

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]

COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

1. To the ten commandments of God we must add the five commandments of the Church, so called because they were established by the Church, that is, by ecclesiastical superiors invested with the authority of Jesus Christ.

2. The commandments of the Church must be observed by all the faithful like the ten commandments of God. They cannot be broken without incurring the guilt of mortal sin and the penalty of eternal damnation. At the same time, being in their nature human laws, the precepts of the Church do not oblige when it is impossible or very difficult to observe them, and they admit of dispensation. With these legitimate exceptions, we are bound to observe the precepts of the Church as the precepts of God Himself, because they are laid on us by the pastors who govern in His place, and to whom we owe the same obedience as we owe to God, according to the words of Our Lord: "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me" (St. Luke x. 16).

3. The commandments of the Church have for their end, (1) to help us to observe the commandments of God, and the things prescribed by Our Lord Jesus Christ; (2) to make us practise the filial obedience, respect, and love that we owe to the Church, our Mother.

4. Among all ecclesiastical ordinances and laws, there are five which in a special manner concern all the faithful; and these are called the five commandments of the Church. They are—

(1) To keep certain appointed days holy, with the obligation of resting from servile works.

(2) To hear Mass on all Sundays and holidays of obligation.

(3) To keep the days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church.

(4) To confess our sins to our pastors at least once a year.

(5) To receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter or thereabouts.

To Keep Certain Appointed Days Holy, with the Obligation of Resting From Servile Work.

I. Meaning of Holidays or Feast-Days.

1. A feast-day, or festival, is a day of joy, a day of solemn assembly or public rejoicing, established either in honor of some distinguished person, or in commemoration of some great event. There are civil festivals and religious festivals; it is of the latter only that we are here about to treat.

2. Religious festivals are days especially consecrated to divine worship. They are established, (1) in order to render to God the solemn homage due to Him; (2) for the spiritual welfare of men; (3) to enliven the days of our earthly pilgrimage with holy joy.

3. There have been festivals as long as there has been any public worship, that is to say, ever since the origin of the human race. The Holy Scripture reveals to us this fact of these real festivals in the solemn invocations of the name of the Lord, established by Enos, in the time of our first father, Adam (Gen. iv. 26); then again in the holocausts offered by Noe and his family after the Deluge; and lastly in the celebrated sacrifices offered by Abraham and the other patriarchs on the altars which they had erected.

4. Formed into a nation, the family of the patriarchs received, together with the law of Moses, the institution of various solemn festivals. The chief of these were the Feasts of the Pasch and of Pentecost, which two solemnities were to endure to the end of time, and to be continued in later days, though under a more perfect form, in the Church of Jesus Christ.

5. The Church, in virtue of the power delegated to her by her divine Founder, to regulate all that concerns divine worship, has established festivals—(1) in honor of the Blessed Trinity; (2) in honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ; (3) in honor of the Blessed Virgin; and (4) in honor of the angels and the saints.

The end of all these festivals is not only to render fitting homage to God and His saints, and a just acknowledgment of their benefits, but likewise to obtain their protection, to inspire the faithful with holy joy, to encourage them, and to nourish their piety and devotion by putting

vividly before them the mysteries of faith, and the example of Jesus Christ and His saints.

6. The Church orders that the festivals that are commanded, or of obligation, are to be kept holy like Sundays. For France and Belgium there are four of these, which may fall on other days than Sunday, namely, Christmas Day, Ascension Day, the Assumption, and All Saints.

7. Besides these feasts of obligation, there are others that are designated as abolished feasts; they are those festivals which, by virtue of an indult granted by Pius VII., on April 9, 1802, have ceased to be of obligation for France and Belgium, although the divine office is to be continued as before, because the Church desires that the faithful should continue to assist at it. Among these abolished feasts are the patronal feasts, that is, the feasts of the patrons of each diocese, parish, or country.

A Presbyterian Tribute to Pope Benedict XV

It would doubtless fill many columns to print all the eloquent tributes paid the world over to the memory of Benedict XV. by the non-Catholic press (says *America*.) The note of bigotry was but seldom and faintly heard in the secular papers of the United States, while the appreciation for the services rendered by the great Pope of the World War was deep and genuine. From the pulpit of the Throop Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, Dr. William Carter preached a formal sermon upon the subject: "A Protestant Estimate of Pope Benedict XV." "No wonder that the world is mourning so deeply now," he said. "No wonder that the chariots of the Church of God are dragging heavily." Praising the dead Pontiff as a great executive, a great friend of man, and above all "a great churchman, a great Christian," he continued.

"Three hundred million Catholics mourn his loss to-day because of the close and tender relationship they had with him, through the faith he so faithfully and consistently exemplified, and three hundred million Protestants send their sympathy, as from heart to heart, and join their sorrow with their Christian brethren. I trust, therefore, that it will not be deemed presumptuous for a fellow-Christian, though of the Protestant faith, in genuine sympathy and sorrow to give, in this public way, a Protestant estimate and eulogy of Pope Benedict XV.

"Benedict XV. had the gentle sanctity of Pius X. mixed with the keen executive ability and brilliant statesmanship of Leo XIII. No smirch, or spot, or stain ever rested on his life, either public or private. No bar sinister can ever be placed on his escutcheon even by the most malignant of his enemies. In him was combined the manhood of the Master and the culture of the Cross. He lived in the quiet of the cloister but his ear was ever attuned to the cries of a needy and a suffering world. He knew his Lord and Master, but he also knew men and ever insisted that he should know them better than he might the better minister to their needs. With one hand he grasped the hand of God, as he walked with Him day by day, with the other he reached out to needy men that he might lift them up to higher and to nobler things.

"Enumerating the long list of the Pontiff's accomplishments in the cause of peace Dr. Carter thus silences all the criticisms that were made against him in the past:

"The best answer to all these criticisms is the fact that Benedict, throughout the war, won the confidence of the world at large enough to join eleven more nations in formal recognition of the Vatican and representation there than it had had before. The nations represented by formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican at the beginning of the war numbered twenty, at the end of the war the number had increased to thirty-one. Let this be the answer to all his critics."

Against those in fine who censured the Pope for his fight against Protestant propaganda in Rome, Dr. Carter nobly replies: "Is there anything derogatory in a man fighting back for his faith?"

"Reminiscences of Early Days in New Zealand."

Archbishop Redwood's *Reminiscences* is now on sale, and may be had from The Catholic Supplies, Manners Street, Wellington; O'Connor, Barbadoes Street, Christchurch; or N.Z. Tablet Office, Dunedin. It is a book that ought to be read in every home in New Zealand.

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