do all that he does, it is never to leave him.

It is to imitate him in everything possible.

It is to follow his examples, it is to resemble him as perfectly as possible in order to become another himself: "*Sacerdos alter Christus.*"[10]

It is to be able to say like Saint Paul: "*Imitatores mei estote sicut et ego Christi.*"[11]

It is what Our Lord indicates when he says to his apostles: "*Exemplum dedi vobis ut quemadmodum ego feci ita et vos faciatis.*"[12]

To follow Jesus Christ is to go with him into the Crib to make oneself poor there.

It is to go with him into Egypt to share his exile and poverty there.

It is to stay with him at Nazareth in silence to lead an obscure and hidden life there.

It is to go with him into the desert to fast and pray there.

It is to travel through the towns and villages to instruct the ignorant, console the afflicted, heal the sick and announce salvation to the world.

It is to combat vices and struggle against evil with courage, firmness.

It is to walk in the midst of the persecutions and injustices of the world.

It is to go up on Calvary to die there.

It is to let oneself be nailed to the cross and die there to obey God and save the world.

It is to go to heaven with him, because he said that those who would have followed him on earth would be beside him in heaven.

"The servant is not above his master: it is enough for the servant that he be as his master" (Mt 10:24–25), to be perfect.

"*Ego sum via.*" (Jn 14:6)

It is not only to follow him exteriorly by doing as he did, following his examples, but it is also to be filled with his spirit.

"*Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu.*" (Phil 2:5)[a]

To be filled with his spirit of humility, poverty, gentleness and charity:

"*Qui dicit se in ipso manere debet sicut ille ambulavit et ipse ambulare.*" (1 Jn 2:6)[b]

Thus it would be little to be content with the exterior, but one must above all fill oneself with his interior, in order to walk really in his footsteps and act in the same sense and the same spirit.[1]

***How must one follow Jesus Christ?***

With faith, love and generosity!

He is the eternal Word, the living Word of God.

With faith. "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6).

One can follow someone closely, from afar; "from afar, close by, not at all."

"I am the light of the world; he that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn 8:12).

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 315 — Before following Jesus Christ, all there is to do: renounce everything, the earth, creatures, oneself; take up the cross and follow him. Without all these conditions, one is incapable of really following Jesus Christ and becoming a true disciple.

"*Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu.*" (Phil 2:5)

To follow Jesus Christ truly, one must be freed from everything, one must be light. This is the heavenly man. Only on these conditions can one truly be his disciple.

Follow me in my spirit; it is not a matter of doing as one wishes, as one thinks, but as Jesus Christ thinks, wishes. My way of doing: "spirit of Jesus Christ."

Follow me, that is, do as I do, go by the same road as I; follow me on the road I took to accomplish my mission; do as I have done, walk in my foot-

steps, take no other road, for you could make a mistake and not arrive at the goal. You must continue my work. You are my apostles, my […] my successors: you must do as I do to arrive at the goal. I converted the universe: I took the road of the crib, of the cross. Take the same route to arrive at the same goal, otherwise you will not arrive… in spirit.

I send you as my Father sent me (Jn 20:21); do therefore as I do, if you want to fulfil the mission that I entrust to you in the name of my Father.

Note a. Have among yourselves the same sentiments that were in Christ Jesus.

Note b. He who says that he abides in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

Note c. Illegible word.

"*Verbum vitae.*" (1 Jn 1:1)

"*Lux vera quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum.*" (Jn 1:9)

"*Splendor patris, candor lucis aeternae.*" (Wis 7:26) [Tr.: Vulgate wording; cf. Heb 1:3]

"*In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae.*" (Col 2:3)

"*In ipso inhabitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter.*" (Col 2:9)[a]

"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).[1]

With love. — He is our Saviour.

We are his, he called us, he has loaded us with his benefits, he has given us everything; he is our Father, our benefactor: follow me.

"*Jugum meum suave et onus meum leve*" (Mk [sic; Mt] 11:30), "*et invenietis requiem animabus vestris*" (Mk [sic; Mt] 11:29).[b]

With generosity. — "The disciple is not above the master" (Lk 6:40).

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master" (Mt 10:25).

"I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest" (Mt 8:19).

"I am ready to die for thee" (Lk 22:33; Mt 26:35) [Tr.: printed "Lk 22:29"].

"I will lay down my life for thee" (Jn 13:37).

"Let us also go, that we may die with him" (Jn 11:16).

There are three kinds of disciples: the good, the bad, the perfect.

The good do the necessary; law; many, good parish priests, good curates.

The bad do nothing, scandalize.

The perfect, who feel the need of following Jesus Christ more closely, who are touched by his poverty, his charity, his devotedness, [his] sacrifice, and who seek to resemble him as much as possible; more than ordinary life: that is not enough for them.

What a difference between these holy and generous souls and the others. How much more they glorify the good God.

One true disciple glorifies Jesus Christ more than a hundred other good ones.[2]

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 327 — It is not a man whom we follow, it is the Son of God. In following Jesus Christ, we follow the true light. He is the Word of life, he is our Master, our king, our solid foundation; he is the truth, the life, the resurrection.

2. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 318 — Those who feel the need of following Jesus Christ more closely in

poverty, humility, suffering; many good ones, but it seems that it is not sufficient, that one can do better, that one must have more life, that this ordinary life does not content the soul, does not satisfy the desire to be God's, that one can do better, that Jesus Christ asks something more of us. Follow me.

=========

Note a. Word of life. The true light that enlightens every man coming into this world. Splendour of the Father. Brightness of eternal light. In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In him dwells corporeally all the fullness of the divinity.

Note b. My yoke is sweet and my burden light, and you shall find rest for your souls.

No slowness, disgust, negligence.

Not from afar, but close.

"In this is my Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit and become my disciples" (Jn 15:8) [Tr.: Chevrier's order: "It is the glory of my Father that you become my disciples and bear much fruit"].

*How one must follow Jesus Christ.*

If we examine the principal actions of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we find that to imitate Jesus Christ one must follow him

in fasting and prayer,

in his gentleness and humility, and his poverty,

in his charity for men,

in his preachings,

in his combats,

in his persecutions,

in his sufferings,

and then we shall follow him in his glory.

"*Ego sum via.*" (Jn 14:6)

"*Exemplum.*"

Let us follow Jesus Christ.

---

**Notes**

1. P. 339.↩
2. 1 Cor 15:28.↩
3. P. 339.↩
4. P. 339.↩
5. Jn 13:3.↩
6. Mt 8:9, etc. [sic]↩

7. P. 939 [sic; evidently 339].↩
8. Mt 19:21.↩
9. Note a. I am the way, the truth, the life.↩
10. Note a. The priest is another Christ.↩
11. Note b. Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1)↩
12. Note c. I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you do also. (Jn 13:15)↩

↑ Contents

## 1°) Follow me in my fasting.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Father Chevrier sees fasting in relation to the apostolic mission, in conformity moreover with what is found in the Bible.

The rules he gives appear to us rigorous. It must be remembered that at the time the ecclesiastical law of fasting was still demanding. One had notably to fast every day of Lent, Sundays excepted. Father Chevrier adds to this the fasts then prescribed in the Third Order of Saint Francis. But he asks that one take "the necessary as to quantity, in order to be able to teach catechism,"[1] and one senses that his preferences go to the fast of charity[2] "when one has not time to eat and prefers to

render service to the neighbour rather than go and eat."[3]

At the centre of everything, proposed for our meditation, are those words of Jesus that so struck Father Chevrier: My food is to do the will of him that sent me.[4] "What beautiful words!"[5]

For this chapter, Father Chevrier made a continuous text, leaving, as usual, a margin in which he doubtless intended to put sub-titles, as can be seen in the typographical arrangement adopted; practically, he did not do this work; there are only two sub-titles at the end.

---

Note 1. P. 354

Note 2. P. 353

Note 3. P. 351

Note 4. Jn 4:34

Note 5. P. 351. See also pp. 182, 188, 478

It is the first example that Jesus Christ gives us in his life, on beginning his apostolic life; before preaching, teaching, he withdraws.

To fast is to deprive oneself of food

either to obey a precept of the Lord,

or to acquire, buy some particular grace,

or to fulfil a precept of charity that is more pressing than that of going to take one's food.

This is what we remark in the conduct of Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Master.

Three acts preparatory to his mission.

— Baptized by John. To receive the consecration of John, the testimony. John's mission was to show Jesus Christ, to preach Jesus Christ, to announce him to the world. He comes, so to speak, to receive John's mission, since John was his precursor, the angel.[2] We cannot act without a mission… It was his exterior consecration.

— Fasting, stripping of the flesh; cutting away of everything carnal, coarse, natural.[3]

— Prayer, a spiritual man through fasting and prayer. And first we see him, immediately after receiving baptism, impelled by the Holy Spirit, going into the desert to spend forty days in fasting and prayer.

He fasts then in this circumstance to obey the will of his Father and to buy the graces he needs to begin his great mission on earth, which is to evangelize men.

So we, when we have some mission to fulfil, must begin it with fasting and prayer.

The Holy Spirit himself says: "*Bona est oratio cum jejunio.*"[4]

One day the apostles had been unable to cast an unclean devil out of the body of a possessed man and they asked the reason. Our Lord answered them that "this kind of devil can be cast out only by fasting and prayer" (Mt 17:20 [Vulgate 17:21]).

There are therefore graces that we can obtain only by fasting and prayer.

That is what Moses did on the mountain, where he fasted forty days and forty nights.

That is what Saint John the Baptist did in the desert, where "his meat was locusts and wild honey" (Mt 3:4).

"Anna departed not from the temple, serving God day and night with fastings and prayers" (Lk 2:37).

And the apostles themselves, before laying hands on Paul and Barnabas: they fasted and prayed and, "after fasting and praying, they imposed hands on them and sent them away" (Acts 13:3).

And Saint Paul recommends to priests to show themselves worthy ministers of God by bearing with patience tribulations, imprisonments, necessities, and living in labour, watchings, fastings and chastity (2 Cor 6:4).

"In all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings, in fastings" (2 Cor 6:4–5).

"[I have been] in many labours, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor 11:27).

Four kinds of fasts:

1. One may fast because the law commands it,

2. or because one has nothing to eat,

3. or also because one wishes to do penance to obtain some particular graces,

4. or because one has not the time to eat and prefers to render service to the neighbour rather than go and eat.

There is the voluntary fast by which one deprives oneself of food to render service to the neighbour.

It is love that imposes charity on us, and the love of God and of souls, by which one prefers to serve God and the neighbour to taking one's food.

This is what Our Lord expresses very well when he answers his apostles who tell him to eat: "I have meat to eat which you know not. My meat is to do the will of my Father" (Jn 4:32, 34).

What beautiful words! The will of his Father is his food; while the others think only of eating, of buying, of preparing what they are to eat, Jesus Christ thinks only of doing the will of his Father and forgets, so to speak, this nourishment of the body that we seek so much. The will of his Father comes before all; he leaves everything to accomplish this holy will.

What a fine example for us who fear so much to delay our meals, to lack a dish, the dessert! How little he occupied himself with this bodily food! Sitting on the edge of Jacob's well, he asks a little water of the Samaritan woman. When the apostles bring him something to eat, he tells them he has a food they know not. Invisible food, which is to do the will of his Father.

"Passing through the cornfields with the apostles, they pluck the ears and rub them in their hands to eat them, because they were hungry" (Mt 12:1).

He seeks figs on a fig tree because he was hungry (Mt 21:18).[5]

And often they had not time to eat because the crowd of people was so great that they could not go out, and they probably contented themselves with a piece of bread.

On the cross he thirsts and is given only gall and vinegar.

That, then, is how Our Lord lived.

He sought the will of his Father and the salvation of the neighbour before his own food.

And this fast which charity imposes is not the least pleasing to God, and it is worth as much as that which is commanded and which one often keeps only by halves or with repugnance.

It is of this fast that Saint Paul speaks: voluntary fast, fast of charity.

The saints had no fixed hour to eat; they ate as though running, and they ate what they had, what they found, what they could. And we, we al-

ways want to be well treated, to have always a certain number of dishes, not to lack dessert.

To have always quantity and quality.

To have one's table always well laid, well clean, well prepared, well arranged.

Our Lord and the saints had now what was needed, now they lacked the necessary and they did as they could.

"*Scio esurire. Scio abundare.*" (Phil 4:12)[6]

The merit of fasting comes from the fact that one makes to God a real sacrifice of oneself, by obedience or voluntarily. And when this privation is made from a motive of charity for the neighbour, when one deprives oneself to be useful to one's neighbour, then there is double merit.

As to abstinence, God shows us its

necessity and usefulness when he himself imposes it on Adam to make him merit heaven by an act of obedience and privation; it is therefore just and legitimate.[7]

*Practice.*

To follow Our Lord Jesus Christ in his fasting and enter into his spirit, we shall observe, as far

as we can, the fasts of precept, the fasts of the poor, the fasts of charity and abstinence.

— "Fasts of precept" are the fasts of the Church: Lent, vigils, Ember days; fasts of the Third Order: Advent (Wednesdays and Fridays only), the vigil of Saint Francis and of the Immaculate Conception and every Friday of the year.

— "Fast of the poor": to know how to fast when one has nothing to eat; to eat what is given us once a month, on the day of the monthly retreat.

— "Fast of charity": that is, we shall not fear to delay our meal when it is necessary to exercise charity, to leave table to go and fulfil another duty of charity towards the neighbour. One must forget oneself for others; in this case, so as to disturb no one and not be for others a cause of displeasure or trouble, one will eat one's portion which is to remain on the table and which one will take care not to carry away. If it is cold, so much the worse. And, if one wishes, one will do well to wash one's plate and glass so as to cause no disturbance to anyone on one's account. One must know how to suffer and make no one suffer.

Abstinence: on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

*Observations on fasting.*

On fast days we shall take the *frustulum*[8] permitted by the Church.

On fast days there will always be served in the morning bread, wine and fruit, and each will take what is necessary as to quantity, to be able to teach his catechism.

Those with more delicate, weaker stomachs may take chocolate or coffee with water, in sufficient quantity to fulfil the duty of their charge, because the duties of charity, of spiritual offices, the employments called charges are more excellent than fasting. If one cannot fast materially, one can always do the spiritual fast.

When one cannot fast at all, one will say, kneeling, before breakfast in one's room or in the refectory, if possible, an Our Father and a Hail Mary on one's knees, arms in the form of a cross, to remind us that if we eat it is by grace and by necessity and that we must ask pardon of God before doing so.

We must insist above all that there be a difference between fast days and other days; that the morning service be altogether different and represent a sign of penance.

If health does not permit fasting, one may take the same quantity of food, but let it be different, that is, poorer, simpler, coarser: bread, wine, fruit, but nothing cooked, prepared on purpose, and then one enters into the spirit of penance.

---

**Notes**

1. Ms XII 299–305.↩
2. Note a: The word "angel", which means messenger, is applied to John the Baptist by Saint Mark.↩
3. Note b. "Natural," in the sense of subject to our spontaneous inclinations.↩
4. Note a: Prayer is good with fasting. (Tob 12:8)↩
5. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 326 — He eats with his apostles in the plains, the deserts, the mountains: they would go and buy something to eat and eat it under a tree.↩
6. Note a. I have learned to be full as well as to be hungry. (Phil 4:12)↩
7. Note a. This interpretation of the "forbidden fruit" of Gen 3 is not peculiar to Father Chevrier. It considerably narrows the sense of this passage of Scripture.↩
8. Note b. Latin word designating a very light meal: to take just a "bite."↩

↑ Contents

## 2°) Follow me in my prayer[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Father Chevrier never gave many explanations of what prayer is in itself, whether in the True Disciple or elsewhere. He prefers to show its results, the good effects of prayer.[2] These effects culminate in the transfiguration of the one who prays, who is more and more transformed into the image of Christ.[3] We are thus established in a view that is at once apostolic and contemplative.

How to learn to pray? Father Chevrier simply places us before the examples and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is by dint of looking at Jesus praying, of listening to him, that one can discover prayer in oneself.

Another concern of Father Chevrier is to vivify the usual exercises of prayer. That is how he always did, whether with the children of First Communion, or with the public of the chapel of the Prado, or with the priests and seminarians of the house. He did not seek specially to create new formulas of prayers, but he made many attempts to adapt the formulas commonly used around him, particularly the Rosary and the Way of the Cross. In his efforts of adaptation he wants to put in the foreground the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the meditation of the mysteries of Christ. The

formulas of prayers are used to help and support this meditation and, if need be, they are adapted to attain it better.

For the celebration of the Divine Office, to which priests are bound, a similar concern is perceived. He proposes intentions of prayer for each part of the Office.[4] It is an attempt to show the unity that must exist between the priest's prayer and his apostolic activity.

Another preoccupation can be perceived. In Father Chevrier's time, custom had it that a good priest said, in the afternoon or the evening, Matins and Lauds, which should be the night prayer and the morning office. At the beginning of his day he said in succession Prime, Terce, Sext and None, which should be spread over the day, and in the early afternoon Vespers and Compline, which are, in fact, two

evening offices. Father Chevrier does not think of reacting against this abnormal displacement; but the prayers he proposes on rising, the Canticle of the creatures[5] and Psalm 50, are like a summary of the Office of Lauds, and the prayers provided for bedtime are various pieces of the Office of Compline.

One finds elsewhere, in Father Chevrier, this desire for an adapted liturgical life. When it is a matter of initiating seminarians into personal study of the Gospel, he proposes to do so in conformity with the framework of the annual liturgical cycle. In the catechetical formation of the children of the Prado, he had the desire to make them take part in the Mass in such a way that they would not be bored there (or at least not too much!) and above all that they would discover in the Mass the presence of all that they were learning at catechism.

It was a very sure apostolic instinct that gave him these concerns, but the liturgical life of the time furnished him, so to speak, no adapted means, and he was not able to be a forerunner in this field, except by desire.

Prayer is one of the most important duties of religion. We have therefore to examine carefully how Our Lord fulfils it so that we may do likewise.

***He withdraws for forty days into the desert to fast and pray.***

"And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and immediately the Spirit

drove him into the desert, to be tempted by the devil; and he was with beasts, and he remained there forty days and forty nights" (Lk 4:1; Mk 1:12–13; Mt 4:1–2) [Tr.: Chevrier's conflation].

***He rises very early in the morning to go and pray in a desert place.***

"And when it was day, Jesus rising very early in the morning, went out and departed into a desert place, and there he prayed. And his apostles sought him, and when they had found him, he went with them" (Mk 1:35; cf. Lk 4:42).

***He withdraws from the crowd and goes to pray in the desert.***

After his miracles, when the crowd flocked from all sides, he withdrew into the desert and there he prayed (Lk 5:16).

***He prayed on the way with his disciples.***

When he was on the way, even with his disciples, he sometimes kept alone, apart, and prayed (Lk 9:18).

***He withdrew at night to the garden of olives to pray.***

By day, Jesus taught in the temple; but at night, going out, he abode in the mount that is called Olivet, to pray; and all the people came early in

the morning to him in the temple to hear him (Lk 21:37–38; 22:39).

*He withdraws to a high mountain to pray.*

"Jesus took with him Peter, James and John and brought them alone up into a high mountain apart, and he went up into the mountain to pray, and whilst he prayed, the shape of his countenance was altered and he was transfigured before them" (Lk 9:28–29; Mk 9:1; Mt 17:1) [Tr.: printed "Mk 9,2"].

*His apostles, seeing him always pray, asked him how one must pray.*

"And it came to pass that as he was in a certain place praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him: Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Lk 11:1).

*He prays after his baptism.*

"Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened" (Lk 3:21).

*He prays after the Holy Eucharist.*

*In the garden of olives he prays long, on his knees, his forehead prostrate, shedding tears of blood and always repeating the same prayer.*

"And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast; and kneeling down, he fell on his face, praying, and saying that, if it were possible, this hour might pass from him.

And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

And being in an agony, he prayed the longer.

And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground" (Lk 22:41–44; Mk 14:35).

*He prays with arms stretched out on the cross.*

For three hours he prays with arms stretched out on the cross.

*Instruction that Our Lord Jesus Christ gives his apostles on prayer.*

"And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.

Amen I say to you, they have received their reward" (Mt 6:5).

*Pray in secret,*

"But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee" (Mt 6:6).

*and without many words.*

"And when you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like to them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask him.

Thus therefore shall you pray:

Our Father who art in heaven…" (Mt 6:7–9).

*One must always pray.*

Jesus says again to his disciples "that we ought always to pray and not to faint" (Lk 18:1).

Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, who questioned him on the place where one must adore:

*Adore in spirit and in truth.*

"The hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to adore him.

God is a spirit, and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23–24).

*That common prayer is very powerful.*

"Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven.

For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:19–20).

*Pray in the name of Jesus Christ.*

"And whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (Jn 14:13).

"Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name; ask, and you shall receive" (Jn 16:24).

*Jesus' reproaches to his apostles.*

"Simon, sleepest thou? So, could you not watch one hour with me? Why sleep you?

Arise! watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mk 14:37; Mt 26:40–41; Lk 22:46).

*Good effects of prayer*

*It strengthens us, preserves against temptations.*

"Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Mt 26:41).

*It drives out the unclean devil.*

"This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting" (Mt 17:20 [Vulgate 17:21]), says Our Lord to his Apostles.

*One obtains everything by prayer.*

"Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do" (Jn 14:13)

*It gives us the Holy Spirit.*

After his baptism, while Jesus prayed, the Holy Spirit came upon him and rested upon him.

*It transfigures us.*

"While Jesus was praying on Tabor, the shape of his countenance was altered, and he became quite other" (Lk 9:29).

*Examples of the Apostles and the saints.*

The Apostles leave all to give themselves to prayer and to preaching.

Saint Paul prayed day and night, for himself and his faithful.

*Summary of this chapter on prayer.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ withdraws for forty days into the desert to fast and pray.

He rises very early in the morning to go and pray in a place apart.

He withdraws from the crowd to go and pray in the desert.

He prayed on the way, withdrawing a little from his Apostles.

He withdraws from time to time, by night, to the Garden of Olives, by night to pray.

He withdraws to a high mountain to pray there.

The Apostles, seeing him often pray, will ask him to teach them to pray.

He prays after his Baptism.

He prays after the Holy Eucharist.

In the Garden of Olives, he prays on his knees, his forehead prostrate on the ground, with tears, and always repeating the same prayer.

He prays with arms stretched out on the Cross.

He teaches us that one must pray in silence and secrecy.

That one must always pray.

That one must pray in spirit and in truth.

That one must pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

That common prayer is very efficacious.

The reproach he makes to his Apostles for not praying.

That prayer strengthens us against temptations.

That prayer drives out the devil.

That it obtains everything.

That it gives us the Holy Spirit.

That it transfigures us.

That the saints did not cease to pray after the example of Our Lord.

He invites his apostles, from time to time, to come and rest and pray.

It is no wonder if we see Our Lord Jesus Christ pray so often, so long, and withdraw so often to pray and give us the example of so assiduous a prayer; it is that the supernatural virtue is so high, the practice of the evangelical virtues so difficult to nature, that we have need of so many graces to practise them, as we shall see in the sublime virtues of gentleness, humility, charity, [poverty],[6] that great graces are needed to attain them.

*Practice*

On rising, we shall recite the psalm "*Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino*" (Dan 3:57).[7]

While washing, the psalm "*Miserere mei*" (Ps 50).[8]

We shall make one hour of meditation a day, three-quarters of an hour in the morning and a quarter of an hour in the evening.

We shall celebrate holy Mass with the greatest respect, never omitting the preparation and the thanksgiving without grave necessity, and making up for it during the day if we could not make the thanksgiving immediately.

We shall recite together or separately, as possible, the divine office with "dignity, devotion and at-

tention,"[9] exactly carrying out the rubrics of the breviary, rising or kneeling at the places indicated, making the pause in the verses and taking at each canonical hour a particular intention:

Matins, to adore the Holy Trinity: unbelievers

Prime, incarnation: family

Terce, Holy Spirit: Church

Sext, Jesus Christ teaching: preachers

None, Passion: sinners

Vespers, Mary mother of sorrows: the afflicted, the sick

Compline, a good death: the dying, purgatory, those in agony.

Little hours before 9 o'clock.

Vespers at 2 o'clock.

Matins and Lauds in the evening.

One must not put off one's breviary and defer it to the evening; that is to neglect the duty of prayer, to expose oneself to saying it badly and to say it to be rid of it; how can one say one's breviary well when one has worked all day and is tired; one must begin the day with prayer.

After breakfast, at 8:30, we shall ask for the Holy Spirit by reciting seven Hail Marys in honour of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and the *Veni Creator*, to which we shall add the prayer.

Prayers before and after meals:

*Pater, Benedicite, Agimus tibi.*

*Pater, Benedicamus.*

Every day a part of the rosary.

In the evening at 4:30, or at another convenient hour, a quarter of an hour's visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Every evening, the ordinary prayer, examen, act of contrition, litany of the Blessed Virgin, *De profundis*, three Hail Marys, the *Memorare*, ordinary invocations.

On going to bed: *In manus tuas*, *Salva nos*, *Dignare*, prayer, *Benedicamus.*

***every week***

We shall recite our whole rosary in private, we shall make our Way of the Cross, we shall make the holy hour, from 9 to 10 o'clock, or from 9:30 to 10:30, once a week, each on his appointed day.

*every month*

We take a day at the beginning of each month to make the monthly retreat; it may be made at the house while continuing one's employment, or in the chapel of Saint-Fons, or elsewhere, begging alms.

On the feasts of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin, we shall try to recite the whole rosary, if we have time.

On the feasts of the Passion, we shall make our Way of the Cross.

During the month of May, we shall try to recite the whole rosary each day, unless our work prevents us.

*every year*

We shall retire for at least eight days to make a serious retreat, in order to be refreshed in fervour and love of God and take up our duties again with more courage and fidelity.

We shall pray sometimes with arms in the form of a cross or with forehead prostrate on the ground, in imitation of Our Lord Jesus, to humble ourselves before God and

to solicit, for ourselves and the neighbour, the very great graces we need for ourselves and for others.

It is the spirit of prayer that one must have.

To have the spirit of prayer is to be inclined to prayer naturally; it is to feel the need of it; it is to do it spontaneously and to understand the need we have of the grace of God to fulfil our duties, so lofty and so great and, at the same time, so difficult for poor nature.

One can pray without having the spirit of prayer.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a: Ms XII 305–313.↩
2. Pp. 361–363.↩
3. Cf. 2 Cor 3:18.↩
4. P. 363.↩
5. Dan 3:57–58.↩
6. Note a. Illegible word; "poverty" is suggested, according to the plan of this part.↩
7. Note b. All you works of the Lord, bless the Lord.↩
8. Note c. Have mercy on me.↩
9. Note d. "Dignity, attention, devotion." Father Chevrier took these three words from the prayer that was recited before beginning the breviary.↩

↑ Contents

## 3°) Follow me in my gentleness[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* The chapter on gentleness is easy to understand.

Gentleness is the particular character of the Saviour,[2] of the Messiah of the poor. This gentleness reveals the strength of a soul capable of rebuking severely, like Jesus, those who by their harshness and their demands prevent the little and the poor from finding the road to salvation. Those who are abrupt and hot-tempered quench the spark of faith.[3]

Let us not stop at the relatively superficial level of questions of temperament, of character. It is a matter of an essential orientation of apostolic action. Gentleness is an aptitude necessary to the missionary. In announcing the Gospel one must proceed with gentleness.[4]

***Examples and doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ on gentleness.***

***He calls everyone to himself and tells them not to be afraid.***

"Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Mt 11:28).

*He wants us to know that he is meek and humble of heart.*[5]

"Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light" (Mt 11:29–30).

*The prophet says in what gentleness consists.*

Speaking of his Son, God says by the mouth of the prophet:

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased.

I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish; he shall not be sad nor troublesome, till he send forth judgment unto victory, and in his name the Gentiles shall hope" (Mt 12:17–21; Is 42:1–4).

*He tells his apostles only what they can bear for the moment.*

Our Lord says to his apostles in Saint John: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come, he shall shew you" (Jn 16:12–13).

*He demands nothing too hard of his apostles, for the moment.*

Our Lord answers the Jews who ask him why his disciples do not fast like those of John and the Pharisees: "your disciples eat and drink"; he says to them:

"Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast whilst the bridegroom is with them?

As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.

But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; then they shall fast in those days" (Lk 5:34–35).

*The comparison he uses to make us understand with what consideration one must act in the conduct of others.*

"He spoke also a similar parable to them: No man putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment; otherwise he both rendeth the new, and the piece taken from the new agreeth not with the old.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; otherwise the new wine will break the bottles, and it will be spilled, and the bottles will be lost. But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved. And no man drinking old, hath presently a mind to the new, for he saith, The old is better" (Lk 5:36–39; Mk 2:21–22; Mt 9:16–17) [Tr.: printed "Lk 36–39"].

*How Our Lord answers the Pharisees, who were scandalized that the apostles had plucked ears of corn to eat them on the sabbath.*

"The apostles having one sabbath day plucked ears of corn and rubbed them in their hands to eat them, the Pharisees were scandalized at it and came to say to Jesus: Behold, why do thy disciples on the sabbath days that which is not lawful?

And Jesus said to them: Have you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry, himself and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God, under Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the loaves of proposition, which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave to them that were with him" (Mk 2:23–26) [Tr.: printed "Mk 3,22–26"].

***Not to be severe with others, nor condemn the neighbour.***

"And he said to them: The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mk 2:27).

"Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple break the sabbath, and are without blame?

But I tell you that there is here a greater than the temple" (Mt 12:5–6).

***"I will have mercy and not sacrifice." (Hos 6:6)***

"And if you knew what this meaneth: I will have mercy and not sacrifice, you would never have condemned the innocent" (Mt 12:7 [printed "Mk 12,7"]; Hos 6:6).

*Jesus reproaches the scribes and Pharisees with imposing on others a heavy and unbearable yoke.*

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying in his teaching: The scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses.

All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not, for they say and do not.

For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them" (Mt 23:1–4).

*Jesus rebukes his apostles who were preventing little children from coming to him.*

"Then were little children presented to him, that he should impose hands upon them and pray.

And the disciples rebuked them that brought them" (Mt 19:13).

"Whom when Jesus saw, he was much displeased, and called them to him, and said to them: Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:14 [printed "Mt 10,14"]; Lk 18:16; Mk 10:14).

"Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it. And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them" (Mk 10:15–16).

***Jesus reproves James and John who wish to bring down fire from heaven on Samaria.***

"And it came to pass, when the days of his assumption were accomplishing, that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, where he was to consummate his sacrifice.

And he sent messengers before his face, and going, they entered into a city of the Samaritans, to prepare for him. And they received him not, because

his face was of one going to Jerusalem" [Tr.: Chevrier adds: "to celebrate the Passover, which did not please the Samaritans, who wanted God to be adored only on Mount Gerizim"].

"And when his disciples, James and John, had seen the insult done to their Master, they said: Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

And turning, he rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are; the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save. And they went into another town" (Lk 9:51–56).

*How he receives even Judas who has just betrayed him.*

"And he that betrayed him had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully. And when he was come, immediately going up to him, he saith: Hail, Rabbi; and he kissed him" (Mk 14:44–45; Mt 26:49).

"And Jesus said to him: Friend" (Mt 26:50), to what purpose art thou come; "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" (Lk 22:48)

*How he reprimands Peter who lacks gentleness by striking with the sword.*

"Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus, and held him" (Mt 26:50).

"And they that were about him, seeing what would follow, said to him: Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" (Lk 22:49)

"Then Simon Peter, one of those who were with Jesus, stretching forth his hand, drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest and cut off

his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus" (Jn 18:10; Mt 26:51).

"But Jesus answering, said: Suffer ye thus far. And when he had touched his ear, he healed him" (Lk 22:51).

"Jesus therefore said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard; for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Jn 18:11; Mt 26:52).

"Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" (Mt 26:53–54). "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn 18:11)

***How Jesus rebukes Peter with gentleness and makes him atone for his three denials.***

"When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs…

He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my

lambs. [Tr.: sic as printed; the Vulgate here has "Feed my lambs … Feed my lambs … Feed my sheep"]

He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he had said to him the third time: Lovest thou me? And he said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep.

Amen, amen I say to thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not" (Jn 21:15–18).

***Jesus Christ's instruction to his apostles on gentleness.***

"Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves" (Mt 10:16).

"You have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you not to resist evil;

but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; and if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him; and whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two" (Mt 5:38–41).

"You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Mt 5:21–22).

*Graces, favours reserved to those who are meek.*

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land" (Mt 5:4 [Vulgate numbering; Chevrier's reference "Mt 5,5"]).

*Summary of the doctrine and teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ on gentleness.*

We see from the examples and words of Our Lord Jesus Christ that:

— He wants us to know above all that he is meek and humble of heart.

— He calls everyone to him to profit by his gentleness.

— The spirit of God rested upon him and communicated gentleness to him.

— God found him so gentle and so lovable that he put all his complacency in him.

*In what does gentleness consist?*

in not disputing, not crying out,

in not making one's voice heard in the streets,

in not breaking the bruised reed, in not extinguishing the smoking flax,

in being neither sad nor turbulent.

*Explanation of these words*[6]

*"He shall not contend." (Mt 12:19 [printed "12,9"]; Is 42:2)*

He comes to announce justice to the nations, he announces it with authority and gentleness, "yea, yea; nay, nay,"[7] "that which is over and above these is of evil" (Mt 5:37). In dispute there always arises bitterness, animosity, attachment to one's ideas. All that comes from evil and is entirely opposed to the spirit of God, which is calm and is

never troubled and keeps peace, gentleness and calm.

*"He shall not cry out." (Mt 12:19; Is 42:2)*

Gentleness in his voice. There will not be in his mouth outbursts of voice, those useless cries, those words of anger; but his voice will always be gentle, calm, peaceful, moderate. The spirit of God is not in cries of the voice, in noise, in outbursts; noise passes and nothing remains. The spirit of God is in thoughts, doctrine and virtues; "*virtus de illo exibat*" (Lk 6:19).[8] The things of God are done in calm, peace, gentleness. Do without noise, without fuss. Good makes no noise and noise does no good.

*"Neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." (Mt 12:19; Is 42:2)*

He will not go into the streets to make noise to attract the world. He will draw all to himself by gentleness and not by noise, din, posters or all those human means that are opposed to the spirit of God, which is a gentle, calm, peaceful spirit.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 331–341.↩
2. Cf. p. 371, note 1.↩

3. P. 377.↩
4. Cf. p. 86.↩
5. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 349 — It is the particular character of the Saviour, of a man who is called to heal; gentleness is the magnet that attracts, that wins hearts; one attracts more flies with honey than with vinegar. So Our Lord says that by gentleness one possesses the earth, that is, one wins everyone, men, animals; everything lets itself be won by gentleness; so it is the first quality that he wants to be noticed in him. Woe to those who are abrupt, severe, [haughty], harsh…↩
6. Note a. Manuscript XII 331 having here only the titles, the commentary is borrowed from Ms XII 352.↩
7. Note b. Cf. "Let your speech be: Yea, yea; Nay, nay."↩
8. Note c. A power went out from him.↩

↑ Contents

### *"The bruised reed he shall not break." (Mt 12:20; Is 42:3 [printed "12,3"])*

natural sense

His gait and manners will be so gentle that he will break nothing, not even an object half broken. He who is abrupt, on the contrary, breaks everything, smashes everything; he acts with brusqueness, he walks with haste, he overturns, he breaks, he tears.

figurative sense

His gentleness will be so great towards sick bodies and souls that in touching them, in treating them, he will do them no harm but, on the contrary, will relieve them. He who is abrupt, on the contrary, does harm, increases the harm; he lacks caution.

***"The smoking flax he shall not extinguish." (Mt 12:20; Is 42:3)***

natural sense

He will know how to bear without complaining the discomforts of life; he will act with such consideration and gentleness that he will rekindle the fire almost out.

figurative sense

He will know how to bear the neighbour's discomforts without complaining. He will not extinguish the little spark of faith and love that still remains in the neighbour's soul, but will know how to act with such caution and gentleness that he will rekindle it and make it live again, restore grace and life. Those who are abrupt and hot-tempered extinguish the spark of faith. What consideration, what gentleness one must have for souls!

*"He shall not be sad nor troublesome." (Mt 12:20; Is 42:4 Vulg.)*

Gentleness will be painted on his face, which will be neither sad nor troublesome. His face will be gentle, affable; everything in him will breathe amiability, attraction, and souls will go to him with confidence and joy. A sad and severe air repels; one must make these sad, severe, austere airs disappear; one must also avoid being turbulent, agitated, bustling, running hither and thither; this agitation, this bustle is also opposed to gentleness and repels people.

*"And in his name the Gentiles shall hope." (Mt 12:21; Is 42:4)*

How gentle he is towards his apostles.[1]

He tells them things only in measure and by degrees.

He demands nothing too painful to nature to begin with.

He teaches them with what consideration one must conduct oneself towards others.

He condemns the severity of the Pharisees, who accuse the apostles of sin for having plucked ears of corn on a sabbath day, being hungry.

His principle of conduct is this: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13).

He reproaches the Pharisees with wanting to impose on others an intolerable yoke that they do not want to carry themselves.

He rebukes the apostles who lacked gentleness towards little children.

He rebukes James and John, who want to bring down fire from heaven on a village of Samaria.

How he receives Judas with gentleness.

How he rebukes Peter when he strikes with the sword.

How Jesus makes Peter atone for his three denials.

He wants us to carry gentleness to the point of resembling little lambs:

"not to resist evil" (Mt 5:39),

to the point of presenting the left cheek if we are struck on the right,

of giving our coat rather than go to law,

of going two thousand paces with one who asks us for a thousand,

of never becoming angry,

of saying no injurious or wounding word.

*Conclusion.*

To him who acts thus, God promises the land.

*Rules of conduct in regard to the virtue of gentleness.*

To conform our conduct to this spirit of gentleness that we see in Jesus Christ,

We shall often remember that gentleness is a virtue singularly pleasing to God and one that above all attracts souls.

We shall avoid quarrelling with anyone whatever; raising our voice too much in speaking; walking with noise and haste.

We shall see to it that we treat all things with consideration and gentleness so as to break nothing, crush or smash; to bear the discomforts of life and also those of the neighbour.

To avoid all abrupt words or actions, so as to spare the weak.

To keep always a cheerful and affable face with everyone.

Not to impose on others a heavy and insupportable yoke.

To keep consideration for each person in particular.

To receive everyone with kindness and gentleness.

Never to strike anyone.

To do harm to no one whatever.

To regard ourselves as lambs in the midst of wolves.

To carry gentleness to the point of not resisting evil,

to the point of presenting the left cheek to him who has struck us on the right

to the point of letting ourselves be stripped of our coat

to the point of going two thousand paces with him who asks us only for a thousand.

never to utter any injurious or wounding word.

May God help us to practise this beautiful virtue!

Gentleness is opposed to all bitterness, all hot temper, all brusqueness, [harsh] words, threats, anger, etc.

Gentleness is a virtue which bears everything from the neighbour, without becoming angry and embittered, and which makes no one bear anything.

*Patiens.* Knows how to suffer.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Father Chevrier continues here the summary of the Gospel announced above. (P. 375.)↩

↑ Contents

## 4°) Follow me in my humility[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* "I am meek and humble of heart," said Jesus.[2] Gentleness does not go without humility, that is evident. Moreover, Jesus expresses himself according to the Jewish manner, which likes to say one same thing in two different words.

We have here an abundant study of the Gospel and of Saint Paul that Father Chevrier did not have time to put perfectly in order.

Jesus frequently called the apostles to humility. This is therefore addressed also to priests and to all those who are sent in the name of Christ.

This humility is that of Jesus, Son of God, fully convinced of his mission and happy to be a man among men. He loved this kind of life.[3] It is the humility of the one sent by Christ to the poor, who will choose by preference the company of the poor and of sinners, not from constraint but from attraction and from love.[4]

*Teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ on humility.*

See the examples of humility of Our Lord, [p. 390].[5]

*One must not do one's actions to be seen by men.*

"Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 6:1).

*his justice, religious actions.*

"Therefore when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men.

Amen, amen I say to you, they have received their reward.

But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth, that thy alms

may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.

And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.

Amen, amen I say to you, they have received their reward.

But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee" (Mt 6:2–6).

"And when you fast, be not, as the hypocrites, sad; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.

Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father, who is present in hidden things; and thy Father, who seeth hidden things, will repay thee" (Mt 6:16–18).

*One must choose the last place.*

"And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table.

When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him, and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place, that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Lk 14:7–11).

Always take the last place, in a spirit of humility, thinking that others are worth more than we and are more worthy than we. For God alone sees and knows men and the interior. These titles and dignities are nothing before God. Out of charity: by leaving to others the most convenient places, the most at ease, the most agreeable, where one can see better, better…; to give pleasure to one's neighbour. Our Lord condemns this eagerness to

place oneself well, to settle oneself well; people run to be first, to choose… in all places.

***Choose the last place on earth to have the first in heaven.***

And in the world to come it will be the same: "many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first" (Mt 19:30; Mk 10:31).

Our Lord says this of those who will have left all for him on earth and who will have been last in the world, humiliated, despised; who will have put themselves in the last rank in the world, according to the world; they will be first in heaven.

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying in his teaching: The scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not, for they say and do not. For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them. And all their works they do for to be seen of men" (Mt 23:1–5).

*Avoid showing oneself in one's clothes, appearing, showing off, taking the first places.*

"Beware of the scribes who love to walk in long robes; they enlarge their phylacteries, and lengthen their fringes, and love the first chairs in the synagogues and the first places at suppers" (Mk 12:38–39; Mt 23:5–6),

*to be greeted.*

"and salutations in the market place" (Mt 23:7).

*loving names, titles.*

"and to be called by men Rabbi. They devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers under the pretence of long prayer.

These shall receive greater judgment" (Mt 23:14; Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47).

*Avoid titles and honorific names; do not accept the titles of father and master if they are given us; think that there is but one Father who is in heaven and one Master, Jesus Christ.*

"But be not you called Rabbi; for one is your master, and all you are brethren.

And call none your father upon earth; for one is your Father, who is in heaven.

Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, Christ.

He that is the greater among you shall be your servant.

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Mt 23:8–12).

***It is better to be persecuted, humiliated than to be praised, applauded.***

"Woe to you when men shall bless you [Tr.: Chevrier: "applaud you, speak well of you"]" (Lk 6:26).

"Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Lk 6:22).

***Parable of the Pharisee and the publican***

"And to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, he spoke also this parable:

Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican" (Lk 18:9–10).

*he compares himself with others.*

"The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican" (Lk 18:11).

*He is content with what he does, he rests on his actions.*

"I fast twice in a week: I give tithes of all that I possess" (Lk 18:12).

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk 18:13).

"I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other;

because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Lk 18:14).

*We are but unprofitable servants.*

"But which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say to him, when he is come from the field: Immediately go, sit down to meat; and will not rather say to him: Make ready my supper, and gird thyself, and serve me, whilst I eat

and drink; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink?

Doth he thank that servant, for doing the things which he commanded him? I think not.

So you also, when you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do" (Lk 17:7–10).

***One must not be puffed up with one's power.***

"And the seventy-two returned with joy, saying: Lord, the devils also are subject to us in thy name. And he said to them: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.

Nevertheless, rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:17–20).

***Jesus' answer to James and John, who ask to be first in his kingdom.***

"Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, adoring and asking some-

thing of him. Who said to her: What wilt thou?" (Mt 20:20–21)

*Request of a natural mother.*[6]

"She saith to him: Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom" (Mt 20:21).

*Craftiness of the apostles.*

"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come to him, saying: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, thou wouldst do it for us. But he said to them: What would you that I should do for you?" (Mk 10:35–36)

*earthly ideas, glory.*

"And they said: Grant to us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, in thy glory. But Jesus said to them: You

know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized? But they said to him: We can" (Mk 10:37–39).

*sufferings.*

"But Jesus said to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink of" (Mk 10:39),

*death.*

"and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized you shall be baptized" (Mk 10:39).

"But to sit on my right hand or on my left is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father.

And the ten hearing it, began to be much displeased at James and John.

But Jesus calling them, saith to them:" (Mt 20:23–25; Mk 10:41)

*In what manner we must be first among our brethren.*

"You know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them; and their princes have power over them" (Mk 10:42).

*difference.*

"But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be greater shall be your minister; and whosoever will be first among you shall be the servant of all.

For the Son of man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many" (Mk 10:43–45; Mt 20:28)

[Tr.: Chevrier's French has "for the redemption of the world"].

***The things of God, hidden from the wise of the world, are revealed to the little and the humble.***

"In that same hour" — that is, after the disciples, returning from their mission, rejoiced to see the devils subject to their voice, in the name of Jesus —

"Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Ghost and said:

I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal him" (Lk 10:21–22). "Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt 11:29).

***Jesus teaches his apostles in what primacy and pre-eminence must consist among them.***

"And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should seem to be the greater.

And he said to them: The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But you not so; but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth. And you are they who have continued with me in my temptations" (Lk 22:24–28).

***Lesson of humility that Our Lord Jesus Christ gives to his apostles who were disputing about precedence.***

"And there entered a thought into their hearts, which of them should be greater" (Lk 9:46).

"But Jesus seeing the thoughts of their heart, when they were in the house, asked them: What did you treat of in the way?

But they held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves, which of them should be the greatest" (Mk 9:32–33).

"And sitting down, he called the twelve; and the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven? And he saith to them: If any man desire to be

first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all" (Mk 9:34; Mt 18:1).

"And Jesus calling a little child, took him and set him in the midst of them; whom when he had embraced, he saith to them:" (Mk 9:35)

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 391 to 410.↩
2. Mt 11:29.↩
3. Ms XII 381; cf. Prov 8:31.↩
4. P. 402.↩
5. Note a. Father Chevrier added this note, thinking that it would have been better to put the examples of Christ before his teaching.↩
6. Note a. Request of a mother who remains on a natural plane.↩

↑ Contents

***One must become like little children.***

"Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven. And he that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me" (Mt 18:3–5); "and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

For he that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater" (Lk 9:48).[1]

*How Our Lord Jesus Christ practised humility.*

*In his incarnation.*

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).

"He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil 2:7).

*In his birth.*

"And it came to pass that when they were there [at Bethlehem], her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Lk 2:6–7). The angel said to the shepherds: "This day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger" (Lk 2:11–12).

Nothing great in this birth, nothing that flatters self-love, vanity; nothing that attracts glory. On the contrary, everything is small, contemptible,

unworthy; he is the rejected one, the refuse of the world, the filth of the streets. It is there that the eternal Word is born…

*In his circumcision.*

"After eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus" (Lk 2:21).

He takes the mark of sinners: he submits to this law of sin.[1]

*His presentation.*

As a poor man, without splendour, without noise, poor parents, offering of the poor, mingled with everyone. Mary mingles with the women and receives a blessing like ordinary women.

*The flight into Egypt.*

He flees like a man without strength, without defence, no opposition. What a humiliation to flee before a man, what a mark of weakness, of fear, of dread! He does not resist: gentleness and humility.

*His hidden life at Nazareth.*

In work and obedience. "He was subject to them" (Lk 2:51 [printed "3,51"]). To submit to inferiors,

to pass for a child, an ignorant person, to need to be kept, commanded, to receive the lessons, the orders of a man — he who commands the whole of nature, master of nature.

*He passes for the son of Joseph*

He, the Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, eternal Word, how his dignity is hidden! The Son of God passes for the son of man, the son of a carpenter. What a lesson for those who cling to their titles and dignities! He asked neither favour nor privilege; he conducted himself as an ordinary man.

---

1. Ms XII 282 — No privilege, no exemption, common law.

Note a. The tone is a little exaggerated.

*He has himself baptized by John.*

Jesus goes to John, his inferior, he recognizes and honours John's ministry although far inferior to his own.

"It came to pass that when all the people were baptized, Jesus came from Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him" (Lk 3:21; Mt 3:13).

"But John stayed him, saying: I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me?" (Mt 3:14)

He does not disdain the grace that comes from John. And Jesus says to him: "Suffer it to be so now." He mingles with sinners.

He receives the baptism of sinners.

He must accomplish all that is just and good. "For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice" (Mt 3:15).

Good example. How God honours him afterwards!

He also praises Saint John; later he does not fear to diminish his ministry by raising his own.

"Then he suffered him." And Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan and, while he prayed, a dove, a voice from heaven (Mk 1:9).

***He goes into the desert to fast and be tempted by the devil.***

"The Holy Spirit drives him into the desert" (Mk 1:12). "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and immediately the Spirit drove him into the desert, to be tempted by the devil" (Lk 4:1).

"He was with beasts.

And he was among beasts" (Mk 1:13).

He is hungry.

"And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry" (Mt 4:2).

What a humiliation to be tempted by an inferior who comes to see what you are, to try to force you, to lay snares, to solicit to evil, to see whether you are capable of doing something.

"And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

Who answered and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:3–4).

Jesus does not show what he is; he does nothing dazzling; he answers nothing that could attract some glory to him; he does not boast of his titles; he does not show his power; he does not ask his Father for miracles for himself, for extraordinary things.

Jesus Christ begins his great mission by three great acts of humility:

baptism

fast

temptation, trial,

one must be tried.

"There was no room for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7)[2]

***He hides himself when he does a good action.***

After healing the paralytic at the pool, Jesus withdrew from the crowd. "He that was healed knew not who it was; for Jesus went aside from the multitude standing in the place" (Jn 5:13).

***He forbids the sick he has healed to speak of it to anyone.***

Jesus, having healed two blind men, strictly forbade them to speak of it, saying to them: "See that no man know this" (Mt 9:30).

"Jesus, having healed a leper, forbade him to tell any man" (Lk 5:14).

"After the raising of Jairus' daughter, he charged them strictly that no man should know it" (Mk 5:43).

***He goes aside to heal the deaf-mute.***

When Our Lord had healed the deaf-mute whom he had led aside to take him away from the

crowd, had said *Ephpheta* and he was healed, "he charged them, *praecepit eis*, that they should tell no man; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it" (Mk 7:36).

***He seeks even to attenuate the glory of his miracles.***

"Jesus was going to the house of Jairus to heal his daughter when they came to the ruler of the synagogue saying: Thy daughter is dead; why dost thou trouble the Master any further? But Jesus went with his three apostles and entering in, he saith to them: Why make you this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. And having put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and his three apostles,"

and taking the damsel by the hand, he saith to her: "Arise"; and she walked; and "he charged them strictly that no man should know it" (Mk 5:35–43).

***He forbids his apostles to speak of his transfiguration, except after his death.***

"After the transfiguration, when the apostles came down from the mountain, Jesus charged

them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead" (Mt 17:9).

*He forbids even his apostles to say that he was the Christ.*

When Saint Peter had made his profession of faith and said: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, and when he had given him the keys of the kingdom, he forbade his disciples to tell anyone that he was Jesus the Christ (Mt 16:16–20).

*He withdraws from the crowd that admires him and goes to pray in the desert.*

"But so much the more went the fame of him abroad, and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he retired into the desert and prayed" (Lk 5:15–16).

*When everyone is in admiration of him, he speaks of his passion*

"After his miracles, all were astonished at the mighty power of God in him; and while all wondered at all the things he did, he said to his disciples: Lay you up in your hearts these words; for it shall come to pass that the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men" (Lk 9:44–45).

*He hides his glorious names and titles.*

He hides his glorious names and titles in order to call himself only the Son of man and the one sent by God.

*He does not concern himself with what is said of him.*

*He does not answer the speeches held against him.*

"Speaking of John, he says: John came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say: He hath a devil.

The Son of man is come eating and drinking, and you say: Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine drinker" (Mt 11:18–19; Lk 7:33–34 [printed "Lc 33,34"]).

*He makes the poor and sinners his favourite company.*

"The scribes and Pharisees reproached Jesus with eating with publicans and sinners, and Jesus said to them: They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick" (Lk 5:30–31; Mt 9:11–12; Mk 2:17 [printed "16,17"]).

He goes to the house of Zacchaeus the publican.

He goes to be baptized with sinners.

"He is a friend of publicans and sinners," said the scribes and the Pharisees (Mt 11:19).

*He does not accept glory from men.*

*He takes not his glory from men,*

"I receive not glory from men" (Jn 5:41).

*He seeks not his glory.*

"As for me, I seek not my own glory" (Jn 8:50).

*He leaves to his Father the care of his glory,*

"There is one that seeketh" (Jn 8:50),

*and of judging what must be done for it.*

"and judgeth" (Jn 8:50).

*He says that all he could say for his glory is nothing*

"If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing" (Jn 8:54).

*that his Father alone can glorify him.*

"It is my Father that glorifieth me" (Jn 8:54).

*He attributes to his Father the good works he has done.*

Our Lord, having proved his divinity to the Jews, says to them: "Many good works I have shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?" (Jn 10:32)

*He regards himself as the Servant of all.*

"For which is greater, he that sitteth at table or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I

am in the midst of you as he that serveth" (Lk 22:27).

"He that will be the greater among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mt 20:27–28).

*Jesus washes the feet of his apostles.*

At the supper, "Jesus riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments, and having taken a towel, girded himself. After that, he putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (Jn 13:4–5).

*He teaches them that they must do the same to others.*

"Then, after he had washed their feet and taken his garments, being set down again, he said to them: Know you what I have done to you?

You call me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am.

If then I, being Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also" (Jn 13:12–15).

*The servant is not above his master.*

"Amen, amen I say to you, the servant is not greater than his lord, neither is the apostle greater than he that sent him. If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them" (Jn 13:16–17).

*Jesus prepares the meal on the shore*

The apostles had spent the night taking nothing.

After the miraculous draught of fishes, "as soon as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith to them: Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught." Then Jesus said to them: "Come and dine."

"And Jesus cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish in like manner" (Jn 21:9–10, 12–13).

*The humiliations of the crib,*

*of the passion.*

*Teaching of Saint Paul on humility.*

*We have received everything from God.*

"What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor 4:7)

*Not capable even of forming a good thought of ourselves.*

"Not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor 3:5).

---

**Notes**

1. Ms XII 20 — The smaller one makes oneself, the greater one is.↩
2. Note a. One does not see why this sentence is noted here. An idea must have passed through Father Chevrier's head and he did not want to let it be lost; then he must have forgotten to strike out this sentence afterwards. Perhaps one should see in it an example of refusal of privileges.↩

↑ Contents

*Why God chooses what is smallest according to the world for his works*

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, that he may confound the wise;

And the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong.

And the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his sight; that, as it is written, he that glorieth may glory in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:27–29, 31).

*One must glory only in the Lord.*

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17).

*Our glory is nothing.*

"For not he who commendeth himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor 10:18).

*It is God alone who gives the increase.*

"I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor 3:6–7).

*Stooping in one's thoughts to the humblest persons.*

"Being of one mind one towards another, not minding high things, but consenting to the humble" (Rom 12:16) [Tr.: Chevrier's French: "Keep always united with one another, in the same sentiments and the same affections, and do not exalt yourselves in yourselves by presumptuous thoughts, but lower yourselves to the humblest persons"].

*and not to be wise in one's own eyes. "Be not wise in your own conceits." (Rom 12:16)*

*To be subject to others.*

"By charity of spirit serve one another" (Gal 5:13), *servite invicem.*

"Let nothing be done through contention, neither by vainglory" (Phil 2:3).

*To esteem others better than oneself.*

"But in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves" (Phil 2:3).

*We are nothing.*

"For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal 6:3).

*One must not compare oneself with others or esteem oneself more than others because others have fallen into some fault.*

"But let every one prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another" (Gal 6:4) [Tr.: Chevrier adds: "that is, in the merit of his own works, and not in another, in the comparisons he will make with others"].

*Anticipating one another in honour and deference.*

"Let each have for his neighbour a truly brotherly affection and tenderness.

With honour preventing one another" (Rom 12:10).

*Saint Paul warns us that knowledge puffs up.*

Saint Paul warns us that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor 8:1).

*That knowledge without charity is nothing*

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he hath not yet known as he ought to know" (1 Cor 8:2). Nor how he must use his knowledge; he does not know how to use his knowledge.

*God is master to do what he will; we must not murmur against God.*

"O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom 9:20–21)

*Examples of humility.*

*Abraham*

"He calls himself dust and ashes" (Gen 18:27).

*David*

"Thy hands have made me and formed me" (Ps 118:73 Vulg.; Chevrier: "Ps 119,73").

*Saint Paul*

"I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than all they; yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Cor 15:9–10).

"He was in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, with the Corinthians" (1 Cor 2:3).

*False humility.*

"There is one that humbleth himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit" (Sir 19:23 [Chevrier: "19,26"]; Chevrier's wording: "People who pretend to humble themselves and whose interior is full of disguise and pride").

***Summary of the teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ on humility.***

We must not do our actions, our justice, to be seen by men.

We must seek the last places out of humility and charity.

Avoid showing oneself in one's clothes, in one's manners.

Not to seek, nor even accept, greetings, titles, flattering names, marks of esteem and respect.

We must carefully guard against the applause of men.

We must not put our confidence in our works nor compare ourselves with others.

We must not be puffed up by our successes, but believe on the contrary that we are only unprofitable servants.

We must not desire the first places.

In what manner we must be first.

The difference between the first among us and the first in the world.

We must become like little children; they are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

It is to the little and the humble that the Lord reveals himself.

***Examples of humility that Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us during his life.***

In his incarnation.

In his birth.

In his presentation in the temple.

In his hidden life at Nazareth, where he passes for the son of Joseph the carpenter.

In this whole beginning of his life, he follows the ordinary laws, he asks neither graces, nor privileges, nor any exemption; it is only sin that he does not take on, he follows the ordinary laws for all the rest.

He recognizes, he honours the mission and ministry of John, his precursor, by having himself baptized by him.

He goes into the desert, where he fasts and prays like a sinner and a poor man who has need of grace.

He hides himself when he does a good action.

He forbids the sick to speak of their healing to anyone whatever.

He often withdraws aside, when he can, to work miracles.

He seeks to attenuate the glory of his miracles before doing them.

He forbids his apostles to speak of his transfiguration, except after his death.

He forbids even his apostles to say that he was the Christ.

He withdraws from the crowd that admires him, to go and pray in the desert.

When everyone is in admiration of him, he speaks of his passion.

He hides his name and his glorious titles so as to call himself only the Son of man.

He does not answer the speeches held against him.

He makes the poor and sinners his favourite company.

He does not accept the glory of men.

He does not take his glory from men.

He does not seek his glory.

He leaves the care of his glory to his Father, and of judging what he should do for it.

All that he could do for his glory is nothing.

His Father alone can glorify him.

He attributes to his Father the works he does.

He regards himself as the servant of all.

He is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister.

He washes the feet of his apostles.

He tells them that the servant is not above the master.

He prepares the meal on the shore, after his resurrection.

Humiliations of the passion.

*Teachings of Saint Paul on humility.*

We have received everything from God.

We are not capable, by ourselves, of producing a good thought.

One must glory only in the Lord.

Our glory is nothing.

It is God alone who gives the increase.

Not to be wise in one's own eyes.

One must stoop, in one's thoughts, to the most abject persons.

To be subject to one another, and to esteem others above oneself.

Not to compare ourselves with others.

We are nothing.

To anticipate one another in honour and deference.

One must not be proud of one's knowledge, which only puffs us up if it is not founded on charity.

God chooses what is poorest and smallest to do his works.

God is master of us, he does with us what he wills; we must take great care not to murmur against him.

Examples of humility:

Abraham

David

Saint Paul

The saints

*Practices.*[1]

*MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 357*

To follow Our Lord and imitate his humility,

We shall choose, like him, what is humblest and poorest on earth.

We shall ask Our Lord for this humility of heart, so as not to do it from constraint but from attraction and from love. "Humble of heart."

We shall choose by preference the company of the poor and of sinners.

We shall hide everything that can raise us in the eyes of men.

We shall know how to hide ourselves to avoid glory and honours.

We shall do nothing to make ourselves loved or known or glorified.

We shall refer everything to God.

We shall speak readily of what can lower or humble us.

We shall not fear to do the lowest and most humiliating actions.

We shall bear humiliations without complaint and in silence

We shall avoid boasting in anything whatever, of making our actions known to men.

We shall fear nothing so much as praises and honours.

We shall accept no title, nor any flattering name.

We shall always take the last places in the world and everywhere.

When we have done all that we ought to do, we shall say within ourselves, aloud and with sincerity: I am only an unprofitable servant.

We shall be well convinced that the servant is not above the master, and that if we want to be first in the heart of God and of men, we must be last, that is, their servant and their slave.

"*Qui potest capere capiat.*"[2]

You shall be blessed if you know these things and if you put them into practice.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Manuscript XII 391 has here only the title. We give the development of XII 357.↩
2. Note b. Let him who can understand, understand! (Mt 19:12)↩

↑ Contents

## 5°) Follow me in my poverty.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* The theme of poverty has already been treated in the chapter "Renunciation of the goods of the earth,"[2] to which one may refer.

Father Chevrier certainly intended to take up the theme a second time, but it seems that the definitive text never saw the light. Thus, in the text reproduced here, one finds again, under the title "rules of poverty,"[3] the enumeration of the various parts of the "renunciation of the goods of the earth."

But the manner of approaching the subject is quite in keeping with the general pace of the last

part of the "True Disciple." It is a peaceful, attentive, prolonged gaze upon Jesus Christ born as a poor man, who lived as a poor man, who died as a poor man, and all this out of love for poverty, out of obedience to his Father and out of love for us.[4]

*How Our Lord Jesus Christ practised poverty.*

It is the first example that Jesus Christ gives us on entering the world.

He wished to be poor,[5]

he chose poor parents,

he was born as a poor man,

poverty was his distinctive character.

he put himself in the rank of the poor,

he took pleasure with the poor,

he lived as a poor man,

he worked as a poor man,

he suffered as a poor man,

he was despised as a poor man,

he was without shelter as a poor man

He conducted himself as a poor man,

he abased himself as a poor man,

he was hungry as a poor man,

he was thirsty as a poor man,

he was naked as a poor man,

he was forsaken as a poor man,

he died as a poor man.

And all this, out of love for poverty,

out of obedience to his Father

and out of love for us.

He wished to be poor.[6]

Saint Paul tells us: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty you might be rich" (2 Cor 8:9).

He chose poor parents.

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary" (Lk 1:26–27).

He was despised as a poor man.

The Jews despised him for that and said: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called

Mary? And they were scandalized in his regard" (Mt 13:55–57).

I was born as a poor man.

Mary at Bethlehem. "And her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger" (Lk 2:6–7).

He was rejected as a poor man.

"Because there was no room for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7)

Poverty was my sign, my distinctive character.

"The angel said to the shepherds: This shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger" (Lk 2:10, 12).

I put myself in the rank of the poor.

By choosing a poor mother. Through the family… through religious duty… Presentation… In life, always with the poor: this was the reproach of the Jews.

I lived as a poor man.

In humility, littleness, without luxury, in work. "I am a beggar and poor" [Tr.: Chevrier: "poor and in need"] (Ps 39:18 Vulg. [printed "Ps. 40,18"]). Ears of corn rubbed. From day to day. "*Mendicus et pauper.*"[7]

I worked as a poor man.

"I am poor and in labours from my youth" (Ps 87:16 Vulg. [printed "Ps. 88,16"]). He worked until thirty to earn his living, to obey God's order: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen 3:19).

He took pleasure in the midst of the poor

I suffered as a poor man.

"I am poor and sorrowful" (Ps 68:30 Vulg. [printed "Ps. 70,30"]).

He was despised as a poor man.

"There was no room for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7). "*In propria venit et sui eum non receperunt*" (Jn 1:11).[8]

I was without shelter as a poor man, during my life.

"Jesus answers a scribe who says to him: Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shalt go. The

foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Mt 8:19–20).

I conducted myself as a poor man.

"I am in the midst of you as he that serveth" (Lk 22:27). "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mt 20:28)

I humbled myself as a poor man.

"He washes the feet of his apostles" (Jn 13:5).

I was hungry as a poor man.

"In the desert, after his fast: '*esuriit*', he was hungry" (Mt 4:2). "In the morning, going by a fig tree, he asked for fruit because he was hungry" (Mt 21:18). "And passing one day through the cornfields, his disciples ate ears of corn, being hungry" (Mt 12:1).

I was thirsty as a poor man.

On the cross, he says: "*Sitio*" (Jn 19:28).

"And on the way, weary, he sits on the edge of Jacob's well and says: '*da mihi bibere*'" (Jn 4:6–7).[9]

Gall and vinegar on the cross.

I was naked as a poor man.

Before being fastened to the cross and on the cross, he was stripped of his garments.

I was forsaken as a poor man.

On the cross, he says: "My Father, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46) And nobody to help him…

I died as a poor man.

On a plank, naked, stripped, abandoned, despised.

And all this because I willed it.

Saint Paul tells us: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty you might be rich" (2 Cor 8:9).

The devil came to offer Jesus all the riches of the earth, showing them to him and promising them to him if he would adore him. Jesus said to him: "Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve" (Mt 4:10).

Out of obedience to my Father.

"I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jn 5:30; 6:38).

And out of love for you.

"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty you might be rich" (2 Cor 8:9).

*Teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ on poverty.*

When Jesus sends his apostles into the world, to preach and to heal, he commands them:

to "give freely" (Mt 10:8),

to have "neither gold, nor silver, nor scrip, nor two coats, to eat what is set before them" (Lk 9:3; 10:7; Mt 10:9–10)

that one must "lay not up treasures on earth" (Mt 6:19),

that one must "sell what one has and give to the poor" (Mk 10:21; Lk 12:33).

He wants us to carry detachment to the point of letting our cloak be taken,

"to give to him that asks,"

"not to ask again what has been taken from us" (Lk 6:30)

"and to lend, hoping for nothing thereby, to give to him that asks" (Mt 5:42; Lk 6:35).

That "detachment from all things is one of the essential conditions for being his true disciple" (Lk 14:33).

When someone asks to follow him, he requires before all to leave everything (Lk 9:57).

That to be perfect one must sell what one has and leave all the goods of the earth, follow Jesus Christ (Mt 19:21).

That it is impossible for a rich man, attached to goods, really to follow Jesus Christ (Mk 10:21).

that "no man can serve two masters" (Mt 6:24),

that God takes charge of feeding and clothing those who work for him (Mt 6:25).

that he never let those who really work for him lack anything (Lk 22:35).

It is his promise: "Seek first the kingdom of God" (Mt 6:33).

That he promised to those who had left all for him "the hundredfold in this world and life everlasting in the other" (Mk 10:30)

that happiness is attached to true poverty (Lk 6:20).

Our Lord cannot bear the least trading in his Church (Jn 2:15).

That one must be content with the necessary (Lk 10:38).

not even occupy oneself with money affairs (Lk 12:13).

that the poor man alone is truly happy according to Our Lord (Mt 5:3).

Words of Our Lord that can be the motto of the true poor man (Jn 17:10).

***How Our Lord Jesus himself practised poverty. (Above)***[10]

***How the saints accomplished these prescriptions of the divine Master.***

Saint John the Baptist (Mt 3).

The first Christians (Acts 4:32).

***Example of Saint Paul.***

he evangelizes free of charge (1 Cor 9:11)

he yields his rights in favour of the Gospel,

he is a burden to no one (2 Cor 12:14)

he coveted no one's goods

he works with his hands (Acts 20:34)

he excuses himself for having preached free of charge but does not want to cease doing so all the same, for it is his glory (1 Cor 9:15)

he eats no one's bread for nothing[11]

he does not even have a woman servant with him (1 Cor 9:5)

he endures all sorts of sufferings (1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 11:27 [printed "11,17"])

he knows how to adapt himself to everything (Phil 4:11)

he knows how to be content with the necessary in food and clothing (1 Tim 6:7)

***Summary of the examples and teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ on poverty.***[12]

He ate no one's bread for nothing.

"Neither did we eat any man's bread for nothing, but in labour and in toil we worked night and day, lest we should be chargeable to any of you. Not as if we had not power, but that we might give ourselves a pattern unto you to imitate us, by working in order to eat" (2 Thess 3:8–9, 12) [Tr.: printed "II Th 3,8–9, 12"].

One must earn one's living by work so as not to live in idleness, spiritual work above all.

One must not see a priest idle like a bourgeois who lives on his private income,

and give the example of work and activity; make rosaries, little devotional objects, when one has time, and remember this duty of work. Small humble jobs, useful to the houses, to give work and humility. Jesus worked (Ms XII 150)

What I ask of you, I have practised myself.

I wished to be poor,

I chose poor parents,

I was born as a poor man.

Poverty was my sign, distinctive character.

I lived as a poor man,

I worked as a poor man,

I put myself in the rank of the poor.

I suffered as a poor man,

I endured as a poor man,

I lacked shelter as a poor man (exile),

I conducted myself as a poor man,

I humbled myself as a poor man.

I was thirsty as a poor man,

I was naked as a poor man,

I died as a poor man.

And all this because I willed it.

"As the Father hath given me commandment, so do I" (Jn 14:31).

"*Quae placita sunt ei facio*" (Jn 8:29).[13] (Ms XII 432)

***Rules of poverty***

To conform to the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ.

1° We renounce in mind and heart all the goods of the earth.

2° We shall be content with the necessary.

3° We shall give to him who asks.

4° We shall not meddle in temporal affairs.

5° We shall ask nothing of anyone.

6° We shall not be anxious about the future.

7° We shall count on God alone.

*Life of the true poor man.*

True, that is, one who has chosen poverty out of love for Our Lord,

he is content with little (1 Tim 6:7),

he lets nothing be lost (Jn 6:12),

he receives everything with gratitude (Lk 10:7–8),

he has a great respect for what is given him; respect for alms.

he complains of nothing (Phil 4:11),

he works to earn his living[1]

he has no servant,

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 214.

He works with his own hands to earn his living and has not money to give at every moment to workmen.

Saint Paul, he does all he can.

"I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mt 20:28).

He employs workmen only when he cannot do better.

He employs no one in his service except for great necessity and when he cannot do it himself.

The poor man does all trades: carpenter, joiner, painter, tailor, mason; he does not always have workmen at his service like the bourgeois; he does not seek for it to be very fine, well made, pretty; he does it himself as best he can.

He does not go by carriage

He has no servant.

"I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mt 20:28).

He does not fear to do the humblest things.

Serves and washes feet, plates, sweeping.

He is not a bourgeois.

he does without everybody,

he does all the work of his house,

he employs workmen only in cases of necessity.

he does not fear to do the humblest and poorest, the lowest things,

he has a horror of all that smacks of the great (of) luxury and vanity (bourgeois),

he renders service to everyone,

he takes great care of all that he has,

he avoids profusion, prodigality, he makes no useless expenses,

he is economical without avarice.

Happiness of the poor man.[1]

Power of the poor man…

Promises of Our Lord to the poor. (Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20; Mk 10:29)

Conditions for sharing in his promises.[2]

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 215.

Happiness of the poor man.

It is to be rich to have no desire.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" [Tr.: Chevrier's French: "It is a great wealth, the piety and moderation of a mind that is content with what suffices for the needs of the present life"] (1 Tim 6:6).

It is desires that make unhappy.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20).

2. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII-5 m, p. 54.[14]

Condition for having God's promise: the only condition is to seek first the kingdom of God

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt 6:33).

It is quite certain that God will not allow himself to give to one who does nothing, or who works for him to draw praise, esteem upon himself, to acquire riches for himself. But he who seeks only God, who sacrifices himself, who renounces everything for God, to glorify God, to make him loved: it is of him that God takes care and to him that he gives his goods.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 411–415.↩
2. P. 275.↩
3. P. 407.↩
4. P. 412.↩
5. Note a. In the manuscript each of these sentences carries a reference to another notebook whose Gospel study we reproduce. The handwriting of this notebook is not Father Chevrier's, but he retouched and annotated it.↩
6. Ms XII 219.↩
7. Note a. I am a beggar and poor.↩
8. Note b. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.↩

9. Give me to drink.↩
10. Note a. Father Chevrier refers to the beginning of the chapter (cf. p. 407).↩
11. Ms XII 150; 432.↩
12. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 150 — 432.↩
13. Note a. I do always the things that please him. (Jn 8:29)↩
14. Note a. This commentary was not reproduced in the manuscript copies. It is not in Father Chevrier's hand, but in that of someone who worked for him and whom it has not been possible to identify. One is therefore morally certain that the thought is Father Chevrier's.↩

↑ Contents

## 6) Follow me in my charity[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* In Father Chevrier's manuscripts one finds several ways of entitling this chapter. In trying to recover the order of succession, it seemed to us that the first attempts were entitled: "Follow me in my charity for the neighbour."[1] Then the title became: "Follow me in my love for men."[2] And finally: "Follow me in my charity." This last choice was perhaps made out of a concern to keep more strictly to the words of Scripture. Indeed, one does not find in the New Testament the expression "charity for

the neighbour," but one finds "love for men"[3] and more often "charity."[4]

As a whole, it is the pure and simple Gospel. A gaze upon Jesus Christ, an attentive listening to his teaching, nothing more. One may note particularly the concern to let oneself be taught the motives that can determine us to charity. Among these motives Father Chevrier does not choose those that seem to him the noblest or those to which he would be more sensitive; he wants to gather all those that Jesus Christ presented to us.[5]

One of the manifestations of charity is brought out more, "compassion."[6] There is even question of sentiments of "tenderness."[7] Certainly the whole shows well that one must not stop there, but Father Chevrier is perceptive. He saw well that often the grace of an active charity insinuates itself into us through compassion, and that we are always tempted to harden ourselves because we sense that by agreeing to feel compassion, we are going to be drawn further.

These pages help us better to understand what "renunciation of one's heart" consists in and the goal towards which it tends: to make us more really compassionate.

1. Ms XII 437

2. Ms XII 451

3. Titus 3:4

4. 1 Cor 13

5. Pp. 426–427

6. P. 419

7. Cf. p. 419, note 1

8. Cf. pp. 235–236

Thinking of the house of the Prado, where lived a hundred boys and girls who were not altogether restful, Father Chevrier summed up and made concrete his thought in the following manner:

We shall ask God to bring to birth in us a great compassion for the poor and sinners, which is the foundation of charity, and without this spiritual compassion we shall do nothing.

We shall excite in ourselves this divine charity so that we may go to meet the miseries of the neighbour and say like Jesus Christ: "Come to me" (Mt 11:28). We shall imitate Our Lord in his goodness to children, calling them to him and giving them quite special testimonies of tenderness and affection. We shall be a father and mother to them, oc-

cupying ourselves with them with a sincere affection to win their souls to God. We shall receive, when the occasion arises, the parents of our children at our table, as well as the poor, making it a happiness to serve them and to show them all our affection for them. We shall forgive, remembering well this word of the Master: "I desire mercy rather than sacrifice" (Mt 12:7), and that hearts must be won by love and not by rigidity and severity. We shall give charity to all who ask it of us, were it only a holy picture or a good word, remembering this word of Saint Peter: "Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, I give thee" (Acts 3:6).

We shall never refuse to render service to anyone whatever, with joy and happiness, regarding ourselves, out of charity, as the servants of everyone.

We shall take as our motto of charity this word of Our Lord: "Take ye and eat" (Mt 26:26), regarding ourselves as a spiritual bread that must feed everyone by word, example and devotedness.[2]

***In studying the life of Jesus Christ, our divine model, we find first that he felt in his soul a great compassion for the unfortunate.***

"In those days again, when there was a great multitude (and had nothing to eat)" (Mk 8:1), "Jesus therefore, when he had lifted up his eyes and seen [that a very great multitude]" (Jn 6:5),

"And Jesus went about all the cities and towns" (Mt 9:35).

"Behold a dead man was carried out" (Lk 7:12).

At the death of Lazarus [Jesus groaned in the spirit] (Jn 11:33 [printed "11,13"]).

The tears over Jerusalem (Lk 19:41).

He calls Judas: "Friend" (Mt 26:50).

He has compassion on the sinful woman at his feet (Lk 7:38).

On the cross he forgives his enemies (Lk 23:34).

He looks with compassion on all who insult him, despise him.

His compassion is the foundation of charity.

It is the first sentiment that must take hold of our soul at the sight of anyone who is in misfortune.

He who remains cold, insensible at the sight of ills, is incapable of any charity.[3]

*He called all the unfortunate to him to relieve them.*

"Come to me all you [that labour]" (Mt 11:28).

"You will not come to me [that you may have life]" (Jn 5:40).

"This is the will of my Father that sent me, that everyone who seeth the Son and believeth in him may have life everlasting" (Jn 6:40).

"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6).

"He that cometh to me shall not [hunger]" (Jn 6:35).

"I am the living bread" (Jn 6:35, 48).

"I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25).

"He that believeth in me, [although he be dead, shall live]" (Jn 11:25).

*He received everyone with gentleness and charity.*

He welcomes the multitude (Jn 6:5).

And he welcomed them all and restored health (Mt 14:14).

"And they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them" (Mt 15:30).

*Children.*

"Children are presented to Jesus" (Mt 19:13 and par.).

*The poor.*

"And when the hour was now far spent" (Mt 14:15).

"I have compassion on the multitude" (Mk 8:2).

"Give you them to eat" (Mt 14:16; Mk 6:37 [printed "Mk 8,37"]).

He was always with the poor; this was the reproach the Pharisees made to him.

*The sick.*

"A certain blind man sat by the wayside" (Lk 18:35).

"And when it was evening, after sunset" (Mk 1:32).

"He laid his hands on every one of them" (Lk 4:40).

"Jesus stood in a plain place, and the crowd [followed him]" (Lk 6:17).

"They bring to him one deaf and dumb" (Mk 7:32).

"Jesus therefore, lifting up his eyes, and seeing [a great multitude]" (Jn 6:5; Mt 14:14).

"And they came to Bethsaida, [and they bring to him a blind man]" (Mk 8:22).

After having healed a deaf-mute [a] great crowd [came to him] (Mt 15:29).

"Jesus retired with his [disciples] to the sea" (Mk 3:7).

***Sinners.***

"He eats with sinners and publicans" (Mk 2:16).

He goes to lodge with Zacchaeus (Lk 19:5).

He bears with the sinful woman who kisses his feet (Lk 7:37).

He does not condemn the woman taken in adultery (Jn 8:11).

The Samaritan woman (Jn 4:17).

***He sent no one away without help and without consolation.***

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me" (Jn 6:37).

"The will of the Father who sent me" (Jn 6:39).

"The Son of man is come to save that which was [lost]" (Lk 19:10).

"Of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one" (Jn 18:9; cf. 17:12).

"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days" (Mk 8:2).

***He even went to meet the unfortunate to relieve them.***

"Jesus went about all the cities and towns" (Mt 9:35).

"A ruler of the synagogue, named Jairus" (Lk 8:41).

"The centurion" (Mt 8:5).

"When he goes to the pool of Bethsaida, he asks: [Wilt thou be made whole?]" (Jn 5:6).

"*Ad hoc veni — ad hoc*" (Mk 1:38).[4]

***Comparisons he uses to make us understand his zeal and his love.***

Parable of the good shepherd who runs after his sheep (Lk 15:3).

The woman who lost a drachma (Lk 15:8).

The father of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11).[5]

Parable of the wedding feast of the king's son. No one [comes] (Mt 22:1).

***He did good in spite of the jealousy and the malice of men.***

"It came to pass that Jesus entered into the synagogue [… a man whose right hand was withered]" (Lk 6:6).

"And behold a woman who had a spirit of [infirmity]" (Lk 13:11 [printed "13,10"]).

"A woman taken in adultery" (Jn 8:3).

"A sinful woman" (Lk 7:37).

He lodges with Zacchaeus, even though he knows that the Pharisees will criticize him.

"Is thy eye evil because I am good?" (Mt 20:15)

***He carried his charity to the utmost limits.***

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life" (Jn 10:11).

"Greater love than this no man hath, [that a man lay down his life for his friends]" (Jn 15:13).

"Therefore doth the Father love me, because [I lay down my life]" (Jn 10:17).

"He has taken our sins upon himself. '*Ecce agnus Dei.*'" (Jn 1:29)[6]

"He has taken our infirmities upon himself" (Mt 8:17).

"I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" (Lk 12:50)

"With desire I have desired to eat [this Pasch with you]" (Lk 22:15).

He loved to the point of bearing with his apostles, of washing the feet of his apostles, of making himself the servant of others.

"I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mt 20:28).

"Take ye and eat; this is my body which shall be delivered for you.

Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood which shall be shed for the remission of sins" (Mt 26:26–28).

"He loved them unto the end" (Jn 13:1).

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34).

"Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast [given me], that they may be one, as we also are" (Jn 17:11).

He prepared the meal on the shore, after his resurrection.

"*Aquae multae non potuerunt extinguere caritatem.*" (Song 8:7)[7]

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

***He invites us to do likewise.***

"Love one another as I have loved you. This is my commandment, that you [love one another]; by this shall all men know that [you are my disciples]" (Jn 13:34–35; 15:12).

"Abide in my love" (Jn 15:9).[1]

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love" (Eph 5:1–2).

He prays to his Father that we may all be one (Supper) (Jn 17:21).

"I am come to cast fire on the earth" (Lk 12:49).

"*Exemplum dedi vobis ut quemadmodum ego...*" (Jn 13:15)[8]

"The servant is not greater than his lord" (Jn 13:16).

"I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, but that it be kindled?" (Lk 12:49)

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 493

"Abide in my love" (Jn 15:9), he says to his apostles. How he prays that this charity may unite them all to him and to one another. It is love that makes us abandon everything for Jesus Christ: goods, family, relatives, friends; that makes us renounce ourselves to follow Jesus Christ. Love is stronger than death.

*Instruction that Jesus Christ gives us on charity*

In his discourse on the mount.

***Not only must one do no harm to one's neighbour but one must not even be angry with him.***

"You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. But I say to you…" (Mt 5:21)

***One must say no word of insult or contempt to anyone.***

"Whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' fool…" (Mt 5:22)

*One must be reconciled with one's brother before going to bring one's offering.*

"If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar…" (Mt 5:23)

*Not even to suffer that others have the least resentment against us.*

"If therefore thou offer… and there thou remember…" (Mt 5:23)

Even when we are not in the wrong.

*One must come to agreement with one's adversary.*

"Be at agreement with thy [adversary] betimes" (Mt 5:25).

*Not even to resist evil, for fear of failing in charity or of making others fail.*

"You have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye…" (Mt 5:38)

*To be disposed to suffer everything so as not to fail in charity.*

"If one strike thee on thy right cheek…" (Mt 5:39)

*To give up one's coat and cloak rather than lose charity.*

"And if a man will contend with thee in judgment…" (Mt 5:40)

*To render service to everyone and even do double if we are allowed.*

"And whosoever will force thee one [mile]…" (Mt 5:41)

*To give to him who asks and not refuse him who would borrow of you.*

"Give to him that asketh of thee" (Mt 5:42) and from him that would [borrow of thee] turn not away.

*To take great care to despise no one.*

"See that you despise not one of [these little ones]" (Mt 18:10).

*To do good to everyone, even to those whom we meet in the street.*

The good Samaritan.

*To invite to one's table the poor, the maimed.*

"When thou makest a feast…" (Lk 14:12)

*Not to judge anyone.*

"And why seest thou the mote…" (Lk 6:41)

"The lamp of thy body is thy eye" (Lk 11:34).

*To reprove with gentleness and charity.*

"If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him" (Lk 17:3).

*And always to forgive.*

"If thy brother sin, rebuke him; how often shall my brother offend against [me, and I forgive him?]" (Mt 18:21)

*Our charity must be greater than that of the Pharisees and of sinners.*

"Unless your justice abound more…" (Mt 5:20)

*And for that, one must not be content with loving those who love you.*

"For if you love them that love you, [what reward shall you have?]" (Mt 5:46)

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 475–487.↩
2. Ms X 261–262.↩
3. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 492. What one must admire in Jesus Christ is this sentiment of compassion that seizes him at the sight of our ills, of tenderness; this trouble, this shuddering that he feels in himself; these tears that he sheds over us and this desire he has to relieve them. This is the foundation of charity, it is the first sentiment that rises in our soul. Those who remain cold, insensible at the sight of ills, cannot have charity.↩

4. Note a. For this purpose I came. (Mk 1:38)↩
5. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 495. The father of the prodigal son: He was awaiting him; his anxiety. He wanders hither and thither, he runs, he falls on his neck, kisses him. He scarcely hears what he says to him, does not even answer what he says to him. He commands his servants: Quick, the best robe, clothe him, ring, shoes; fatted calf, a feast. Joy, "for this my son was dead, and is come to life again!" (Lk 15:23–24)↩
6. Note a. Behold the Lamb of God.↩
7. Note b. Many waters have not been able to quench charity.↩
8. Note c. I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you do also.↩

↑ Contents

***To do good to those who do good to us.***

"And if you do good to them who do good to you, what thanks have you?" (Lk 6:33)

***To lend to those who give us interest.***

"And if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive…" (Lk 6:34)

***To greet those who greet us.***

"And if you salute your brethren only [who salute you…]" (Mt 5:47)

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 489. He gets down from his horse, goes up to this man. Compassion.

"Going up to him, he sees his wounds, pours in oil and wine, binds up his wounds; sets him upon his own beast and brings him to an inn and takes care of him for a day; pays the host, commends his poor man, promises to pay and to come back to see him." (Lk 10:34–35)

2. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 489 — Not to see evil in others. We see evil in others and we are sicker than they. We want to correct others and we have more defects than they.

***We must do more.***

We.

***We must love our enemies.***

"But I say to you, Love your enemies" (Mt 5:44).

***Do good to those who hate us.***

"Do good to them that hate you" (Lk 6:27).

***Bless those who curse us.***

"Bless them that curse you" (Lk 6:28).

***Pray for those who persecute and calumniate us.***

"Pray for them that persecute you" (Mt 5:44).

*Greet those who say nothing to us.*

"And if you salute those who salute you" (Mt 5:47).

*Go to meet those who bear us ill will.*

*Lend without interest.*

"Lend, hoping for nothing thereby" (Lk 6:35).

*Do good without expecting a reward.*

"Do good, hoping for nothing thereby" (Lk 6:35).

*Do good to the wicked and the ungrateful.*

"And your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Highest" (Lk 6:35).

*To the just and the unjust,*

*and your reward shall be great,*

*and we shall be the sons of the Most High,*

*and we shall be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect.*

*Finally, treat everyone as we would wish to be treated ourselves if we were in their place.*

"All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them" (Mt 7:12).

***To keep us to the practice of this divine charity, Jesus Christ assures us that God will use towards us the same measure that we shall have used towards others.***

"With the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again" (Lk 6:38).

***If we do not judge, we shall not be judged.***

"Judge not, and you shall not be judged" (Lk 6:37).

***If we do not condemn, we shall not be condemned.***

"Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned" (Lk 6:37).

***If we forgive, we shall be forgiven.***

"Forgive, and you shall be forgiven" (Lk 6:37), "for if you will not forgive men, [neither will your Father…]" (Mt 6:15)

Parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23–35).

"Forgive us our trespasses as we [forgive]." Pater. (Mt 6:12)

"And when you shall stand to pray, … [forgive…]" (Mk 11:25).

"Blessed are the merciful, for they [shall obtain mercy]" (Mt 5:7).

*If we give, it shall be given to us.*

"Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure and pressed down… shall they give into your bosom" (Lk 6:38).

*If we want our prayers to be heard, we must keep nothing in our heart against anyone whatever.*

"And when you shall stand to pray, [forgive…]" (Mk 11:25).

*That Our Lord regards as done to himself all the good we shall have done to the least of his.*

The answer that Christ gives to the elect who ask him: "When did we feed thee, clothe thee?" (Mt 25:37–38)

"He that receiveth you receiveth me" (Mt 10:40).

"And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these [little ones]…" (Mt 10:42).

"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water…" (Mk 9:40 [printed "Mt 10,42"]).

"As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren…" (Mt 25:40).

"He that receiveth you, receiveth me" (Mt 10:40).

*That on the day of judgment we shall be judged principally on charity.*

"And when the Son of man shall come…" (Mt 25:31)

*That charity is his favourite commandment.*

"A new commandment I give unto you" (Jn 13:34),

"These things I command you, that you [love one another…]" (Jn 15:17).

*That charity is the distinctive sign of his true disciples.*

"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples" (Jn 13:35)

"I in them, and thou in me; that they may be [made perfect in one] and the world may know [that thou hast sent me]" (Jn 17:23).

*That this commandment contains all the others.*

"One of the scribes came up to Our Lord…" (Mk 12:28)

"On these two commandments dependeth the whole law" (Mt 22:40).

"It is comprised in this word… Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Rom 13:9–10; Gal 5:14) [Tr.: printed "Rm 8,10"].

*That charity is the end of all the precepts.*

"The end of the commandment is charity from a pure heart" (1 Tim 1:5).

*And that before giving Peter the government of his Church, he asks of him nothing else but love.*

"When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon…" (Jn 21:15)

*Charity is known by words and by works.*

"A good tree cannot bring forth [evil fruits]" (Mt 7:18).

*Teaching of Saint Paul on charity*

*He teaches us that charity is the most excellent of all the virtues.*

The scribe says it in the Gospel, repeating what Jesus Christ had said, that "to love one's neighbour as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices" (Mk 12:33).

*It is more excellent than the gift of tongues, than knowledge,*

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels" (1 Cor 13:1)

To speak well. Theology. To know all languages. Gospel. To know how to speak of spiritual things, to preach

gift of tongues,

gift of prophecy,

gift of knowledge,

"And if I should have prophecy": discernment, penetration, counsel; "and should know all mysteries and all knowledge" (1 Cor 13:2), mystery of nature and of heaven.

***more excellent than faith and the gift of miracles,***

"and if I should have all faith…" (1 Cor 13:2)

***more excellent than humanity [Tr.: sic; evidently "almsgiving"?] which gives all its goods,***

"and if I should distribute [my goods]…" (1 Cor 13:3)

***more excellent than poverty which strips itself of everything***

"distribute all my goods" (1 Cor 13:3)

***more excellent than mortification,***

"and if I should deliver my body to be burned," by penance (1 Cor 13:3).

*and martyrdom*

burned by martyrdom, "and if I should deliver my body to be burned," as a martyr (1 Cor 13:3).

*"Charity is patient." (1 Cor 13:4)*

The word "patient" means to suffer; that is, he who has charity suffers without complaint the pains and annoyances of others.

*"Is kind," (1 Cor 13:4)*

It is kind, that is, it makes no one suffer; what is kind is agreeable, good and does not vex. These are the two principal characteristics

of charity: to suffer what others make us endure, without complaint, and to make no one suffer, to be agreeable to everyone.

*"beneficent," (1 Cor 13:4) [Tr.: Chevrier's French "bienfaisante"]*

"It does good to others" (1 Cor 13:4).

*"Charity envieth not," (1 Cor 13:4)*

*"dealeth not perversely" [Tr.: printed "ni téméraire", rash], (1 Cor 13:4)*

*"is not puffed up," (1 Cor 13:4)*

"Be subject to one another" (Gal 5:13).

*"is not provoked [Tr.: printed "ni précipitée", hasty]" (1 Cor 13:5)*

James and John who wish to bring heaven down on Samaria.

*"Is not ambitious," (1 Cor 13:5)*

*"seeketh not her own," (1 Cor 13:5)*

*"is not provoked to anger," (1 Cor 13:5)*

*"thinketh no evil," (1 Cor 13:5)*

*"rejoiceth not in iniquity"; (1 Cor 13:6)*

*"but rejoiceth with the truth." (1 Cor 13:6)*

*"Beareth all things," (1 Cor 13:7)*

*"believeth all things," (1 Cor 13:7)*

*"hopeth all things," (1 Cor 13:7)*

*"endureth all things," (1 Cor 13:7)*

*"charity never falleth away." (1 Cor 13:8)*

*We must consider ourselves all as forming one body of which Jesus Christ is the soul and head and of which each of us is a member. (1 Cor 12:12)*

*"Above all things, we must have charity, which is the bond of perfection." (Col 3:14)*[1]

*The end of the precepts is charity.*

"The end of the commandment is charity from a pure heart and a good conscience" (1 Tim 1:5).

"Render therefore to all men their dues: tribute…" (Rom 13:7)

***We remark in Saint Paul the love of tenderness and affection.***

2 Cor 6:11–18; 7:2–3; 11:2; 12:20

Phil 1:3–8; 4:1–3

Gal 4:19

1 Thess 2:7–12.

***The love of zeal and solicitude,***

Eph 1:3–11; 1:15–18; 3:13–18;

Phil 1:2

2 Cor 11:28–29

Col 1:9–11; [printed "11,1–3"; evidently 2:1–3][2]

***and the love of sacrifice:***

1 Cor 9:18–23; 10:33; 15:30–31;

Phil 1:22–25; 2:1–8; [printed "11,17"];

2 Cor 5:1–2; 12:14–15;

***Exhortation of Saint Paul to charity.***

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom 13:8).

“I, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy” (Eph 4:1).

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of charity…” (Phil 2:1)

“And let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works” (Heb 10:24).

“By charity of spirit serve one another” (Gal 5:13).

“Let love be without dissimulation” (Rom 12:9).

“Practise in all things humility and meekness” (Eph 4:2).

“Let all your things be done in charity” (1 Cor 16:14).

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children” (Eph 5:1).

“Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be (of one mind)” (Rom 15:5)

“Be kind one to another” (Eph 4:32).

“For as in one body we have many members…” (Rom 12:4).

“Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved” (Col 3:12).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens” (Gal 6:2).

“If a man be overtaken in any [fault…]” (Gal 6:1).

“Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation [be put away from you]” (Eph 4:31).

“Everyone as he hath determined in his heart” (2 Cor 9:7).

“All things are lawful, but all things edify not” (1 Cor 10:23).

“Let us follow after the things that are of peace” (Rom 14:19).

“Him that is weak in faith, take unto you” (Rom 14:1).

“Let no evil speech [Tr.: printed: dishonest words] proceed out of your mouth…” (Eph 5:4; 4:29).

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more” (Rom 14:13).

“Let every one of you please his neighbour” (Rom 15:2; cf. 15:1).

“Put away anger, bitterness, evil speaking” (Col 3:8; Eph 4:31).

“But thou, why judgest thou thy brother?” (Rom 14:10)

“Judge not before the time” (1 Cor 4:5).

"O man, whosoever thou art that judgest" (Rom 2:1).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:10)

"I fear lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would" (2 Cor 12:20).

"Now there are diversities of graces" (1 Cor 12:4).

"For the rest, brethren, rejoice, be perfect" (2 Cor 13:11).

*Exhortation of Saint Peter*

"But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves" (1 Pet 4:8).

"Chastifying your souls in the obedience of charity" (1 Pet 1:22).

"Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring" (1 Pet 4:9).

"Laying away therefore all malice, and all guile" (1 Pet 2:1).

"As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another" (1 Pet 4:10).

*Exhortation of Saint John*

"Dearly beloved, let us love one another, for charity is of God" (1 Jn 4:7).

"By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us" (1 Jn 4:9).

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn 3:14).

"My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue" (1 Jn 3:18).

"He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother have need…" (1 Jn 3:17).

"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light" (1 Jn 2:10).

Love one another. These were his last words.

*Exhortation of Saint James*

"[If a brother or sister be naked, and want daily food…]" (Jas 2:15)

"Detract not one another, my brethren" (Jas 4:11).

"The tongue, [no man can tame]" (Jas 3:8).

"If any man think himself to be religious, not [bridling his tongue…]" (Jas 1:26).

"Hedge in thy ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue, and make doors and bars for thy mouth" (Sir 28:28–29 Vulg.; printed "28,24–25").[3]

"The multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32).

*MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 470*

***Rules of charity that a true disciple of Jesus Christ must observe.***

In conformity with the words and examples of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that one must:

***What must be avoided so as not to wound charity.***

never get angry with anyone,

never say any word of insult or contempt to anyone whatever

never return evil for evil,

not even resist evil.

Not quarrel with anyone, neither lawsuit nor dispute; lose one's goods rather than lose charity.

One must take great care not to despise one of these little ones.

Not to see the mote in one's brother's eye when we have a beam in our own;

not to want to take the mote out of one's brother's eye when we have a beam in our own; one must first take the beam out of one's eye before taking the mote out of one's brother's eye.

"Can the blind lead the blind?" (Lk 6:39)

To judge no one, condemn no one, think no evil of others.

After the example of Our Lord, we must feel in ourselves a great compassion.

---

**Notes**

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 456. Charity must be the principle of our actions, regulated afterwards by the Holy Spirit. Some begin their actions by examining, considering: compass, rule… If one begins with that, one never finishes and does nothing; one must begin with love, and one sees first all that can be useful, and acts. Knowledge, reasoning always come to constrict love, restrict actions.↩
2. Note a. We give here the references of the texts transcribed in a parallel manuscript. (XII 11 b).↩
3. Note a. Translation of the Latin text. The text of our modern Bibles is often quite different for the book of Ecclesiasticus.↩

↑ Contents

*What we must feel in ourselves.*

Following the example of Our Lord, we must feel in ourselves a great compassion for the unfortunate.

Call the unfortunate to us to relieve them.

Feel in ourselves that divine fire which Jesus came to bring upon the earth: "*ignem veni mittere*" (Lk 12:49).

Say like Saint Paul, "*Caritas Christi urget nos*"[1] (2 Cor 5:14)

Desire to spend our life for the neighbour, to give our life for him.

"I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and I feel myself pressed until it be accomplished" (Lk 12:50) [Tr.: Chevrier's wording].

Feel in ourselves this mission that has been given us to relieve and to heal.

Groan over the lot of the unfortunate.

*What we must do.*

We must be reconciled with our enemies before going to the altar.

Go to meet them even when we are not in the wrong.

Not suffer that others have the least resentment against us.

Come to agreement with our adversaries.

Give to him who asks; lend to him who has need; if we are asked a service, grant double.

"Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; bless them that curse you; pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (Lk 6:27–28; Mt 5:44).

Do to others all the good that we would have others do to us.

Receive everyone with gentleness and charity, children, the poor, the sick, sinners; send no one away without help; go even to meet the unfortunate to relieve them.

Do good in spite of the jealousy and malice of men.

Tend the sick whom we find on the way.

Give dinner to the poor; invite them to our feasts.

Run after the lost sheep.

Rebuke one's brother with prudence and charity when he falls into some fault.

"Forgive until seventy times seven times" (Mt 18:22).

Not to be put off by obstacles.

*Our charity must be wholly supernatural.*

Our charity must be greater than that of the people of the world.

If sinners love those who love them, greet those who greet them, do good to those who do good to them, lend to those who give them interest,

for us, we must love our enemies, go to meet those who wish us ill, greet those who say nothing to us, do good without expecting a reward, lend without interest, do good to the good and to the wicked, to the just and to the unjust,

and we shall be the children of the Most High, and we shall be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

*That God will treat us as we shall have treated others.*

We must remember that God will use towards us the same measure that we shall have used towards others.

If we do not judge, we shall not be judged; if we do not condemn, we shall not be condemned; if

we forgive, we shall be forgiven; if we give, it shall be given to us, and much more shall be given to us than we shall have given.

If we want our prayers to be heard, we must keep nothing in our heart against our neighbour.

That on the day of judgment we shall be judged principally on charity towards the neighbour.

That Jesus regards as done to himself all that we shall have done to the least of his.

That charity is his favourite commandment,

that it is the mark of his true disciples,

that this commandment contains all the others,

that before giving Peter the government of the Church, Jesus Christ asks of him only love.

*Excellence of charity.*

We must remember that charity is the most excellent of all the virtues.

That it is more excellent than knowledge, than faith, than poverty, than penance.

*Qualities of charity.*

That charity is gentle and patient; that it is neither envious, nor rash, nor proud, nor hasty.

That it is not ambitious; it seeks not its own interests; it is not provoked; it thinks no evil; it rejoices not in evil; it rejoices with the truth, with the good.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; it never falls away.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. The love of Christ presseth us.↩

↑ Contents

## 7) Follow me in my preachings.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* To succeed in one's life, to be useful to others, one must know what one has to do and all the rest falls into place. "When one important thing is done well, the rest also goes well."[1]

For Father Chevrier it is very clear, "to preach is the great mission of the priest."[2] The chapter "follow me in my preachings," left unfinished, is nevertheless a keystone of the "True Disciple."[3]

This view is admissible only if one understands the expressions to preach, to teach catechism, in the sense of making Jesus Christ known. "Are we not here for that and for that alone: to know Jesus

Christ and his Father and make him known to others?"[4]

The study of the Gospel and of Saint Paul first sets us before the breadth of the ministry of the Word and the multiple forms this ministry can take: Jesus "preaches everywhere" and "preaches every day."[5]

Passing to concrete applications, Father Chevrier confines himself specially to two sectors: "catechism" and "the little missions."[6] In conformity with what we know of him, he keeps to what he has experienced.

Through the indications he gives, great ideas pass which deserve to be retained. As regards catechism, he does not present to us a pedagogy adapted to the various ages, as one would do nowadays. He had the concern to adapt himself to the social milieu, to the kind of mind of the children of the Prado, but he did so with the means of his time. Nevertheless, he follows the doctrinal principles that must guide all catechetical pedagogy. He does so with great simplicity but also great accuracy.

---

1. P. 299

2. P. 448

3. Cf. pp. 59–60, indications for the study of the theme "The Word" and also p. 338

4. LP no. 231, 30 June 1873.

5. Pp. 441–442

6. Pp. 450–451

This Catechism of the Prado, so remarkable for the simple tone of its developments, for the abundance of images or comparisons, for the penetration of its examinations of conscience, has lost nothing of its timeliness. A master could easily transpose it into a "Catechism for today."[2]

The "little missions" are series of preachings generally called parish missions. The great models in this kind of ministry remain those of the seventeenth century, such as Saint Vincent de Paul and his Congregation of the Mission, Saint Grignion de Montfort, etc.

Father Chevrier speaks of "little" missions. It is that he wants to renounce "all great and solemn preachings."[3] In his view, this kind of preaching cannot answer the purpose he proposes: to ensure that the poor who would come may feel at ease, to familiarize them with the Gospel, with Christ. This is well felt through the practical

counsels he gives: not to go up into the pulpit, not to oblige people who have slipped furtively into the church to come forward to the first places, to seek a setting that is not intimidating, etc. He would have liked to be able to do the same even to celebrate Mass. He had prepared a petition to the Pope to obtain permission to say Mass in the villages, in the course of missions, outside the parish church.[4]

We thus see how the priest must follow Jesus Christ in his "gentleness," his "humility," his "charity," not only alongside his ministry, as a preparation for this ministry, but in the exercise of his "great function" as priest.

The manuscript we follow here is a very copious collection of passages of Scripture. It contains, in fact, all the preaching of Jesus, and therefore all the discourses contained in the Gospels. This transcription is not in Father Chevrier's hand and very many pages contain no annotation from him. We have chosen to reproduce only the text written by Father Chevrier himself, simply indicating the reference of the passages he comments on.

*It is his great mission.*

"At Nazareth, he enters the synagogue" (Lk 4:16).

He reads and explains the prophecy of Isaiah that concerns him, to evangelize the poor. Astonishment he produces in the crowd; yet they are scandalized, saying, we know his father and mother. Jesus Christ's answer: "No prophet is accepted in his own country" (Lk 4:24). "And all they in the synagogue were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust him out of the city; and they brought him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong" (Lk 4:28–29).

At twelve years old, he remains in Jerusalem and teaches the doctors of the law.

The answer he makes to Mary, his mother.

He answers his apostles who told him that the world was seeking him: "Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come" (Mk 1:38 [printed "1,35"]).

The crowd wants to keep him, because it will not leave him, and he says to them: "To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent" (Lk 4:43).

*He travels through the towns and villages.*

"From Nazareth he goes to Capharnaum" (Mt 4:13).

Fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

He begins to preach. "And he taught in their synagogues" (Mt 4:23).

He says to his disciples: "Let us go into the neighbouring villages and towns, that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come" (Mk 1:38).

They strive to keep him: There are other cities also, for this I am come. And he went through all Galilee, teaching and healing.

"He went about all the cities and towns, preaching and healing" (Mt 9:35); to preach and to heal, he does not separate these two actions.

"And the twelve with him" (Lk 8:1).

When he is driven out of Nazareth, he travels through the surrounding villages.

*He preaches everywhere*

In the temple (Lk 21:37).

Every day in the temple (Lk 19:47; Mt 21:14).

In the synagogues (Lk 4:15; Mk 1:21; Mt 9:35).

He stops in a plain and preaches. "And he, lifting up his eyes on [the] multitude [and on] his disciples, said: Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Lk 6:20).

Jesus goes up a mountain and preaches to his disciples and the crowd (Mt 5:1).

On the way, he instructs the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:4). He takes occasion of the water to instruct her and speak to her of that living water that gives eternal life. He gently reproaches her for her life; he instructs her on the manner of adoring God.

He goes up into Simon's boat and instructs the crowd from the boat (Lk 5:3; Mt 13:2).

At table at the Pharisees' (Lk 11:37).

In houses (Mk 2:2).

On the shore (Mk 2:13).

By the seaside.

In a boat (Mk 4:1).

***He preaches every day. (Lk 21:37; 19:47)***

***He speaks with fidelity.***

"My doctrine is not mine" (Jn 7:16).

"If any man will do the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (Jn 7:17).

He seeks not his glory.

"He that believeth in me, doth not believe in me, but in him that sent me" (Jn 12:44).

"I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment…" (Jn 12:49)

"What I speak, I speak as the Father said to me" (Jn 12:50).

"The things that I have heard of him, these same I speak in the world" (Jn 8:26).

"As the Father hath taught me, these things I speak" (Jn 8:28).

"My Father is with me" (Jn 8:29).

"I speak that which I have seen with my Father" (Jn 8:38).

***He speaks with simplicity.***

In all this discourse [on the mount], one sees neither refinement, nor preamble; nothing that smacks of study, research, trouble, announcement, emphasis, care, ostentation, mannerisms. Everything is simple in tone, words, bearing,

manners; much doctrine and few words; "and with us it is the contrary."

The comparisons are: salt, light, the lamp, the bird, the lily, the straw, the beam, sheep, wolves, trees, brambles, thorns, houses, wind, rain, rock: all things that are understood.

In these parables, everything is known, visible, sensible:

the grain that is sown (Mt 13:1)

the cockle (Mt 13:36).

the grain of mustard seed (Mk 4:30).

the seed that bears fruit of itself (Mk 4:26).

the leaven (Lk 13:20).

the hidden treasure (Mt 13:44).

the precious pearl (Mt 13:45).

the fishermen's nets (Mt 13:47).

the two sons (Mt 21:28).

the prodigal son (Lk 15:11).

***He speaks with authority.***

He relies on the authority of his Father (Jn 8:13 ff.; Mt 5:18, 20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39; Mt 7:29).

What authority of language, what sublimity of doctrine reigns in all this discourse [on the mount]. One has only to read to notice that it is a Master who speaks.[5]

***He speaks with firmness. (Jn 18:37)***

He rebukes the scribes and Pharisees on their false maxims (Mt 15:3).

He calls them hypocrites (Mt 15:7).

Herod (Lk 13:32).

He rebukes the Pharisees who were watching him (Lk 14:1; Mt 22:18; Mt 23:2).

***It is the great mission that Jesus Christ confers on his apostles.***

"Jesus Christ chooses twelve men to be with him and to send them"to preach"" (Mk 3:14).

They go first with Jesus and follow him in his preachings (Lk 8:1).

***Instructions he gives his apostles in sending them out to preach.***

He sends them two by two (Mk 6:7).

Where they are to go (Mt 10:5).

What they are to say; what they are to do; all this free of charge.

In what conditions they are to go: poverty.

The workman finds his food where he works.

Where they are to lodge; how they are to present themselves; how those who receive them will be treated; and those who shall not have received them.

In what dispositions they are to be; what their principal virtues are to be (Mt 10:16).

Warnings he gives them; persecutions he foretells; not to be anxious about what they are to say to their judges; terrible war in families.

In persecutions, to flee to other cities; to fear nothing: "the disciple is not above the master" (Mt 10:24). Let this not prevent you from speaking, preaching on the housetops; not to fear those who kill the body. God watches over you, confidence (Mt 10:29).

"Every one that shall confess me [before men…]" (Mt 10:32).

"I came not to send peace, but the sword" (Mt 10:34; Lk 12:51).

To take up one's cross (Mt 10:38); to lose one's life.

Reward granted to those who receive us (Mt 10:40).

"Salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13); "the light of the world" (Mt 5:14),

We must enlighten others by good example.

Good examples.

Force of this word (Mt 5:18). Happiness of him who shall have taught; done and taught (Mt 5:19).

Mission of the seventy-two disciples (Lk 10:1).

He asks for labourers for the harvest.

To be as lambs in the midst of wolves. In poverty; not to waste time chatting with the world.

The priests' greeting on entering: [peace to this house].

The apostles hold the place of Jesus Christ (Lk 10:16).

Great mission that Jesus entrusts to his apostles before leaving them (Mt 28:16; Mk 16:15).

To preach in the name of Jesus Christ penance and the remission of sins (Lk 24:46).

They must first be filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49). "When they had received the Holy Spirit, they began to speak, '*coeperunt loqui*'; '*aliis linguis, prout Spiritus Sanctus dabat eloqui illis*'"[6] [Tr.: the French prints "ariis"] (Acts 2:4).

The mission of preaching is the most important of all, it is the one that comes before all the others; one must preach before baptizing; preach before hearing confessions, to convert, enlighten, instruct, the fundamental mission; without it, nothing in the world.

How the apostles fulfilled their mission.[7]

***Teaching of Saint Paul, the great doctor of the nations, on preaching.***

Saint Paul is a debtor to everyone for the preaching of the Gospel (Rom 1:14 [printed "14,17"]).

He is not ashamed of the Gospel (Rom 1:16).

To preach without the artifices of speech so as not to make void the cross of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:17–25).

God destroys the wisdom of the wise.

Folly of preaching.

To preach Jesus Christ crucified.

Power and wisdom of God.

In God, what seems folly is wisdom; what seems weakness is stronger than men.

Not with lofty discourses of human eloquence and wisdom (1 Cor 2:1–16).

“I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2).

Not to rely on the persuasive words of human wisdom.

And that faith should not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

“Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God” (1 Cor 2:12).

To announce the truths, not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in those which the Holy Spirit teaches.

One must give each the food that suits him (1 Cor 3:1–13).

Milk to the weak.

“Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase” (1 Cor 3:7).

“For other foundation no man can lay in souls but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus” (1 Cor 3:11).

He preaches without charge, so as to put not the least obstacle to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

He would rather die than lose this glory.

“For if I preach the gospel, it is no glory to me, for a necessity lieth upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor 9:16) willingly, not unwillingly, by force. “What is my reward then? That preaching the gospel, I may deliver the gospel without charge” (1 Cor 9:18).

“For whereas I was free as to all, I made myself the servant of all, that I might gain the more” (1 Cor 9:19 [printed “8,19”]).

“I became all things to all men” (1 Cor 9:22).

Odour of death, odour of life (2 Cor 2:14–17 [printed “2 Co 4,14–17”]).

To preach with sincerity, on behalf of God, in the presence of God, in the spirit of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:1–13),

not adulterating the word of God.

"Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4:2): "Our recommendation is the sincerity with which we preach" [Tr.: Chevrier's wording].

"We preach Jesus Christ. We are your servants through Jesus" (2 Cor 4:5) [Tr.: printed "Co. 4,5"].

"God hath shined in our hearts" (2 Cor 4:6), to enlighten others.

To preach the Gospel in persecutions and afflictions of the flesh (Gal 4:11–20).

He is like a mother who gives birth to Jesus Christ in us.

That God may put his word on my lips (Eph 6:18–20 [printed "Ep 4,18–20"]).

To announce the Gospel freely. Liberty and boldness in chains.

To preach Jesus Christ, admonishing every man, instructing in all wisdom (Col 1:21–29).

End of my labours.

"We speak, not as pleasing men, but God" (1 Thess 2:4).

Neither flattery, nor avarice, nor the glory of men; poorly; like a nurse full of tenderness; dis-

posed to give our life for you, in pains and fatigues. Work, night and day, poor. Irreproachable conduct (2 Thess 3:8).

Like a father (1 Thess 2:11).

Paul's entreaty to Timothy, through Jesus Christ (2 Tim 4:1–5).

One must speak, preach always, at every moment.

Watch, suffer, fulfil the duties of a preacher of the Gospel.

Preach, exhort, rebuke (Titus 2:15; Heb 4:12).

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 544–559.↩
2. P. Broutin, *Le mouvement catéchistique en France au XIX^e^ siècle*. Nouvelle Revue Théologique, 6 June 1960 [sic as printed], p. 632.↩
3. Ms X 275.↩
4. Ms X 164.↩
5. Note a. These two sentences of commentary are not in the Father's hand but were doubtless copied from a first preparatory text drawn up by the Father himself.↩
6. Note a. They began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them to speak.↩
7. Note b. Cf. pp. 447 and 450.↩

↑ Contents

*Condition for preaching well.*

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly; neither for the sake of filthy lucre, but voluntarily" (1 Pet 5:2) [Tr.: Chevrier's wording: "not for gain but with disinterestedness"].

Not as master, but as model.

No scandal (1 Cor 10:32–33).

Seeking what is useful to others.

"To bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom 15:1–7).

"Let every one of you please his neighbour" (Rom 15:2).

Necessity of preachers sent by God (Rom 10:15).

"God as it were exhorting by us; to speak in the name of God" (2 Cor 5:20–21).

To give no offence to anyone, that our ministry be not blamed (2 Cor 6:3). But to commend ourselves in much patience.

Though young, to be an example to the faithful (1 Tim 4:12).

A model of good works (Titus 2:7–8). Words pure and irreprehensible.

The apostles choose exclusively prayer and preaching (Acts 6:4).

Saint Paul does not cease to preach in public and in houses. "*Publice et per domos*" (Acts 20:20).

"The apostles ceased not every day, in the temple and from house to house, to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).

Qualities of a preacher: not quarrelsome, moderate, apt, patient, gentle, full of hope for sinners, for their conversion (2 Tim 2:24–26).[1]

***Summary of Our Lord's conduct in his preachings.***

It is the great mission that he received from his Father. He goes about the towns and villages, preaching and healing.

He preaches everywhere,

he preaches every day,

he preaches with fidelity,

he preaches with simplicity,

he preaches with authority,

he preaches with firmness.

*Jesus chooses twelve apostles to send them out to preach.*

He first takes them with him; he sends them two by two.

He sends them first to the sheep of Israel,

he gives them at the same time the power to heal.

He sends them in the greatest poverty.

He tells them to preach free of charge, that the workman is worthy of his hire.

He tells them to lodge with worthy people.

He recommends them to be gentle as lambs, prudent as serpents, simple as doves.

He announces persecutions to them, for he is come to bring on the earth the sword and division.

He tells them to have confidence, that he too was persecuted.

Preach on the housetops, fear [nothing], God watches over you.

You must be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

***Before going up to heaven Jesus Christ gives them his great powers.***

"All power is given to me.

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them. '*Ite, docete*'" (Mt 28:18–19).

***How the apostles fulfilled this mission.***[a]

After receiving the Holy Spirit, Saint Peter: three thousand, five thousand men converted.

Persecution, scourging, prisons.

"*Ibant gaudentes*" (Acts 5:41).[b]

They leave everything to preach: "*nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus*" [Tr.: printed "non vero oratione et predicatione instantes erimus"] (Acts 6:4).[c]

"They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ in the temple and from house to house" (Acts 5:42). Saint Paul: "*publice et per domos*" (Acts 20:20).[d]

**Notes**

1. Cf. p. 444, note b.
2. They went away rejoicing.

3. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.
4. In public and in private.

*Summary of Saint Paul's doctrine on preaching.*

We are obliged to preach. We must not blush at the simplicity of the Gospel nor make void the power of the cross by the artifices of human eloquence.

We are nothing in preaching, it is God who does everything.

We must rely only on God.

We must please God and not men.

We must make every possible sacrifice to win souls for Jesus Christ.

We must find our reward in souls.

The pressing invitation he makes to all of us to preach.

One of the great conditions for bearing fruit is good example.

*Practical summary.*

*To preach is the great mission of the priest.*

*One must preach with fidelity.*

Speak only of what God has taught us, say nothing of ourselves.

Say only what Jesus Christ has taught us, the Gospel.

If we say something of ourselves, it is no longer the word of God, it is the human word.

Not to preach oneself, to preach Jesus Christ.

One preaches oneself when one seeks everything through study, contrivance, researches, satisfactions.[2]

*With simplicity.*[3]

*With authority.*

*With firmness.*

*When must we preach?*

Every day, and on Sundays several times. It is on Sunday especially that one must preach, teach catechism. At every moment; a priest must always be ready to speak, like Our Lord: he spoke, instruc-

ted, rebuked at every moment and on every occasion.

Before Mass, explain the Holy Mass and recite aloud the prayers of the Mass.

After the Gospel, explain the Epistle and the Gospel, simply.

After Vespers, explain the rosary.

In the evening, explain the way of the cross before making it and make it in the form of an instruction.

At prayer, explain a commandment of God.

During the examination of conscience

"*praedica verbum, insta, argue, obsecra*" (2 Tim 4:2).[a]

Every evening, the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the faithful.

Our Lord said all that needed to be said: we have only to open his book and read it to the faithful with a little explanation.

***Whom must we preach?***

Jesus Christ. "*Haec est vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te solum Deum verum, et quem misisti Jesum Christum*" (Jn 17:3).[b]

"I know only Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ crucified" (1 Cor 2:2), that is the foundation of all things.

His divinity. That is one of the principal points. "*Praedicate Evangelium*" (Mk 16:15).[c]

A little less devotion and a little more faith in Jesus Christ.

***What must we teach above all?***

The rosary, the way of the cross, the Mass, the commandments of God, Jesus' teaching to the faithful: God – Jesus Christ – the Church.

***Where must we preach?***

Everywhere, like Jesus Christ.

Everywhere we find occasion, where we think our word may produce some effect, like Jesus Christ.

**Notes**

1. Preach the word, be instant, reprove, entreat. (2 Tim 4:2)
2. This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (Jn 17:3)

3. Preach, preach the Gospel. (Mk 16:15)

Like the apostles. "*Publice et per domos*" (Acts 20:20).[a]

If we were allowed to go into the houses, that is, to establish halls or places of instruction among the faithful, and there gather people to instruct them, to give religious talks; people do not come, one must go and seek them.

Who would prevent dividing a parish into several districts and going to spend a month in each district? settling in a suitable place: a barn, a hall, a house, and instructing the people each evening; how we should fulfil our task of preaching!

*Example of Jesus Christ at Nazareth*

Our Lord enters the synagogue to read from the scroll which he unrolls and reads and, after the reading, he explains the prophecy (Lk 4:16).

So, to read first a passage of the Gospel, of Holy Scripture, and to explain it: that is the ordinary form of instruction.

To have a lectern on which one places, before the exercise, the book containing the part which serves as the foundation of the instruction; to

read first the text and then give the practical explanation of it, this for the Gospel.

…[b]

the rosary

the way of the cross

the evening catechism

***Catechism, simple instruction,***

It is simple instruction, by question and answer. It is not the book that instructs, it is the priest.

Our Lord did not say: "read, instruct yourselves," but he said to the priest: "*docete*" (Mt 28:19).[c]

How sad it is to see children spend two hours a day learning words and being bored repeating always the same thing, "they" and "the catechist"! for it is deadening. Whereas one can give them more faith and love and religion in a quarter of an hour than they take in two hours' time.

When one instructs grown-ups, or the ignorant, one cannot say to them: go, take these catechisms and read; one must instruct oneself,

---

Note a. In public and in private. Cf. p. 444, note b.

Note b. Uncertain text; one reads: "and the priest."

Note c. Teach.

put oneself within the reach of each and of the great number and instruct by the spoken word. "*Fides ex auditu*" (Rom 10:17).[4] [5]

***Manner of proceeding.***

One must proceed by truths, begin with the fundamental truths and go on afterwards to those more remote.

When one builds a house, one always begins with the main walls and then goes on to the finer work and the ornaments.

The fundamental questions are: God, sin, Jesus Christ, his teaching, his death, his Church, sacraments, the general resurrection, the last ends.

One must put all one's faith in these great truths and not waste one's time on all these little instructions which do not hold because the foundations do not exist.

*In the little missions.*

Avoid going up into the pulpit, or go up only when one cannot do otherwise because of the crowd…

When one goes to evangelize a parish, begin with the church… place oneself at one side of the church or down below, then go up as the people come.

In the villages, begin by going there each evening. Settle in a barn or a room of an honest inhabitant, as soon as there are enough people, install oneself there and say Mass there. Go above all to ignorant villages without religion.

*Aim of all instruction and of catechism.*

It is to enlighten the mind by knowledge, to touch the heart by love and to determine the will to act.

Faith, love and action, these are the three effects one must seek to produce in all instruction.

To give faith by knowledge, reasonings, sight of things.

To give birth to love for the truth one teaches.

And to move to perform actions in keeping with the truth known and loved.

To arrive at these three effects, one must take every possible means and,

as Saint Paul says, one must give birth like a mother, make oneself a nurse and a father and give one's life through charity.

*Forming catechists.*

*Means of becoming good catechists.*

One must teach catechism often and for a long time, know the method for teaching catechism.

Have a large notebook or, better still, several notebooks to write one's own catechism oneself.

Catechism often, every day. One must make one's catechism oneself, write one's catechism oneself; have a big notebook or several in which are written, in the margin, the titles of each lesson and, each day, note what one learns in one's readings, instructions, and, at the end of a few years, one has one's complete catechism and, in the course of instructions one has made oneself, a store from which one can draw for one's catechisms and instructions.

One must begin this work early, from the moment one begins to teach catechism, and you add each time you teach catechism something to the

articles; as one reads or studies a question, one writes on the page what one has learned in a reading, in an instruction, in one's prayers, studies or conversations; and thus you enrich yourself each day without effort, without trouble, and, after a certain time, you find you have, on all religious questions, a complete work, and to preach and teach catechism you have only to consult your catechism and you find your subject all treated and you have only to reflect, pray and coordinate your ideas a little to speak in public, and as it is your own work, you have little trouble recalling it to your memory.

Follow for this the sequence of the questions or lessons that we have given for the catechism. Place each title of the lesson and its articles in the margin, spaced sufficiently, according to the size of the subject, so that you can write in abridged and succinct form the reflections, proofs, stories or indications necessary to the subject; and do this on all the lessons of the catechism. And, at the end of a few years one comes to have a complete work from which one can draw great profit, without its having cost much trouble, and it so happens that one prepares ten years in advance

the instructions one has to give during one's whole life.

*Order of the lessons.*[6]

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. It is Father Chevrier who copied out in his own hand the text of 2 Tim 2:24–26, forgotten by the one who had prepared the notebook.↩
2. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 543. To speak with sincerity, on behalf of God, in the presence of God and in the spirit of Jesus Christ.↩
3. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 524–534. The word is the bread of souls; it is the food of Christians; men are healthy according to the food one takes; health, life are in proportion. If the food one gives is good, our faithful will have life.

   It is the same with the instruction to be given as with food ("*non in solo pane*"). There are the great dinners, there is the ordinary food, there are the pastries, cakes, delicacies, one is fond of them. It is the ordinary food that is the most necessary, the most useful to health and on it our health depends. The ordinary food is simple instruction: catechism. (Ms XII 524).

   Simplicity in words, in bearing, in manners. No researched effect; no rule, when the occasion presents itself, walking, on occasion in… no platform, no preparation, seated on the ground, in a boat. (Ms XII 534)↩
4. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 526. "*Docete*" (Mt 28:19), remember this word of the Master. One must teach, not have people read. Uselessness of books; teaching does

not come from books, little. So many books! The Gospel. Not reading, one does not understand, one understands badly. The book is cold, the word is better than the book, the word reaches people better.↩

5. Note a. Faith comes by hearing. (Rom 10:17)↩
6. Note a. The manuscript ends thus with the announcement of a development that never saw the light of day, or else it is an invitation to refer to the indications given in the notes on catechism composed elsewhere. These notes are quite numerous. (Ms VII).↩

↑ Contents

## 8°) Follow me in my struggles against the world.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Father Chevrier had at first thought of gathering into a single chapter "Follow me in my persecutions, my sufferings and my death"; then he thought of three distinct chapters, the first having as title "Follow me in my struggles and my persecutions." Finally, he resolved to split this one again, distinguishing "Follow me in my struggles" and "Follow me in my persecutions."

Thus the intention is quite clear: the struggles of Jesus are not the assaults he suffers at the hands of others, but the assaults he wages against others.

At first sight, one is surprised to find such a preoccupation in a gentle and peaceable man like Father Chevrier. And when one goes through the manuscripts, the surprise grows at the number of studies entitled expressly or equivalently "Struggle against the Jews." One wonders what this fit of anti-Semitism means.

When one looks more closely, the surprise ceases.

A big notebook of more than six hundred pages contains a study of this kind, linked to a study on the Passion.[2] All can be summed up thus:

Struggle between Jesus Christ and the Jews, which ends in the triumph of the Jews when the putting to death of Jesus is decided.

Jesus then freely commits himself to his Passion and, by his death and resurrection, it is he who carries off the definitive victory.

One recognizes here the guiding thread of the Gospel of Saint John. So it is a matter of the struggle that Jesus waged against the Jews in announcing the Gospel. By the very fact of this announcement, he took on everything in them that was not in conformity with the Gospel. Father Chevrier clearly noted that Jesus had to wage this struggle even against his disciples.[3]

But it is evidently the struggle against the Pharisees that holds Father Chevrier's attention.[4]

One may think that he was somewhat disconcerted by the oppositions he met throughout his life, whether inside or outside the Prado. He who, precisely, was not combative by nature, had great need to find in the Gospel light and strength to oppose in his turn those who stood in the way.

One senses in him a twofold preoccupation.

He must struggle against his collaborators to maintain true religion and repel a "false religion," of Pharisaic spirit, the one that imposes sacrifice before mercy. It seems that this concerns principally the manner of treating the children of First Communion and the young seminarians. Father Chevrier did not admit the over-severe manners of some.[5]

He must struggle also against his disciples. He uses a certain severity, not to punish but to rebuke. To rebuke is not first of all to sanction but to enlighten by showing what in someone's conduct is not according to the Gospel. Indeed, the weapon with which one must fight is, in the end, the witness rendered to the truth. Thus one fights

not at random, but with knowledge, wisdom and charity.[6]

*He came to bring war.*

He came to bring the sword (Mt 10:34–35).

Sign of contradiction. Simeon (Lk 2:34).

To bring division into the house, the father against the son in the family (Lk 12:51–53).

*Reason for this war.*

He is the eternal Word, wisdom, truth, light.

The reason for this combat is that there is a difference between what comes from heaven and what comes from earth.

"He that is of the earth, of the earth he is,

"he that cometh from heaven is above all" (Jn 3:31) [Tr.: Chevrier: "who comes from heaven is heavenly"].

There can be no peace between truth and error, Jesus Christ and the world;

"I am from above, you are from beneath" (Jn 8:23).

"I am the truth" (Jn 14:6) [Tr.: Jn 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"].

"*Spiritus Domini super me*" (Lk 4:18).[7]

He says nothing of himself, he says as his Father has prescribed him to say.

***He comes to fight against the error, the lie and the sin that reign in the world.***

The devil established his empire on earth since sin.

He comes to overthrow the empire of the devil, which had been established on earth since sin.

He comes to re-establish faith, justice, truth, the worship of the true God, to destroy pride, avarice, impurity, the lie.

"Great" warrior: "*exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam*" (Ps 18:6 [Vulgate; Ps 19:5]).[8]

Glory of God. Peace to men.

He seeks the glory of God.

To fight against evil.

"For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth" (Jn 18:37) (to Pilate); this is yet another of his great missions.

By my words and my actions.[1]

*Inevitable war.*

The devil's word to Jesus: [he] begs him to leave him alone (Lk 4:33–34).

One does not like to be thwarted… dislodged.

There can be no peace between Jesus Christ and the devil, truth and error, evil and virtue. Let us alone (Lk 8:28 [cf. Lk 4:34]).

Evil cannot love good, nor error truth; so he is not welcomed [nor] received. "The world knew him not. His own received him not" (Jn 1:10–11).

He was a stumbling-block for the unbelieving (Rom 9:33).

As soon as a man does not do as others do, thwarts others by his manners, condemns others, he becomes a stone of scandal; because self-love and jealousy awaken in the others.

Reason for this hatred between the world and Jesus Christ: it is because "he testifies of it that the works thereof are evil" (Jn 7:7).

Our Lord often said: "blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me" (Lk 7:23).

"*Et scandalizabantur in eo*" (Mt 13:57).[9]

*He first fights against the unbelief of the Jews and their earthly and worldly ideas.*

The Jews had made for themselves an entirely temporal idea of the Messiah, a temporal king who was to deliver them… their state favoured this idea… without a king.

The apostles themselves ask when he will establish his temporal kingdom.

Earthly ideas of the Jews and of the apostles, so opposed to the Truth

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 578–635. Every time he sees a reform, a lesson to give, he gives it, something that is not right in the soul or the heart. (Ms XII 578).

Evil is in the world, our souls, our hearts and our minds. The devil has taken the place of God, he is called prince of this world. Darkness, error, lie, pride, cruelty, impurity, envy, murder. To instruct and to rebuke. It is not enough to instruct, one must rebuke them; it is not enough to plough a field, to plant in it, one must pull up the weeds, cut, prune, otherwise the first work is useless. One must rebuke, fight constantly against evil, tear it up wherever one finds it. Important work, perhaps more difficult than the first and just as

necessary, the one becomes useless without the other. One finds far more easily people who instruct than people who correct. (Ms XII 635).

Temporal kingdom.

Temporal king.

After reading the Scripture in the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus closed the book. And he taught. The Jews are scandalized at his knowledge and doctrine, not knowing where he draws his knowledge from, not drawing it from them.

"Is not this the son of Joseph the carpenter?… his mother… his brethren…" (Mt 13:55).

"A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country" (Mk 6:4).

After the discourse on the Eucharist, they are scandalized that he says he came down from heaven (Jn 6:41).

Various sentiments regarding Jesus: some say he is the Christ, others think not; "we know whence this man is; but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is" (Jn 7:25–27).

Division of sentiment among the people about Jesus Christ: some acknowledge him as the Christ,

others refuse; does the Christ come then out of Galilee? (Jn 7:37–41).

Their reasoning is precisely a ground for belief, had they studied well (Jn 7:42).

Answer of the guards to the Pharisees who had sent them to seize him (Jn 7:46).

How the Pharisees shake the crowds who believe (Jn 7:47–49).

Nicodemus takes up his defence and he is answered that out of Galilee no prophet riseth (Jn 7:50–52).

***The combat Jesus Christ sustained against the Jews to make himself recognized for what he is.***

The trouble he has to make himself accepted for what he is (Jn 8:12).

He invokes as witness his origin and his end (Jn 8:13–14).

He is only the witness of him who sent him and who is with him. His Father is with him (Jn 8:15–19).

He invokes the witness of his works and the witness of the Father himself and the Scriptures…

He comes in the name of his Father.

He gives them the reason why they cannot believe.

Witness of Moses.

"If you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (Jn 5:36–47).

They are scandalized at him, his fellow-countrymen above all: "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred" (Mk 6:4).

"You have seen me, and you believe not" (Jn 6:36).

The Jews murmur at what he says of himself, they set against it his birth, his parents, and Jesus tells them that "no man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him" (Jn 6:44).

They set against his miracles those of Moses (Jn 6:28–33).

They ask for a prodigy in order to believe.

How Jesus answers them (Mt 16:1–4).

***He fights against Pharisaism: the bad spirit of some.***

Jesus fights against the bad spirit of the Pharisee who despises the sinful woman who had come to weep at his feet and ask his pardon, and shows

him that this woman is worth more than he and that she has obtained her pardon.

They are scandalized at the powers he grants (Lk 7:36–50).

Narrow and proud spirit of the Pharisees who despised others.

Against the pride of the Pharisees who take offence at seeing Jesus eat with [the publicans] (Mt 9:11).

He fights against the Pharisees who reproach him for eating with sinners (Mk 2:15–17 and parallels).

He fights the rule of severity of the Pharisees against the apostles concerning fasting and he opposes a broad, prudent and merciful spirit.[1]

"And why seest thou the mote?"… (Lk 6:41).

Bad spirit: they murmured because Jesus goes to lodge with a sinner [Zacchaeus] (Lk 19:1–10).[2]

False religion: they look with an evil eye on his healing the sick on the Sabbath day (Lk 6:6–8).

False, bad religion: Jesus proves to them that one can do good on the Sabbath day; they do not yield, they take counsel against him (Mt 12:9–14).

They seek to catch him in his words; they seek the means to tempt him and to be able to accuse him by bringing him an adulterous woman (Jn 8:1–11).

***He has to fight against the false religion of others.***[3]

False religion of the Pharisees who do not want the sick man to carry his bed on a Sabbath day (Jn 5:10).

False religion of the Pharisees who reproach the apostles for having plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath to eat them (Mt 12:1).

To put mercy before rule, before sacrifice (Mt 9:13; 12:7).

Rigid observers who put the rule before everything.

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 574. He enlightens the Pharisees and the disciples of John on the question of fasting.

2. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 576. He despises opinion, blame; he is not troubled by the reproach the Pharisees may make in going to lodge at Zacchaeus's, he goes.

3. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 586. Recommendations that Our Lord Jesus makes to us, "priests especially"; instruction of Our Lord on Pharisaism. Pay close attention. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Mt 16:6); nothing is more opposed to the spirit and the religion of Our Lord.

"I desire mercy and not sacrifice; you would never have condemned the innocent" (Mt 12:7).[1]

Pharisees who made their justice consist in certain external practices; so Jesus says to his disciples: "unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees" (Mt 5:20).

False religion of the Pharisees: they put human traditions before the precepts of the Lord.

Many similar things take the place of the commandments: certain practices, customs. Hypocrisy: religion of the lips. Human doctrine and ordinances.

To make void the precept in order to keep the traditions (Mk 7:1–9).

The lesson he gives them by saying that "it is not what enters into the body that defiles the man, but what comes out of it" (Mk 7:15).[2]

Not to judge according to appearances (Jn 7:19–24).

False religion of the Pharisees who made it a sin to eat without washing the hands.

Jesus Christ's reproaches.

One must take care of the inside as of the outside.

False religion of the Pharisees who pay tithe of mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the charity of God (Lk 11:42).

False religion of the Pharisees who choose the first places (Lk 11:43).

Sepulchres.

False religion of the doctors who, by their learning, impose intolerable burdens on men, which they themselves touch not with a finger, building the sepulchres of the prophets. Outward glory.

False religion of the doctors who have the scriptures, the key of knowledge, and do not understand the sense of the scriptures and prevent others from understanding it, prevent these from understanding its meaning (Lk 11:44–54).

False religion of the Pharisees.

Parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk 18:9–14).

***He convicted his enemies of blindness, unbelief and murder***

Bad spirit of the Pharisees and doctors who despised the design of God for them; they always found fault with everything, whether one does white, whether one does black, they always criticize everything.

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 589. Spirit of Jesus Christ. His thoughts on fasting, prayer, almsgiving, outward worship, his religion, his yoke. Summary of Our Lord's doctrine on fasting, prayer, almsgiving, outward worship; on what is to be avoided in the Pharisees. The first is mercy. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Mt 12:7). If one begins with sacrifice, how will one arrive?

2. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 626. He is not afraid to reproach his apostles for their ignorance. But "Jesus said: Are you also yet without understanding?" (Mt 15:16; Mk 7:18).

"But wisdom is justified by all her children" (Lk 7:35) [Tr.: Chevrier: "the children of Wisdom have rendered justice to wisdom"].

Bad spirit of the Pharisees who are not content with what they see, but who ask for a miracle as proof.

We must be content with what we see, and with the Scriptures (Mt 12:38–42).

He fights against the blindness of men which comes from their passions and their reasoning.

Explanation that Jesus Christ gives of this bad spirit which reigns in the Pharisee (Lk 11:33–35).

Those who see become blind. Blindness: one sees, and does not want to see. One wants to see only by one's eyes and one's reasonings; one does not want to see things as they are, and as the good God gives them to us, simply and plainly. The reasoners do not see rightly (Jn 9:39–41).

He opposes to this blindness the works he does in the name of his Father.

Reason for their unbelief: They are not of my sheep (Jn 10:22–30).

Those who say, and do nothing, will be excluded from Heaven; those who at first refuse, and do, these do the will of God.

Those who boast of doing everything, and who do nothing, will be excluded; those who refuse,

and who nevertheless do, will be admitted (Mt 21:27–32).

He is not of this world.

"I have many things to speak and to judge of you" (Jn 8:26) [Tr.: Chevrier: "many things to condemn in you"].

"We are the seed of Abraham" (Jn 8:33). "Abraham is our father" (Jn 8:39). He fights against this blind confidence in their title of children of Abraham, they who do the works of the devil; they do the works of their father who is the devil.

They boast of having Abraham for father, that is, the spirit of Abraham; Father in the sense that they follow him in his law, in his faith, in his works.

Jesus proves to them that they have not Abraham for father because they do not do the works of Abraham.

Religious pride which rests on a title, on the title of child of God, of Saint Francis, Saint Benedict, Saint Dominic, ill-founded confidence: one must do the works of one's Father. Titles are nothing, it is works that count. "You are of your father the devil," envy, murder (Jn 8:37–44).

Bad spirit of the Jews who say that it is by the devil that he casts out devils.

Prejudice, settled will.

"Generation of vipers," there is nothing but gall and venom in your heart (Mt 12:22–34).

Settled will not to believe, and to give the most evident things a contrary meaning.

Spirit of blasphemy: is not forgiven (Mt 12:31–32).

The evil eye.

How he confounds the Pharisees who were watching him, to see whether he would heal a man with dropsy on the Sabbath day.

Narrow and rigid spirit, which puts the law before charity, which pushes the law to excess.

Reason for his conduct (Lk 6:6–10).

Mk 12:1–12. [The murderous vinedressers.]

***He rises against the vices of these men and crushes them with his anathemas***

He fights against the profaners of the temple (Jn 2:13–21).

Against the proud, the hypocrites (Mt 6:2–6).[1]

Against long and useless prayers (Mt 6:7–8).

Hypocrites… fasts, prayers (Mt 6:16–18).[2]

Mt 23:13–32.

Jesus said to the Jews: "no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will sustain the one, and despise the other.

"You cannot serve God and mammon" (Lk 16:13).

***What weapons did he use in this combat.***

Without weapons to defend himself: Union with his Father, he acts wi[th him] (Jn 5:16–17).

The works he does (Jn 5:36–38).

The holy Scriptures (Jn 5:39–41).

He has come in the name of his Father (Jn 5:43).

The reason they do not believe is that they do not seek the glory of God (Jn 5:44).

Moses (Jn 5:45–47).

The prophet Isaiah (Lk 4:16–19).

His future death (Jn 8:28–29).

His innocence (Jn 8:45–46).

The works bear witness of me; not of my sheep (Jn 10:22–26).

I say nothing of myself; "believe for the very works' sake" (Jn 14:10–11).

"*Labora sicut bonus miles Christi Jesu*" (2 Tim 2:3).[10]

"*Bonum certamen certavi*" (2 Tim 4:7).[3] [11]

---

1. Ms XII 626. Outward religion that seeks to appear.

2. Ms XII 573. He condemns hypocrites, great prayers, great fasters.

3. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 595–626 and 628. He has established us to continue the war on earth. We are the good God's commissioners. We must not tolerate evil. Examples of Saint John the Baptist and of the saints (XII 595). We are the soldiers of Jesus Christ. Conditions for being a good soldier, good doctor, good master: "physician, heal thyself" (Lk 4:23); "if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit" (Mt 15:14); "hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Mt 7:5). With care and gentleness: "no man putteth a piece of raw cloth unto an old

garment, nor new wine into old bottles" (Mt 9:16–17) (Ms XII 626–628).

How important it is to have the spirit of Jesus Christ, so as not to make war against him, rather than making it for him.[12]

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 609–614.↩
2. This notebook was reproduced in the sixth volume of the manuscript copies, in three separate places as if it were a matter of three distinct booklets, Ms VI 535–540; 485–486; 363–385.↩
3. Cf. p. 461, note 2.↩
4. Cf. Ms VI 527: Words or actions of the Jews or Pharisees directed against Jesus Christ.↩
5. P. 460.↩
6. Cf. p. 463, note b.↩
7. Note a. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.↩
8. Note b. He hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way.↩
9. Note a. And they were scandalized in him.↩
10. Note a. Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (2 Tim 2:3)↩
11. Note b. I have fought a good fight. (2 Tim 4:7)↩
12. 1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 584. Follow me in my struggles. The false ideas of the Jews and of his apostles. He fought the bad spirit, the bad spirit of the apostles and of the Jews, follow me in my good spirit. The bad religion of the Pharisees, follow me in my true religion. The vices of everybody: pride, avarice, impurity; follow

me in my humility, poverty, purity. With what weapons he fights.

MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 562. What weapons did he use in this great combat: words, examples, lamb in the midst of wolves, gentleness. "We fight with the weapons of justice" (2 Cor 6:7); "we do not fight according to the flesh" (2 Cor 10:4). Conditions for rebuking and fighting well: "to be full of charity and knowledge, that you may [admonish one another]" (Rom 15:14). Knowledge, wisdom and charity. He rebukes everyone with gentleness and prudence, discernment, prudence, strength and charity; what a difference in the manner of rebuking each individual!↩

↑ Contents

## 9°) Follow me in my persecutions.[1]

↑ Contents

[See] chapter

To carry one's cross

persecuted unto death

despised, insulted, hated.

Our Lord foretells persecutions to his apostles

Examples of the apostles.[2]

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Persecutions are all the manifestations of hostility on the part of men towards Jesus Christ and his apostles. The New Testament speaks of them abundantly.

Here we have only the result of a first research by Father Chevrier, the list of references in the order in which he found them while reading the United Gospels. (A single reference to the Acts of the Apostles, at the end.)

He notes his intention to return to the chapter "To carry one's cross."[3] He doubtless wanted to harmonize the study on persecutions and the study on the cross. He also refers to a Notebook of the Passion.[4] He wanted to use one of his many works on the subject to draft his commentary.

The last lines are already a sketch of this commentary; they give us an orientation: it is not a matter of deploring the hostility that was unleashed against Jesus, but of admiring how he bore persecution.

Already at his birth, there is no room for them at Bethlehem (Lk 2:7 [printed "2,2"]).

Herod, in hypocrisy, tells the Magi to inquire carefully about him and to come back and tell him, that he too may go and adore him (Mt 2:8).

"Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword

shall pierce, that, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed" (Lk 2:34–35).

"The angel said to Joseph: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: for Herod will seek the child to destroy him" (Mt 2:13).

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (Jn 1:11).

After Jesus had driven the sellers out of the Temple, the Jews asked him the reason for his action, saying: "What sign dost thou shew unto us, seeing thou dost these things?" (Jn 2:18).

"The light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved" (and if he comes near it, he puts it out), "but he that doth truth cometh to the light" (Jn 3:19–21).

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake… Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and [speak] all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake" (Mt 5:10–11).

Jesus casts out a dumb devil. “The Pharisees said: By the prince of devils he casteth out devils” (Mt 9:34).

“Blessed shall ye be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you” (Lk 6:22).

“Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me” (Lk 7:23).

The Jews persecute Jesus because he heals on the Sabbath days (Jn 5:15).

“Hereupon the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God” (Jn 5:18).

When Jesus, in spite of them, had healed on the Sabbath day a man who had

a withered hand, “they were filled with madness; and they talked one with another what they might do to Jesus” (Lk 6:11).

“The Pharisees, going out, made a consultation with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him” (Mk 3:6); he goes away and the crowd follows him. Some persecute him, the crowd, the people follow him.

"His own, having heard of these things" (that is, the healing of a possessed man) "said: He is become mad" (Mk 3:21). "And the Pharisees said that it was by Beelzebub, prince of devils, that he cast out devils" (Mt 12:24); others asked for miracles (Lk 11:19 [cf. 11:16]).

How Jesus answers all these persecutions. "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils"… (Lk 11:19).

How great is the sin of those who persecute the good God and refuse to believe in his miracles when they see them with their own eyes, because they said: "He hath an unclean spirit" (Mk 3:30).

They ask for a miracle to mock. "A wicked and adulterous generation" (Mt 12:39).

Explanation of this war against Jesus: "the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut" (Mt 13:15).

Persecution he had to endure at Nazareth, where he says that no prophet is accepted in his own country and proves it by facts. They drive him out and lead him to the brow of the mountain to cast him down (Lk 4:29).

Recommendation Jesus gives his apostles in sending them on mission: "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves" (Mt 10:16).

"For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you"… Persecutions they will have to undergo on my account. Conduct they will have to keep (Mt 10:17).

"After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him" (Jn 7:1).

Dissension that arises among the people about him: some say he is good, others would have laid hands on him, but "no man laid hands on him" (Jn 7:43–44).

"The Jews then took up stones to cast at him" (Jn 8:59).

After Jesus had said he was the good Shepherd, "many of them said: He hath a devil, and is mad. Others said: These are not the words of one that hath a devil" (Jn 10:19–21 [cf. 10:20–21]).

"Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? No, I say to you, but separation" (Lk 12:51).

After Jesus had said that he and his Father were one thing, they took up stones (Jn 10:30–31).

After the resurrection of Lazarus, "some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done" (Jn 11:46).

"The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council, to decree his death" (Jn 11:47) [Tr.: Chevrier's wording].

A great multitude of the Jews came to see Lazarus and believed, and the chief priests thought to kill Lazarus also (Jn 12:9–10).

Reflection of the Pharisees at the sight of the crowd honouring Jesus entering Jerusalem. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves… "Master, rebuke thy disciples" (Lk 19:39).

The Jews ask by what authority he does these things and who gave him the power (Lk 20:2).

The Pharisees and the Herodians, to lay snares for him and deliver him to the magistrates, ask him whether it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar (Mt 22:17).

Jesus foretells persecutions to his apostles. They will lay hands on you, [they will] deliver you up

to synagogues, prisons, tribunals… beaten, witness (Mt 24:9).

Jesus promises the hundredfold with persecutions (Mk 10:30).

The chief priests and the scribes sought how to put him to death. Council to seize him (Mk 14:1 and parallels).

Satan (Lk 22:3).

He foretells the betrayal of Judas (Mk 14:18).

Satan enters into Judas, and he went out (Jn 13:27).

"Behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Lk 22:31).

Peter's answer: "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death" (Lk 22:33).

"And he was reckoned with the wicked" (Lk 22:37).

Jesus foretells his Passion (Mt 20:17–18).

"If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you" (Jn 15:18).

"You shall lament and weep, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (Jn 16:20).

"In the world you shall have distress, but have confidence, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

"The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world" (Jn 17:14).

How Jesus behaves when his enemies come to seize him (Mt 26:47–56; Jn 18:4–11).

At Annas's (Jn 18:13).

Peter denies his Master (Mt 26:69–75; Jn 18:15–27).

How he answers the interrogations (Jn 18:19–23).

They seek false witness against Jesus (Mt 26:59).

He is not afraid to say what he is (Mt 26:64).

How Jesus answers the priests (Lk 22:66–67).

Accusations before Pilate (Lk 23:2).

*(Notebook of the Passion)*

With what dignity he speaks to his judges and to his enemies.

With what gentleness he treats his enemies and gives himself up to them.

With what majesty he speaks to his Judges.

With what patience he endures all the ill-treatment.

His silence in all the accusations…

With what sorrow he receives insults and humiliations.

With what kindness he forgives.

Malice and wickedness of the Jews and of the priests in the scourging and the crowning with thorns.

Jesus foretells to Peter his death and says to him: "When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst. Follow me" (Jn 21:18–19) [Tr.: v. 19 is "Follow me"].

Jesus tells his apostles that they will bear witness to him (Jn 15:27; Acts 1:8).

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 643–649.↩
2. Note b. Note scribbled on the flyleaf.↩
3. P. 465: cf. pp. 325–334.↩
4. P. 471.↩

↑ Contents

## 10°) Follow me in my sufferings.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* One could entitle these pages: the mystery of suffering in the life of the priest.

An important subject in Father Chevrier's thought, for we have sixteen manuscripts witnessing to his work on the question, but none is the definitive draft. Here is the plan this chapter should have had:

Examples of Jesus Christ.

Instructions of Jesus Christ.

Examples of Saint Paul.

How shall we follow Jesus Christ in his sufferings.[1]

And here is the main accent that seems to emerge when one has gone through all these papers:

Suffering is the seal of love and of the conversion of the heart,

…

This character is the most beautiful, the greatest, the strongest, the most powerful over God and over men, and it is the one that converts and heals.

…[2]

One thinks of the risen Christ appearing to Thomas and showing him the marks of his passion to heal him of his unbelief.[3] One thinks of Paul converted to Christ, become an apostle and carrying about everywhere and always in his body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in his body.[4]

This character, this seal of suffering is not necessarily to be understood in a physical, visible sense. On the contrary, various manuscripts bring to light the importance of suffering of the heart.[5] This comes quite especially from the anxiety

---

1. Cf. Ms XII 683–684.

2. Ms XII 657–658.

3. Jn 20:27–28

4. 2 Cor 4:10

5. Ms XII 683.

of the apostle who, with his Master, suffers in his heart at seeing the sheep without a shepherd.[2]

We have chosen to reproduce the most developed commentary. Other manuscripts are surely later than it, but they only sketch a new plan and contain no commentary.

(Our Lord bore outwardly the character of poverty and of suffering; those who have it only inwardly risk very much not having it at all.)[3]

*He is born in a stable.*

He suffered from poverty (Lk 2:6–7).

*The angels give the shepherds his poverty as the sign by which they will recognize him.*

Poverty was his particular character (Lk 2:12).

*He was circumcised on the eighth day.*

He suffered from the fulfilment of the law (Lk 2:21).

*The old man Simeon announces suffering to Mary.*

He suffered from the contradictions of the world.

And the Blessed Virgin will be pierced by the sword (Lk 2:34–35).

*He remains seven years in exile in Egypt.*

He suffered persecutions. He suffered in exile (Mt 2:13–15).

*He is for others an occasion of suffering.*

involuntarily (Mt 2:16–18).

*"He came unto his own, and his own received him not".*

He suffered the rebuffs of the world. "No room for them" (Jn 1:11; Lk 2:7).

*Saint John the Baptist bears on himself the character of suffering (Mk 1:6).*

*Jesus Christ goes into the desert, he fasts, he prays, he is with the beasts, he is hungry.*

He suffered in the desert. Voluntary penance (Mk 1:13; Mt 4:2).

*He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*

He suffered because he willed to bear the sins of the world (Jn 1:29).

*The angel tells Joseph that "he shall save his people from their sins".*

[He suffered] because he saved the people from their sins (Mt 1:20–21).

*It was necessary that he suffer, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert"... (Jn 3:14)*[4]

*When his disciples urge him to eat, he answers them that he has food they know not of*

He suffers from fatigue and hunger, when he sits down on the edge of Jacob's well.

He forgets that he suffers in order to do the will of his Father, which is his food (Jn 4:31–34).

*Blessed are they that suffer.*

We shall be blessed when we suffer something for God (Mt 5:10–11).

*One must suffer in following Jesus; this is what he gives that young man to understand who asks to follow him.*

He suffers from poverty… (Mt 8:19–20).

*Jesus suffers in his soul at seeing this multitude without a shepherd.*

He suffers in his heart at seeing the sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9:35–38).

*How he sternly reprimands Peter who wanted to oppose his sufferings.*

He speaks openly of his sufferings as a very natural thing. Suffering is a mystery that can be understood only by the spirit of God (Mt 9:35–38 [sic as printed; evidently Mt 16:21–23]).

*If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, let him take up his cross.*

To follow Jesus Christ, one must suffer; there is suffering to be done; take up one's cross (Mk 8:34).

*He that will save his soul shall lose it.*

One must lose one's life (Mk 8:35).

*He speaks of his sufferings at his transfiguration.*

He speaks with Moses and Elias of the passion (Lk 9:28–31).

*He suffers at being with this race.*

He suffers at living with men so far from the truth, so coarse (Lk 9:41).

*Jesus foretells his sufferings to his apostles, but it was a hidden mystery.*

He speaks of the sufferings of his passion. The apostles understood nothing of it, it was a veiled word (Lk 9:43–45).

*I am the good Shepherd, I lay down my life.*

He gives his life for his sheep.

Difference between the good shepherd and the hireling.

He suffers to bring back to the fold the straying sheep.

It is through suffering that he wins the love of his Father. He suffers voluntarily (Jn 10:11–18).

*I am come to cast fire on the earth.*

He is come to bring the fire of love which makes one love suffering (Lk 12:49–50).

*I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized. (Lk 12:50)*

*Complaints of Jesus over Jerusalem (Lk 13:31–35).*

*Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth…*

Poverty [first] character of the true disciple (Lk 14:33).

*Jesus weeps over Lazarus.*

He suffers in his soul at seeing Lazarus dead (Jn 11:34–36).

*Jesus announces his passion to his apostles.*

Jesus speaks of his sufferings to his apostles and it was a mystery to them (Lk 18:31–34).

*What Jesus answers his two apostles who ask him for the first places.*

What Jesus answers the mother [of the sons] of Zebedee, who asks that her sons be placed at his right hand and his left: Can you suffer? second character of the disciple. The two characters of true disciples: poverty, sufferings[5] (and charity).

By this shall all men know that you [are my disciples]. It is not a question here of place or honour, it is a question of suffering. "Can you drink the [chalice] that I drink? or be baptized" (Mk 10:35–41).

*He is come to serve.*

He suffers in serving himself and gives his life; he is come to serve and to give his life (Mk 10:45).

*One must suffer to bear fruit. (Jn 12:24)*

*He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life shall keep it.*

One must hate one's soul, one's life (Jn 12:25).

*His soul is troubled at the sight of the sufferings.*

He is come to suffer and die (Jn 12:27–28).

*Going up to Jerusalem he walked before them. (Lk 19:28)*

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.*

It is through suffering that one draws all to oneself (Jn 12:32–33).

*"With desire I have desired to eat this [Pasch with you]".*

He desires with great desire to give himself to them (Lk 22:14 [cf. 22:15]).

*How his heart must have suffered at seeing Judas.*

He suffers in his soul at seeing Judas, his disciple, who is going to betray him (Mt 26:21–25).

Saint Peter, to whom he announces his denial. The disciples go away from Jesus because of the hard saying: "*durus est hic sermo*" (Jn 6:61 [printed "6,60"]); "and will you also go away?" (Jn 6:68 [printed "6,67"]).

*This is my blood which shall be shed.*

He gives his blood for the remission of sins (Mt 26:27–28).

*Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me. (Lk 22:21)*

*Jesus foretells to Saint Peter his denial.*

Third character of the true disciple: love, charity, Mark (Jn 13:35–38).

*I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified.*

He immolates himself to sanctify others in truth (Jn 17:19).

*He feels fear, sadness, desolation.*

He suffers in his soul at the sight of the sins men are going to commit. His soul is sorrowful even unto death (Mt 26:37–38).

*Sweat of blood.*

He suffers even to sweating blood at the sight of the crimes of the earth (Lk 22:44).

*Jesus betrayed by Judas. (Lk 22:47)*

*Jesus bound and led like a malefactor.*

"I am he": he does not shrink from suffering (Jn 18:4–5; 18:12).

*Jesus struck at Caiaphas's. (Jn 18:22)*

*Blows, insults and outrages in the house of Caiaphas. (Lk 22:63–65)*

*Denial of Saint Peter. (Lk 22:55–62)*

*Despair and death of Judas. (Mt 27:3–10)*

*Jesus despised by Herod and sent back to Pilate. (Lk 23:8–11)*

*Jesus compared with Barabbas and scourged. (Mt 27:15–21; Jn 19:1)*

*Crowning with thorns. (Jn 19:2–3)*

*Jesus presented to the people and delivered up to be crucified. (Jn 19:4–16)*

*Jesus carries his cross. (Jn 19:16)*

*Jesus given gall to drink. (Mt 27:34)*

*Jesus crucified. (Lk 23:33)*

*He is placed among the wicked. (Mk 15:28)*

*Jesus is blasphemed. (Mt 27:39–43)*

*Jesus given vinegar to drink. (Mt 27:48)*

*Thirst of Jesus. (Jn 19:28)*

*Jesus gives up the spirit. (Jn 19:30)*

The cross, sign of suffering, is shown everywhere.

Redemption was accomplished only by the cross.

***How Jesus Christ bore in himself and on himself this character of suffering.***[6]

***He offers himself generously to his Father to suffer.***

***He accepts with submission all that the Father demands in his Justice.***

***For this he fights strongly against the feelings of nature.***

"Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause I came unto this hour" (Jn 12:27).

*He speaks calmly of his passion and his death.*

*He desires it ardently.*

*He goes to meet his enemies and announces himself for what he is. Makes himself known to them and is not afraid to say that it is he.*

*He speaks to them with dignity, without fear.*

*He treats them with kindness.*

*He lets himself be taken and led everywhere, without resistance.*

*He speaks to his Judges with dignity, without evasion and without weakness. Truth.*

*He suffers with patience.*

*He listens with patience to all the accusations made against him.*

*He defends himself by keeping silence.*[7]

*He suffers everything with the greatest patience.*

*Contempt, insults, humiliations, ill-treatment.*

*He forgives with kindness.*

*He obeys in everything with the greatest perfection.*

*He suffers everything with love.*

*He forgets himself in his sufferings to think only of others.*

*He seeks no consolation.*

*He dies a martyr of obedience and of love.*

He is always represented nailed to his cross.

*One cannot give a greater mark of love than to give one's life for someone. (Jn 15:13)*

*One must hate one's own life. (Lk 14:26)*

*Necessity of suffering for every Christian and above all for the priest.*

*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory? (Lk 24:26)*

*After the example of Jesus Christ, one must suffer.*

*One must suffer to obtain graces from God.*

*One must suffer the contempt, the insults and the blows of one's neighbour, without saying anything.*

*One must suffer the thefts of one's neighbour.*

*One must bear and even carry the sins of the world, its pride, its avarice, its jealousy, its wickedness, its hatred, its anger, its sloth.*

*Suffering in the privation of the things of earth:*

*He was hungry, thirsty, without shelter.*

*Sufferings in voluntary penances:*

*Fasts, prayers, night vigils.*

*Sufferings imposed by God his Father.*

*Suffering is in the world since the sin of Adam.*

*To take on the sins of others.*

*To take on the pains and miseries of others.*

*Suffering is the character of a true apostle of Jesus Christ.*[1]

It is the character of the apostle (Acts 9:8–16).

*Saint Paul points out that God treats his true apostles as the last of men.*

Opposition between the Protestant ministers, Jews[a] and the true apostles of Jesus Christ. To be a spectacle to the world by suffering.

Difference between true ministers and false. We, true ministers, we are [weak] and you [strong]; you are honoured [and we despised].

Sufferings of the apostle.

How he suffers (1 Cor 4:9–13).

*Saint Paul prefers to suffer by working with his hands to earn his living rather than to cause the smallest obstacle to evangelization.*

Saint Paul bore the character of poverty of the disciple of Jesus Christ. Poverty gives freedom.

To suffer to win souls for Jesus Christ.

*I chastise my body and bring it into subjection.*

He voluntarily imposes penances on himself to assure his salvation (1 Cor 9:27).

---

1. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 680. There are sufferings that come from poverty, others that come from charity, others that come from God, others that come from ourselves, from the efforts one makes to accomplish one's duty. Sufferings in the pains one endures to save a soul. It is the great sign of true love. Effect of suffering. Nothing attracts more than suffering. Suffering has an attraction that converts the hardest souls, draws the most hardened hearts. It is the seal of great souls. Wherever there is suffering, there is generosity, devotion, sacrifice, love and, consequently, grace, merit and reward on the part of the Master for whom one suffers. He suffered in his body and in his soul; he suffered at the hands of the apostles, at the hands of the Jews, at the hands of his Father.

==========

Note a. This unexpected attack on Protestant and Jewish ministers is curious. One scarcely sees the reason for it here. Be that as it may, if Father Chevrier knew and esteemed Protestants, it is

likely that he had no personal relations with Protestant or Jewish ministers. He is simply echoing a bad apologetic that was common coin at the time: one wanted to prove the truth of Catholicism by disparaging non-Catholics.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 691–697.↩
2. P. 479.↩
3. Note a. Cf. p. 278.↩
4. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 681. He did not come on earth to enjoy himself and live at ease; he came to convert the world, bear the sins of the world, expiate the sins of the world, fight against them and give men the example of the virtues; and this could not be done without suffering. To instruct, rebuke, correct, give example; convert, expiate; all this could not be done without suffering.↩
5. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 684. The crucifix, the calvary, is the second state in which Our Lord shows himself to us as model. The cross is everywhere; the sign of suffering exists everywhere: it is thus that Our Lord shows himself to us. What does a crucifix signify, if not the suffering of Christ?↩
6. MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 681. No character of the bourgeois, of well-being, of convenience, of comfort. Work.↩
7. Note a. It is interesting to see on the manuscript itself how Father Chevrier worked over his commentary. The corrections he makes go in the direction of simplicity, of sobriety. He first noted an exclamation: "How he

keeps silence!" Then this sentence is struck out and he explains: "Instead of defending himself, he keeps a profound silence." He strikes out again and writes: "He defends himself by keeping silence." There is no doubt that this last sentence is better than the preceding ones for its simplicity and force of expression.↩

↑ Contents

***Saint Paul seeks not what is advantageous to himself, but what is useful to others.***

He renounces all personal advantage in order to be useful to others (1 Cor 10:33).

***The salvation of others is accomplished by our sufferings.***

Excessive evils, even to being condemned to death (2 Cor 1:3–9).

***We carry this treasure in vessels [of clay], always bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus Christ, that the life of Jesus Christ may be made manifest in our body. Death worketh in us, but life in you.***

Suffering and death in us produce in you life and salvation (2 Cor 4:7–11, 12).

*Our outward man is corrupted, but the inward man is renewed (2 Cor 4:16)*

*We must commend ourselves by great patience in evils (2 Cor 6:3–11).*

*He regards his sufferings as the true sign of the priest.*

Suffering is the mark he invokes to establish his title of apostle of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 11:21–33).

*Saint Paul takes pleasure in his infirmities (2 Cor 12:9–11).*

*Sufferings he imposes on himself for his faithful; he takes good care not to be a burden to them.*

Character of suffering, and of poverty, out of charity for souls.

Marks of my apostleship (2 Cor 12:12–15).

*He writes in chains to the Ephesians (Eph 4:1–2).*

*He wants to glorify Jesus Christ in his body, [by] life [and by] death (Phil 1:20–21).*

*Saint Paul rejoiced to see his blood poured out for the salvation of the faithful.*

For the faith of his faithful (Phil 2:17).

*One must seek the interests of Jesus Christ and not one's own.*

One must seek the interests of Jesus Christ to the detriment of one's own (Phil 2:21).

*Saint Paul wants to know Jesus Christ and to be made conformable to his death.*

He wants to share in the sufferings of Jesus Christ and be made conformable to his death (Phil 3:10).

*One must not conduct oneself as an enemy of the cross (Phil 3:18–19).*

*Saint Paul rejoices in sufferings because he fills up in his flesh what is wanting of the sufferings of Jesus Christ.*

He rejoices in this, that he fills up in his flesh what is wanting of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, by suffering for his body, which is the Church (Col 1:24).

*Saint Paul recalls to the Thessalonians the pains and fatigues he endured.*

He wanted [to become little among them]. He worked with his hands so as to be a burden to no one (1 Thess 2:1–12).

*Saint Paul recalls to the Thessalonians how he lived among them (2 Thess 3:7–12).*

*Saint Paul, apostle of the nations: this is what draws on him the evils he suffers (2 Tim 1:11–12).*

*Saint Paul endures all for the love of the elect.*

That they may obtain salvation (2 Tim 2:8–13).

*Saint Paul tells Timothy that he must know his life, his doctrine, his persecutions (2 Tim 3:10–12).*

*Watch, endure constantly the labours; as for me, I am even now ready to be sacrificed [Chevrier: "I am like a victim sprinkled"]; the time of my dissolution is at hand.*

He is like a victim sprinkled for the sacrifice (2 Tim 4:5–8).

*A reasonable victim is needed, capable of suffering with love. The blood of bulls.*

Offering of Jesus Christ to his Father: "Behold, I come" (Heb 10:4–9).

*As for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why I bear in my body the marks.*

Character of suffering. Saint Paul bears the stigmata imprinted on himself (Gal 6:14–17).

***He is like a crucified man. They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh. (Gal 5:24)***

***If we be dead with Christ, we shall live also.***

Reward if we are dead (Rom 6:8).

***We are put to death all the day long for you. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (Rom 8:36)***

***All that will live godly shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim 3:12)***

"*Ibant gaudentes apostoli a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati*" (Acts 5:41).[a]

"*Quotidie morior per vestram gloriam*" (1 Cor 15:31).[b]

"*Hoc fac et vives*" (Lk 10:28).[c]

He who accomplishes all these things will be able to say with truth: "for me, to live is Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:21). "*Si hoc scitis, beati eritis, si feceritis ea*" (Jn 13:17).[d]

---

Note a. The apostles went from the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

Note b. I die daily for your glory. Translation of the Latin text.

Note c. Do this and thou shalt live.

Note d. If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them.

↑ Contents

## 11°) Follow me in my death.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Under the title: Follow me in my death, one finds only a study, barely begun, on the Passion.

This study begins with the prayer of Jesus which, in Saint John, immediately precedes the account of the Passion.[2] This prayer is, in fact, like an anticipated liturgical expression of the mystery that was accomplished in the death of Christ.

In another manuscript that was not destined for the True Disciple, one finds an interesting commentary. It is a catechism preparation on the mystery of the Redemption. Father Chevrier comments on the title of Saviour attributed to Jesus. He characterizes the attitude of Christ during the Passion by noting his submission, his ardour, his courage, his silence, his dignity, his gentleness, his humility, his kindness, his love, the perfection

of his obedience, and in the midst of all this he writes this sentence: "With what power he dies."[3]

To follow Jesus Christ in his death is to take part in the work by which, in virtue of his divine omnipotence, he saved the world.

*I have glorified thee on the earth.*

*I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now*

*I have manifested [thy name]... (Jn 17:4, 6)*

*Those whom thou gavest me have I kept, and none of them is lost. (Jn 17:12)*

*How Jesus conducts himself when they come to seize him:*

"I am he" (Jn 18:4–5).

He does not want them to defend him (Jn 18:11).

He heals Malchus (Lk 22:51).

And the chalice that I must drink… (Jn 18:11).

He is silent before the high priest Caiaphas (Mk 14:60–61).

He lets himself be bound and led away (Jn 18:12).

(Notebook, manner in which he suffers)[4]

*The combat goes to death.*

*Hatred and jealousy, reaching the last degree, demand death.*

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 699.↩
2. Jn 17.↩
3. Ms VIII 253–256.↩
4. Note a. This note certainly refers to one of the studies on the Passion, cf. for example Ms VI 434–435 where one finds again the sentence: "With what power he dies." (p. 493)↩

↑ Contents

## 12°) You will follow me in my glory.[1]

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* The last title is different from those that precede it. It is no longer the invitation: follow me, but a promise: "you will follow me in my glory."

The princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, drew from the promises the Lord had made them the courage to accomplish the work they had been given to do.[2]

These promises are addressed to us also, and since Jesus Christ has willed to make them to us,

we owe it to him to listen to them, to welcome them, to find in them courage, strength and joy.

***Promises of Jesus Christ to his disciples.***

He that shall confess me before men,

I will also confess him before my Father

who is in heaven. (Mt 10:32)

He that followeth me walketh not

in darkness, but shall have

the light of life. (Jn 8:12)[a]

*Qui mihi ministrat me sequatur*

*et ubi ego sum illic sit et*

*minister meus.* (Jn 12:26)[b]

*Si quis mihi ministraverit*

*honorificabit eum Pater meus*

*qui est in caelis.* (Jn 12:26)[c]

*Volo, Pater, ut ubi ego sum,*

*illic sit et minister meus.* (Jn 12:26 [cf. 17:24])[d]

---

Note a. The first five sentences are the Antiphons of Lauds of the Common of a Martyr.

Note b. If any man minister to me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my minister be. (Jn 12:26)

Note c. If any man minister to me, him will my Father who is in heaven honour.

Note d. Father, I will that where I am, my servant also may be.

*Beatus vir qui suffert tentationem,*

*quoniam cum probatus fuerit*

*accipiet coronam vitae quam*

*repromisit Deus diligentibus se.* (Jas 1:12)[a]

*Quicumque hanc regulam secuti fuerint,*

*pax super illos et misericordia.* (Gal 6:16)[b]

Prayer of Jesus after the Supper:

You are my friends if you do

what I command you.

I will not now call you servants,

for the servant knoweth not

what his lord doth.

But I have called you friends, because

all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father

I have made known to you. (Jn 15:14–15)

***Words to Saint Peter:***

Saint Peter, taking up the word, said to Jesus:

Behold we have left all things

and have followed thee.

What therefore shall we have?

Jesus answered him:

Amen I say to you, that you who

have followed me, in the regeneration,

when the Son of man shall sit on the seat

of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging

the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mt 19:27–28)

And every one that hath left house,

or brethren, or sisters,

or father, or mother,

or wife, or children,

---

Note a. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall re-

ceive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him.

Note b. And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them and mercy.

for my sake and for the gospel,

shall receive in this present time a hundredfold,

houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers,

and children, and lands,

with persecutions,

and in the world to come life everlasting. (Mt 19:27–29; cf. Mk 10:29–30)

***Saint Paul's confidence before dying:***

*Bonum certamen certavi,*

*cursum consummavi, fidem servavi.* (2 Tim 4:7)[3]

As to the rest, there is laid up for me

a crown of justice, which the Lord,

the just judge, will render to me

in that day. (2 Tim 4:7–8)

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. Ms XII 689–699.↩
2. Pp. 502–503.↩

3. Note a. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.↩

↑ Contents

# Annexes

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* As announced in the General Introduction, the documents that follow are useful and almost indispensable for a better understanding of Father Chevrier's thought. They have, in particular, the advantage of giving a more synthetic, more condensed expression of this thought.

They come as an appendix to the True Disciple to explain it, not to complete it. They are not meant to give the whole of the Father's thought. On subjects as important as these, and on others besides, Father Chevrier explained himself abundantly in other writings, in particular in the catechism preparations and in the commentaries on the mysteries of the Rosary.

↑ Contents

## ANNEX I – MANUSCRIPT Ms XI 543–550

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* This manuscript opens and closes on the word disciple. The ending is even rather curious: the word disciple is de-

tached from the rest of the text and forms a paragraph of its own, like a signature; that is why we have brought it into relief by writing it in capitals.

The most remarkable passage is perhaps the one that describes the sovereign freedom with which the Spirit of God communicates himself to us. The Spirit "bloweth where he will"; Father Chevrier had experienced it.[1]

Nothing here treats directly of the Mass for itself, nor anything on the Virgin Mary for herself.

Duties:

- To know

1, what he is

2, what he says

- To love

- To follow

↑ Contents

## DISCIPLE

↑ Contents

*Obstacles to becoming a disciple.*

"I know you, that you have not the love of God in you… If another shall come [in his own name, him you will receive]… [you] receive not the glory that is from [God alone]" (Jn 5:42–44).

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden… he selleth all that he hath, and buyeth it" (Mt 13:44).

"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (Jn 6:64 [printed "6,63"]).

One must ask God for the understanding of his word and of his doctrine.

Jesus rebukes Peter, who does not want him to suffer (Mt 16:23): you savour not the things that are of God, but that are of men.

"*Qui potest capere capiat*" (Mt 19:12).[2]

"*Qui habet aures audiendi audiat*" (Mt 13:43).[3]

His disciples do not understand the mystery of suffering when Jesus speaks to them of it.

"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (Jn 7:16).

*It will be known whether my doctrine is from myself.*

"If any man will do the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (Jn 7:17; cf. 7:16–17).

"If you continue in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn 8:31–32).

"He that is of God, heareth the words of God" (Jn 8:47).

"I speak to you, and you believe not… but you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (Jn 10:25–27) [Tr.: Chevrier's compressed wording].

"*Non omnes*": all do not understand this word. But "they to whom it is given" to understand it (Mt 19:11).

*Promise to the disciple.*

"If any man minister to me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my minister be. If any man minister to me, him will my Father honour" (Jn 12:26).

*A servant, no more.*

"The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is the apostle greater than he that sent him" (Jn 13:16).

*Blessed if you know.*

"If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them" (Jn 13:17).

*To love Jesus Christ.*

"If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not"… (Jn 14:23–24).

"In this is my Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit, and become my disciples" (Jn 15:8).

The disciple of Jesus Christ is a man who is filled with the spirit of his Master, who thinks like his Master, who acts like his Master, who follows him in everything and everywhere.

But this spirit of God few receive, few understand, few admit in practice.

Only those who are of God, who listen to his word and to whom it is given to receive it.

No one goes to the Son but through the Father.

It is therefore a great grace to receive this spirit which the world cannot receive. If we are of the world, if we think like the world – ideas of the world – we cannot receive it; one must strip oneself of oneself in order to receive it and understand it.

This spirit is spread through the Holy Gospel. It is there that it is sown like flowers which must be gathered one by one in order to take the greatest quantity possible.

Our Lord had it entire, this spirit; we can have it only in part; but at least let us try to take as much of it as possible, to be as much animated by it as possible and to glorify Jesus Christ and his Father.

This Spirit is little known, little relished, little understood, even among those who ought to possess it and understand it: habits, customs, the ideas one forms, the reasonings one makes, outward examples, draw the world and even priests to live according to the spirit of the world and not according to the spirit of God.

So that, if we want to act according to the spirit of God, we must struggle much against the ideas,

the customs, the manners of others, and it is also for this reason that the saints, who had the spirit of God, had so much to suffer even from their own brothers.

But one must not stop at that, one must lean on Jesus Christ and his word; that is the unshakeable and solid foundation on which one can sit down in peace: Jesus Christ and the Church.

Leaning on these two bases, one cannot but walk in safety, in spite of contrarieties, combats, struggles and persecutions.

O my God, give me your spirit, this is the prayer we must make continually and always, at every moment; the spirit of God is everything! If we are animated by it, we have everything, we possess all the riches of heaven and earth.

But one must ask for it with the real intention of receiving it, with the will to do all one can to acquire it, with the will to make all the sacrifices possible and required to have it and receive it; otherwise we cannot receive it and God cannot give it to us.

The spirit of God is neither in a positive rule, nor in forms, nor in externals, nor in clothes, nor in regulations; it is in us when it is given to us.

One hears the sound, but one knows not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; it bloweth where it will. It comes to us at the moment when we expect it least. When we seek it, we do not find it; when we do not seek it, we find it; it is independent of our will, of the moment, of the time and the hour; it comes when it wills, it is for us to receive it when it comes. It has freedom of action, and it is independent of us, but it communicates itself to us when we are thinking of it least; it is not in reasoning, nor in study, nor in theories, nor in rules; it is the divine fire that is always moving, that rises upward in an irregular manner, it shows itself and disappears, like the flame of wood; one must take it and rejoice in it when it shows itself… and keep it every time it communicates itself to us.

Saint Paul knows nothing but "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2).

"No man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11).

"The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him… but the spiritual man judgeth all things" (1 Cor 2:14–15).

Degrees for becoming disciples of Jesus Christ: carnal – child – food (1 Cor 3:1).

"Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Nothing (Rom 8:35).

"Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor 3:18–19).

"We are fools for Christ's sake" (1 Cor 4:10).

"If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (1 Cor 16:22).

***The good odour of [Jesus Christ].***

"We are the good odour of Christ" (2 Cor 2:15).

***To live according to the spirit and not according to the letter***

"The letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth" (2 Cor 3:6).

***Freedom***

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor 3:17).

*Love must make us live by Jesus Christ*

"The charity of Christ presseth us, judging this, that if one died for all, then all were dead. And Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto him" (2 Cor 5:14–15) [Tr.: printed "mous presse" for "nous presse"].

"If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal 1:10).

Paul's fidelity to his vocation, to the call of God upon him… (Gal 2:8).

Knowledge of Jesus Christ: the height, the depth… of this great mystery (Eph 3:18).

"For me, to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21).

His love for Jesus: "*coarctor e duobus*" (Phil 1:23).[4]

All seek their own interests and we those of Jesus Christ, "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom"… (Phil 3:8).

"Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for" (Phil 3:20).

He is inured to everything, to want, to abundance.

"As therefore you have received Jesus Christ the Lord, walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him" [Tr.: "as on your foundation"] (Col 2:6–7).

"Jesus our model: be you also holy in all manner of conversation, according to him that hath called you, who is holy" (1 Pet 1:15).

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps" (1 Pet 2:21).

"He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked" (1 Jn 2:6).

*To take up one's cross*

is to accept the suffering that [comes]

- from poverty,

- from renunciation of creatures,

- from renunciation of oneself.

It is to accept the persecutions that a disciple of Jesus Christ must expect. [He] who will not carry his cross and follow me cannot be

*DISCIPLE*

---

**Notes**

1. P. 511.↩

2. Note a. Let him that can understand, understand. [Tr.: the French edition's note cites "Mt 13,43"; it is Mt 19:12, the verse quoted in the text. The two notes (a, b) appear to have their references transposed.]↩
3. Note b. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (Mk 4:23) [Tr.: the Latin in the text is Mt 13:43.]↩
4. Note a. I am straitened between two [to depart and be with Christ… to remain in the flesh… for your sake].↩

↑ Contents

# ANNEX II – MANUSCRIPT Ms XII 2–26

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* We have already seen the essential place held by the study of the Gospel in Father Chevrier's thought.

One must first read and reread the Holy Gospel, steep oneself in it, study it, know it by heart, study each word, each action, to grasp its meaning and make it pass into one's thoughts and one's actions.

It is in each day's prayer that one must do this study and that one must make Jesus Christ pass into one's life.[1]

This assiduous prayer, this meditation, must be nourished by a knowledge of Jesus Christ that is

not vague but precise. That is why one must be attentive to the details of the Gospel. Not to fix on one detail in order to draw a whole development from it. In that case one risks making the Gospel say what it does not mean to say. Not to choose the details that serve to justify preconceived ideas. In that case one submits the Gospel to one's own thought, whereas one should do precisely the opposite.

Father Chevrier advises gathering from the Gospel everything that bears on a question, and he likes to make a complete table of it in order to have the whole ensemble before one's eyes. This is what he is seeking when he makes a summary of the examples and teachings of Jesus Christ and of Saint Paul.

As for the prayer that is to assimilate this work, it can be very simple. Father Chevrier never thought that prayer had to be bound to reasoning on each detail drawn from the Gospel; on the contrary, the counsels he gives for prayer rather engage one in a way of simplicity.

This spiritual use of the Gospel is not opposed to a properly exegetical study; that is quite clear in principle. Yet in practice it creates difficulties:

These difficulties are unavoidable for students of theology. When they discover the scientific value of modern exegesis, they are somewhat dazzled and tend to believe that with it they will be able to penetrate the Gospel to its depths. Yet one must, sooner or later, come back to still more fundamental questions. Is the Gospel made to let me meet Jesus Christ or only to hear him spoken of? Is it made to transform my life or only to give me a few ideas that I shall use as I see fit? We know the answer of faith, and we are then obliged to have recourse to the grace of the Spirit who alone can put the Gospel at our service to make us know, love and follow Jesus Christ.

Father Chevrier compares the study of the Gospel to the discovery of a house. A psalm that uses a similar comparison expresses very well what this study of the Gospel is:

Walk about Zion, go round it,

count its towers;

take note of its palaces; [Italian: the Italian edition has here an extra line, "let your hearts cling to its walls," between the towers and the palaces (Ps 48:14); the French digital copy omits it.]

that you may tell future ages

that he is God,

our God for ever and ever,

he it is who leads us.[2]

*[To know the Gospel]*

In the life of Our Lord are found Wisdom and light. It is in these little details that we find our whole rule of conduct and that we find perfection and a sure teaching, in accordance with God, since it is God himself who shows himself to us.

What use is the Gospel if one does not study it?

To know the Gospel well, one must enter into the little details of each fact, of each action; it is there that we find wisdom.

When one passes along a street and sees a beautiful house, one looks at it in passing and says: there is a beautiful house; one sees only the outside, one does not realize all that is inside, all the arrangement, beauty, conveniences, etc. One passes, one looks, one says: it is beautiful, that is all: one does not make use of it… But if one goes in and visits each floor, each room, one can admire its order, its interior beauty, its perfect arrangement.

So with the Gospel; many look at it and say: it is beautiful, and have not gone inside to examine its interior beauties and cannot make use of it, enjoy it and put to their use the things that are found there.

To know a house, one must enter it and put to one's use the rooms that compose it.

To know the Gospel, one must enter it, see the details and put into practice the things we find there; and we have only to enter a little, to study its details, to understand at once how beautiful, great, perfect this house is. It is truly the house of Wisdom.

We find in the study of Our Lord the true light; we find our rule of life all made, all prepared, all chewed; only,

one must seek it and find it there; when one goes into a great field, there are all sorts of plants in that field; if you need a violet, you must look for it; if you need borage, you must look for it [Italian: the Italian omits the borage]; if you need rare leaves, you must look for them.

Seek in the Gospel and you will find all the plants and flowers that are necessary to us to give us life and to maintain it in us.

**Notes**

1. P. 227.↩
2. Ps 48:13–15 [Vulgate 47:13–15].↩

↑ Contents

## ANNEX III – MANUSCRIPT Ms X 653–661

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* These thoughts on Poverty deal with the poverty of the priest. It is enough to refer to the particular introductions on "Renunciation of the goods of the earth"[1] and on "Follow me in my poverty."[2]

Two Latin phrases punctuate these pages like a kind of refrain: "*nos vero orationi et praedicationi instantes erimus.*"[3] It is the word of the apostles at the moment of the institution of the deacons: As for us, we shall give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.[4]

"*Virtus de illo exibat.*"[5] A power went out from him, says the Gospel of Saint Luke of Jesus.[6]

These words give us the meaning of the priest's poverty according to Father Chevrier. This poverty is founded on the conviction that only

the Word of God is effective in doing the work of God.

---

1. P. 275

2. P. 403

3. Acts 6:4

4. Cf. p. 518, note a; pp. 523–524

5. Lk 6:19

6. Cf. pp. 521–522

*Thoughts on Poverty – The priest, a man stripped.*

It is in poverty that the priest finds his strength, his power and his freedom. What can one do against a poor, detached priest? Today, more than ever, one must be poor to fight against the world, against earthly enjoyments, the luxury and well-being that is growing prodigiously everywhere.

The priest must not follow the world, he must go in front and be its master to stop it and lead it.

If the priest does as everyone does, how will he be able to lead and instruct it?

Luxury and well-being today are ruining the world; it is for us to act otherwise and to give men examples quite opposite to theirs.

The priest is the ornament and the glory of the house of God; it is he who must be its wealth and its glory; what are all the outward ornaments without the priest?

Let us not set our mind and our time on occupying ourselves with the accessory and [on] leaving the principal.

What use are so many candles and lights if the priest is not the true light of the faithful?

What use are these riches of ornament and outward splendour if the priest is not clothed with charity and humility?

The wealth of God, the greatness of God, is therefore in the holiness of the priest and not in the ornaments or outward riches of our temples.

Not to confuse the principal and the accessory, that is unfortunately what is done in our day; people think only of adorning churches, of building fine temples, fine houses, of giving them all outward beauty, and do not see that this displeases God and makes them neglect the true and only useful and necessary thing.

Let us not busy ourselves with building, nor with beautifying; let us leave that to the laity. The time

spent on that is time lost; the dealings it requires and the miseries it occasions turn us aside from the main business, which is the salvation of our neighbour and our sanctification. Often too there are quarrels, lawsuits, difficulties of payment; one spends one's life asking for money and bothering people. "*Nos vero orationi et praedicationi erimus*" (Acts 6:4).[1]

"*Martha, Martha... porro unum est necessarium*" (Lk 10:41).[2]

To build nothing, not to seek to beautify one's dwelling: this is the rule I take with the grace of God, leaving that entirely to the laity and to the people charged with it, when it is absolutely necessary, and never to do more than one can pay.

It is better to have only a plank and a tile to cover oneself than to get into difficulties, and the faithful, seeing us suffer and lack everything, will be only the more edified by the good example that will come of it.

Jesus Christ, our model, had neither house nor outward apparatus; he made use of what he had, where he was, and one does not see that he had anything built; he was himself the wealth and the beauty of the faithful.

A holy, poor priest is all wealth.

A poor, holy priest in a wooden church is more pleasing to God, more useful to the faithful, than an ordinary priest in a church of gold. What converts the sinner is not rich, outward things; these, on the contrary, serve only to excite their curiosity and their jealousy.

Ordinarily it is not before statues of gold and silver that miracles and pilgrimages take place, but before humble, poor statues, scorned by the honours of the earth.

What excites curiosity does not lead to piety, and the principal aim we must propose in all things is piety, faith, the love of Our [Lord].

That is why one must be poor everywhere, even in one's talks, in one's sermons, so that luxury and curiosity and a certain complacency may not come to replace faith and piety.

When we have no lodging, only a borrowed lodging, and when we are sent elsewhere and are obliged to move house like the poor, then we shall have true poverty. Why should the soldiers of Jesus Christ not practise poverty like the emperor's soldiers? They carry everything with them, move at the first order, sleep on a plank.

What right have we, then, to be better treated, better lodged, better fed than the poor of the earth?

Poverty keeps us in humility, gentleness, confidence, prayer, before God and before men.

It is enough that our feet touch the earth; let us not put our hands or our head there. It is the priest who is the most beautiful candle of the church.

It is the priest who is the most beautiful chandelier of the church, the most beautiful candlestick of the church.

It is a great error to believe that one attracts by this outward brilliance; one may excite curiosity. But to produce grace by outward means: one is mistaken. A poor and holy priest will convert more of the world by his example than all the chandeliers in the world, than all the candles in the world, than all the outward beauties that are inappropriately displayed to attract men in vain. Jesus Christ, poor and stripped, drew more to himself by his poverty than all the gold in the world, "*virtus ex illo exibat*" (Lk 6:19),[3] which cannot be said of any outward thing.

It is that it is easier to have candles, chandeliers, alms-boxes, canopies, and all this paraphernalia, than to have holiness; an ounce of holiness and poverty is worth more than all the glitter of the world.

We must not weary the faithful with useless requests; if we preach and practise poverty and on the other hand are continually asking them for things, objects, etc., then we weary them, bore them and drive them away from us; let us leave offerings free so that they will have nothing to say.

A penny freely offered is better than a thousand francs given with pain.

If we are truly poor, we shall be esteemed more and shall be given more; let us not weary the faithful with our importunate and repeated requests. The truly poor man suffers and asks only for what is necessary, which the good God does not refuse.

A poor and holy priest in a wooden church will convert more sinners than an ordinary priest in a church of gold and marble adorned with all sorts of outward beauties.

It is a proof that one is very poor in virtue and holiness oneself when one is obliged to borrow from outward things the brilliance and beauty to draw the world to oneself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (Jn 12:32). The poor, blood-stained cross drew the world.

Poverty and suffering will therefore attract more than all the pomps and outward beauties of the world.

Is it not shameful to be obliged to borrow from outward things this brilliance, this pomp that we ought to have in ourselves?

Is it not a great proof of our poverty, of our indigence, when, to attract the world, we are obliged to go to so much outward expense?

Is it not, besides, to despise the faithful and to regard them as children to attract them by toys, by games or other things, as is done at fairs and markets or displays of merchandise? Of Jesus Christ it was said: "*virtus de illo exibat*" (Lk 6:19).[4]

Not that outward worship is to be condemned, no, since the Church asks for it and since we are

composed of a body and a soul and outward things must lead us to God. But let us not give way to this passion that exists in our day and let us not take the accessory for the principal.

Simplicity, poverty: this is what suits us in particular and what we must embrace.

We must be careful to avoid using natural means to get money, which do not come from God but are invented to excite people's cupidity, such as lotteries, concerts, soirées, amusements; nothing is more opposed to true charity. It is no longer an alms, it is a curiosity, a cupidity, and one makes people commit more sins by using these means than one makes them perform acts of charity.

Let us not go looking for money in the world, spending one's time in drawing-rooms, in visits to the great; one must lose time, tell lies, receive praise or give it to the world; lose one's time, perhaps scandalize and weary people who do not always receive with pleasure. Remember that when one goes to ask money of worldly people, one does not give them pleasure. Go only when they tell you to, invite you to, and briefly.

Let us be truly poor and draw as near as possible to the poor. One is better within one's right and

one's state in begging at the door of a church or in the street than in making useless and painful visits. In begging at the door of the church or in a square, one wearies no one and everyone gives freely. All these money-runners, money-seekers, do not do the good God's work, and above all a priest must not lose his time on a thing so harmful to himself and to others.

What right have we to be better lodged, better clothed, better fed than the poor of the world?

Is it not shameful to see priests growing rich, buying lands, houses, and that with the Church's money, and priests who, in the world, would have been poor workmen, who would scarcely have sufficed to live in the world, priests who owe it to the Church and to alms to be priests and who grow rich?

Does one become a priest to grow rich?

What a misfortune for the Church!

Those who have no patrimony must not acquire one.

In our day, the passion for building seems to invade all priests. Especially those at the head of religious establishments or churches: all want to en-

large their church, their presbytery, their boarding school. Then, what happens? One must leave the spiritual work, the work of souls, to occupy oneself only with the material work, the stones, the walls, the pulpits, the altars… and one is obliged to leave the catechisms, prayer, confession, the work of souls.

The apostles had said: "*nos vero orationi et praedicationi instantes erimus*" (Acts 6:4);[5] one must therefore leave outward things to occupy oneself only with the things of God: that is the priest's main business.

How much time lost for God, for souls, for one's own sanctification! They are obliged to run continually to the Prefect, to the mayor, to the emperor, to Mr. So-and-so, to Mrs. So-and-so. Is that the work of God! No, it is human work. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Lk 12:31; cf. Mt 6:33).

Did the Curé of Ars busy himself with building? Did he go looking for money, running to this one and that one? and yet what priest has had more money than he? It was brought to him from the ends of the world…

The reason is that it is easier to run to this one and that one than to be saints.

Do you want to have a lot of money, fine churches, fine ornaments? Become saints, be poor…

In a church, as in one's room, one must avoid having things that excite curiosity and destroy attention to God. In ornaments and other things… the thought of God must come out of them and not the thought of art or taste… "*Spiritus est Deus, et eos qui adorant eum in spiritu et veritate oportet adorare*" (Jn 4:24).[6]

It is again against the spirit of poverty to hold lotteries, to give concerts, to hold gatherings to get money under any pretext whatever. It is not true charity and these are means too natural for a priest.

The poor man finds his glory in the ordering of his life and in the fear of God, others are honoured for their great wealth.[7]

It is again against the spirit of poverty and humility to impose oneself on the world, to believe that everyone owes you, that those who do not give to us fail in their duties. To demand alms, goods

from them, is ridiculous. Is anything owed to us? What right have we?

It is again against the spirit of poverty and of the Gospel to burden oneself with a thousand temporal cares, to be tradesmen or to meddle in the affairs

of the world, even under pretext of good works, such as, for example, making children work, being at the head of workshops…

The priest's work must be an entirely spiritual work.

"*Nos vero orationi et praedicationi instantes erimus*" (Acts 6:4).[8]

These works necessarily force one to have business dealings with the world, markets, sales, purchases, and by that very fact create a thousand cares and a thousand embarrassments.

Never to put oneself at the head of such houses.

One must remember well that voluntary and sought-after poverty is not worth the effective poverty of the world of the poor of the earth, of mothers of families, of workmen without work, of the poor without food and lodging… and that a

voluntary religious poor man will never suffer as much as the poor of the world.

It is for this that Saint Francis, who truly loved poverty, envied the lot of the poor and worked to become like them.

---

**Notes**

1. Note a. As for us, we shall give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Exact Latin text: "*nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus.*"↩
2. Note b. Martha, Martha, one thing is necessary. (Lk 10:41)↩
3. Note a. A power went out from him.↩
4. Note a. Cf. p. 521, note a.↩
5. Note a. Cf. p. 520, note a.↩
6. Note b. God is a spirit, and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth.↩
7. Note c. Probably a free translation of a text of Scripture, see for example Sir 10:30 [Vulgate; Douay 10:34].↩
8. Note a. Cf. p. 520, note a.↩

↑ Contents

## ANNEX IV – MANUSCRIPT Ms X 150–156

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* In January 1879, a few months before his death, Father Chevrier

asks the Archbishop of Lyon to accept his resignation as superior of the Prado and to appoint as new superior François Duret, then aged 26 and a priest for 18 months.[1]

A few notes that remain to us show that he had been reflecting on this question for some time and remained perplexed:

Appointment of a superior.

Necessity.

Difficulties: young and incapable of choosing well themselves.

Appointment: perhaps it would be better to have him appointed by authority.

How: general meeting, older priests, two thirds of the votes.

A little further on one reads, about the qualities he would want for this new superior:

"Above all the spirit of the work: catechism, poverty, disciple"[2]

This last enumeration is important because it sums up Father Chevrier's whole conception of the apostle of the poor.

He is a catechist, that is, he devotes himself totally to making Jesus Christ known with simplicity.

He is a poor man, that is, poverty is the principal sign that accompanies his preaching of the Gospel.

He is a disciple, that is, his ministry and his life find their source in his union with Jesus Christ.

We have already shown what idea of the Mission, and in particular of the mission of the priest, underlies the True Disciple.[3]

Concerning the mission of the superior one finds here the same doctrine: the superior does not replace an absent one, he does not succeed someone who has effaced himself, he represents an Invisible One who manifests himself through him. Hence the obligation, for the superior as for every apostle, "to say or do nothing of himself" but "to say everything and do everything through Jesus Christ or with Jesus Christ and in union with Jesus Christ."[4] The allusion to the conclusion of the eucharistic prayer in the Roman liturgy is evident. Through him, with him and in him…

The indications that Father Chevrier then gives are interesting. He rather insists on the fact that

the superior must not leave to others his specific function, government. This insistence is explained by the situation in which Father Duret was going to find himself. A young superior, he had three confrères of his own age and others who were older. Among the latter, some had not always approved of Father Chevrier, far from it; others did not have the judgment and firmness necessary to govern properly. It was therefore necessary to put Father Duret on guard against indiscreet interference.

Certain terms have, at the present time, an unpleasant ring, such as general supervision. It is enough to read Father Chevrier's explanations to understand it in the right sense.[5]

We have only a copy of this text; the manuscript is lost.

↑ Contents

## To my brother François Duret, Superior of the Providence of the Prado.

↑ Contents

*Warning*

You must remember well that there is only one Master and Superior in heaven and on earth, who is Jesus Christ, to whom God has given all power and all authority in the world. That, consequently, any superior whatever is only the representative of Jesus Christ and must act and speak only in union with Jesus Christ. And that if Our Lord says of himself that he says and does nothing of himself, all the more must a superior on earth say or do nothing of himself, but must say everything and do everything through Jesus Christ, or with Jesus Christ, and in union with Jesus Christ, and he must be so united to Jesus Christ, the one true Master, that he can say with truth: it is not I who speak or who command, it is Jesus Christ who speaks and commands in me. This is the first truth with which you must be thoroughly penetrated in order to become a good superior.

*Qualities of a good superior*

- Calm: To know how always to possess one's soul in every circumstance, good or bad. Never to show outwardly either anger, or impatience, or weakness, irritation, and for that to moderate one's inner feelings.

- Serious: Leaving aside everything childish, to have the seriousness of old age in spite of one's youth.

- Reflective: To say nothing and do nothing without having thought it over maturely before God, who alone is able to enlighten us.

- Prudent: To understand and foresee beforehand the import of one's words and actions, so as to say nothing or do nothing that might turn to the harm of oneself or of others.

- Discreet: To be reserved in one's words, never disclosing the secrets of others, speaking of everything with reserve and moderation.

- Capable:

Of instructing in the things of God and in the things that concern the work, and for that to know how to study much what relates to these things.

Of rebuking faults, and for that to know the different faults that are harmful to souls and to the work: to see the faults, to know them, to seize them.

Of handling affairs, everything that concerns the inside or order of the house, of persons, of indi-

viduals. He must be the counsellor and the father of all. Outside, with business people, oblig[ations], buyers, sellers, notaries, etc.

- Gentle: In order to be able to possess souls. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Avoid all brusqueness, harshness, bitterness.

- Patient: To know how to bear many things because no one is perfect. To know how to wait, to bear much, provided the faults do not harm the community; when they harm the general good…

- Charitable: For everyone. To love everyone in God and for God, having no preference or partiality for anyone, but loving everyone in God and for God.

- Conciliatory: Always seeking to put peace among all, avoiding divisions, schisms, separations, seeking to unite everyone in one bond of love and charity.

- Firm: When once one has decided a thing good and useful to the work or to individuals, to hold firm so that the duty may be done. It is not enough to say and command, one must see to it that what one has commanded is carried out; otherwise one achieves nothing.

- Persevering: To undertake nothing, to begin nothing, before having weighed and reflected well; but when once one has begun a thing, to pursue it to the end; this is the only way to arrive at something solid and lasting. To begin and not to pursue is a mark of weakness and of ill-understood zeal, and this fault, so frequent, makes us lose our authority. And it is better to do little and finish it than to begin much and finish nothing; and to do things one after the other.

*Functions of the superior*

- To preside: It is the superior's duty to be the first in everything; that is what his name expresses and that is why… sign of his authority was given him. He must remember that he must be the first in virtue and humble himself.

- To admit and dismiss: It is he who must receive subjects into the house. No one must enter or leave, be received or dismissed from the house without his approval.

- Relations with the Archbishop or Superior: It is for him to give account from time to time to the Archbishop or his delegate of the state of the work, of its progress or its failings.

- To govern: The government of the house belongs exclusively to him. It is he who has received from God the grace for it and no one can or must do anything or change or undertake anything without his authorization. Everything must be done through you as head of the h[ouse]. To give an account. To receive strangers, benefac[tors], visits.

*Duties*

- To give good example: He must be the model and the example of all by his regularity and by his whole outward bearing. Our Lord said nothing else to his disciples: "*Sequere me*,"[6] showing by his words that he had nothing else to do than to [follow him].

- To instruct: He must be full of the spirit of God in order to communicate it at every moment to all; he must be always ready to tell everyone and each one what is needed for his instruction and advancement.

- To rebuke: This is a great duty. It is not enough to say, one must rebuke, pull up the weeds, warn people of their faults, make them know and understand them and help them to pull them out. A great duty: it is because one does not rebuke

enough that the father of the family's field is invaded by evil. One must constantly pull up evil as one perceives it.

- To have things done: One must also have done, have executed what one has commanded and ordered. It is here that one really needs courage, firmness and perseverance, to have others execute what one has judged good.

- Before God: The office of superior comes from God; it is therefore he who will ask us for an account of our administration.

- Responsible before men: If something unbecoming or bad happens in a community, it is to the superior that people turn, and he must give account of the conduct of his subjects.

- General supervision: He must therefore watch over the whole community, the carrying out of the rule, of the offices, of the exercises, have an eye on everything, know all that goes on, be on the watch to see, to hear everything, without anyone even noticing it.

- Particular: That is, to watch each individual, to take account of

each one, of what he is, what he does, his conduct, character, to know everyone.

- Counsellor: He must be the man of business of each. Each must have recourse to him as to his light. He is the friend and father of all in this world. He must be approachable to all and always ready to do a service to all. His room must be open to all without distinction. He is the father and friend of everyone.

- Difficult task: Woe to him who wants to be superior, seeks to be superior. He takes upon himself a great burden that he will not be able to carry without the grace of God. A good superior is the salvation of souls, the glory of God, of the Church, as a bad superior is the ruin of souls, the destruction of communities and the shame of his house.

*Burden of responsibilities*

*Means of fulfilling worthily this great charge*

- Prayer: He must pray more than the others because he has more burdens than the others, because he needs graces for himself and for the others. He must pray at every moment to keep himself equal to his office.

- Union with Our Lord Jesus Christ: To be one with him so that he may speak in you, act in you, and that you may say like Saint Paul: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" [Tr.: Chevrier: "it is not I who live, it is Jesus Christ who speaks, who commands in me"] (Gal 2:20).

- Love of God: To do everything for God, with a view to God, to his glory. To seek in everything only the glory of God. "Lovest thou me? Lovest thou me?" (Jn 21:17) Jesus said to Peter before entrusting him with the government of the Church. It is that, in fact, one must love God in order to govern others. To suffer.

- (Love) of souls: To seek only the salvation of souls in the orders one may give; one must [not] seek what pleases them, what suits them, one must seek their spiritual good. That is why sometimes one appears cruel in demanding things that thwart them and which nevertheless [are] necessary to the glory of God and to their spiritual good.

*(03) Words of Jesus Christ to his apostles*

"Many that are first [shall be last]" (Mt 19:30). "I am not come to be ministered unto"… (Mk

10:45). "*Haec meditare*"[7] (1 Tim 4:15). Saint Paul to Titus.

*Director.*[8]

To direct. Spiritual director, not temporal.

Prayers.

Prayer. Notebook. Spiritual reading.

Catechisms.

Cards. [Tr.: meaning uncertain; perhaps the membership or attendance cards of the children.]

Spiritual correspond[ence].

To replace the superior in spiritual matters, the meetings.

To give permissions in the superior's absence.

To give the order, to designate the Masses, the preachings of the sisters.

---

**Notes**

1. Introduction p. 9.↩
2. Ms X 145.↩
3. Cf. p. 208.↩
4. P. 527.↩
5. P. 529.↩
6. Note a. Follow me.↩

7. Note a. Meditate on these things.↩
8. Note a. Here was to begin a list of the various offices exercised by the persons serving in the house of the Prado. The sequel never came.↩

↑ Contents

## ANNEX V – The Picture of Saint-Fons

↑ Contents

*[Berthelon's introductory note:]* Father Chevrier had been given a little house situated in the territory of the commune of Saint-Fons, in the southern suburbs of Lyons.

The little house, which has been preserved, was then in the midst of the fields, on a plateau overlooking the Rhône valley, the plateau of the Clochettes. It was fitted up as a house of retreat and, in the ground-floor room where there was a manger for animals, Father Chevrier had the idea of reproducing on the walls a picture he had already transcribed long before on paper. Hence the habit taken at the Prado of calling this picture the "Picture of Saint-Fons."[1]

The layout of the premises invited Father Chevrier to modify the order he had set down on paper. The picture thus became a true triptych: the mystery of the Eucharist is in the centre, with the

door opening on the little chapel, while the panel of the crib and that of the cross converge on this central panel.

This picture is not an invention of Father Chevrier. Others before him had the idea of summarizing the evangelical ideal in the light of three principal aspects of the mystery of Christ:

the Incarnation, characterized by the Child Jesus in the crib,

the Redemption, characterized by Jesus on the cross,

the Life of the risen Christ in the Church, characterized by the Eucharist.[2]

"Such, in fact, is the ordering of the divine plan: Wisdom takes a humanity, immolates it and gives it as food: Incarnation, Redemption, the Church! Such is the divine logic of the mysteries, such are the stages of the divine realizations, the Church being the end of all things. We must find this logic and this ordering everywhere. It is this which must therefore mark the stages of holiness."[3]

If the idea of this picture in three parts is not an invention of Father Chevrier, the commentary he

gives of it is his own, and notably the threefold affirmation:

the priest is a man stripped,

the priest is a man crucified,

the priest is a man eaten.

The last of these three phrases has made its fortune. Please note that it is necessarily preceded by the other two, without which it has no meaning, for it does not mean that the priest must have a devouring activity but that his whole ministry must be life-giving; that is why he must "become good bread." Besides, the reference to the eucharistic mystery suffices to dispel any equivocation.

The title of the picture, "*Sacerdos alter Christus*," the priest is another Christ, is not peculiar to Father Chevrier; he certainly had it from a Capuchin, Father Laurent of Aosta, his contemporary.[1] But the Capuchin himself, where did he get this formula? From the Fathers of the Church, he says. However, he takes good care not to cite any, and doubtless for good reason.

The formula in itself would be very recent; it perhaps would not go back beyond the nineteenth century, although the idea is older.

Today, theologians are often very reserved before this formula. They fear that it makes one forget that "Christian" also means "another Christ." By forgetting it one could arrive at an erroneous conception of the priest.

As has already been said, all Father Chevrier's doctrine on the priest refers to this word of Christ: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you,"[2] and it is in this sense that he understands the formula "another Christ."

The Second Vatican Council confirmed that, by the sacrament of orders, the priest is specially configured to Christ, to act in dependence on Christ.[3] It also confirmed that the priest must conform his life to that of Christ.[4]

Each is free to use or not to use this formula, but it seems quite acceptable if one wishes thereby to express the priestly tradition in the sense in which the Fathers of the Church precisely conceived it.

"Such is therefore the way by which the priesthood, in fact, was then handed on, from successors to successors of the Apostles, the way of imitation. Certainly, at the same time, the Spirit was communicated by the imposition of hands,

and the priestly powers were communicated too in consequence. That was essential. But there was, besides, this constant and no less fundamental concern to copy, because it was the practical means, and at the same time the means willed by God, to find the Model again and to ensure its reproduction. No code in this, no theory of the priesthood, no manual,

---

1. Cf. Six 154–155 and note 66.

2. Jn 20:21, cf. p. 208.

3. P.O. 2 § 3; 12 § 1

4. P.O. 14 § 1.

nor even an embryo of a treatise; the immediate grasp, on seeing and hearing a priest, of the replica of the True Priest."[4]

Moreover, let us add that Father Chevrier did not intend to reserve for the priest the ideal expressed by the Picture of Saint-Fons. He himself made an adaptation of it for the brothers and sisters of the Prado, simply suppressing the mention of the priest's powers.

↑ Contents

## The Picture of Saint-Fons

↑ Contents

*[Translator's note: The French digital copy of the Berthelon edition used here ends at this point and does not reproduce the Picture itself. The text below is translated from the Italian edition (p. 359), whose layout the Italian text-layer scrambles; it has been reconstructed from the page scan. Cf. the English of Chambost's 1926 anthology, "The Picture of Saint-Fons," given earlier in this project. In the Italian the verse of Jn 13:15 is split across the three panels, as shown here. The layout of the original wall-painting is a three-column grid; here each panel is set out in turn.]*

**SACERDOS ALTER CHRISTUS**

(The priest is another Christ)

*[Heading at the top left:]* for his powers. *[Heading at the top right:]* for his examples – model. [Tr.: so the Italian prints it ("per i suoi poteri … per i suoi esempi, modello"); the exact placing of these two headings over the panels is not clear from the scan.]

*Exemplum dedi vobis, ut quemadmodum ego feci, ita et vos faciatis*[5] (Jn 13:15) – "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also."

**First panel – THE CRIB (the Child Jesus)** *Exemplum dedi vobis* – **POVERTY: POOR AND HUMBLE**

| **Poor** in the house | **Humble** of spirit |
|---|---|
| in clothing | of heart |
| in food | in relation to |
| in goods | God |
| in work | men |
| in ministry | oneself |

**The priest is a man stripped.**

*The poorer one is, the more one glorifies and loves God and makes oneself useful to one's neighbour.*

**Second panel – THE CROSS** *Ut quemadmodum ego feci* – **DEATH TO ONESELF**

| **To die** to one's body | **To immolate oneself** in solitude |
|---|---|
| to one's spirit | in prayer |
| to one's will | in penance |
| to one's reputation | in work |
| to one's family | in suffering |
| to the world | in death |

**The priest is a man crucified.**

*The more one is dead, the more one gives life.*

## Third panel – THE HOST (central panel, the Eucharist) *Ita et vos faciatis* – CHARITY

| To give | To give life through |
|---|---|
| one's body | one's faith |
| one's spirit | one's doctrine |
| one's goods | one's prayers |
| one's time | one's words |
| one's health | one's powers |
| one's life | one's examples |

**The priest is a man eaten.**

*To become good bread.*

*[Italian editorial notes to the Picture:]* (1) In the chapel of Saint-Fons the third panel of the picture is in the centre, painted on the wall where the door opens that leads to the little chapel. The arrangement is meant to express the convergence of the whole towards this third part. (2) "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also" (Jn 13:15). (3) Here on the manuscript three drawings are sketched: a Child Jesus in the manger, a cross and a host. [Tr.: these notes are in the Italian edition; the French digital copy lacks them.]

---

**Notes**

1. Cf. Introduction, p. 30.↩

2. Six, p. 181.↩
3. Marie-Eugène of the Child Jesus, *Je veux voir Dieu*, Éd. du Carmel, 1956, p. 666.↩
4. G. Jouassard, "Pour une étude du sacerdoce au temps des Pères," in *La Tradition sacerdotale*, pp. 111–112, Éd. Mappus, 1959.↩
5. [Tr.: Chevrier's heading is the Latin of Jn 13:15, divided over the three panels: *Exemplum dedi vobis* (crib) / *ut quemadmodum ego feci* (cross) / *ita et vos faciatis* (host).]↩

↑ Contents