

ON CHARITY

From the Catechism of Rodez

FIRST INSTRUCTION ON CHARITY TOWARDS GOD

CHARITY is a gift of God by which we love Him above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Of the three theological virtues it is the sweetest and the most excellent; it is the one which gives lustre and value to all the others, and without which faith and hope would profit us nothing: *Now there remain faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity (I. Cor. XIII, 13). St. Paul says: 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, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and I have not charity, it profiteth me nothing (I. Cor. XIII. 1-3).* But, on the contrary, *with charity we have all. In the love of God and of our neighbor are contained the law and the prophets (Matt. XXII, 40); that is, the whole Gospel and all the duties which it prescribes to us. Therefore, it is important to know well the nature, necessity, and practice of charity. We have to devote several instructions to this subject. Let us begin with the charity towards God, and first let us study its motives and characters.*

II. Why should we love God? Undoubtedly, because He commands us to do so: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God (Matt. XXII, 37).* Using the absolute master over our hearts, has He not the right to require that we should consecrate ourselves entirely to Him? *“But, O my God,”* cries St. Augustine, *“was it then necessary to command us to love Thee? Would it not be for us the greatest of all misfortunes, if we did not love Thee?”* We should love God because He is infinitely amiable, because He is infinitely good and just, that is, we should love Him from a motive of justice, from a motive of gratitude; and, shall I say it, we should love Him for our own interest.

1st Motive. Justice. — I will not undertake to draw a picture of all the divine perfections. It is an abyss into which our weak intelligence cannot penetrate. The angels and even the seraphim, who see God face to face, can only contemplate Him, love Him, and celebrate His praises. God alone can understand Himself, and all I could tell you would be infinitely below the reality. Thus, if I were to tell you that God is not only infinitely great and powerful, but that He is the greatness and power itself; that He is not only holy and wise, but that He is holiness and wisdom itself; in short, if I were to tell you that God possesses in Himself all the qualities and all the perfections that can be imagined, and that He possesses them all in the most perfect degree, this, undoubtedly, would be telling you something, and, nevertheless, it would be nothing in comparison with the reality. I would be only lisping like a child, and I could say with the prophet: *I cannot speak (Jer. I. 6).*

To form an idea of the grandeur and perfections of God, represent to yourselves all that is the greatest, the most amiable, the most magnificent, in creatures, in the firmament with its numberless stars, in the seas with their extent and the immense riches lying in their bosom, in the earth with its inexhaustible fruitfulness, finally in all that nature can offer to our eyes as most seducing and most enchanting, and you will have but a dim shadow and obscure picture of the infinite beauty of God. It is from Him, as from a fruitful and inexhaustible source, that flow all the perfections of creatures, all the wonders of the world: but they are only a pale and slight reflex of God's greatness. By His sovereign and immortal glory He eclipses and effaces all created beings more than the sun, which at its rising eclipses the stars of the firmament. He is so beautiful, He is so great, He is so amiable, that in heaven His sole presence enraptures the blessed and plunges them into ecstasies of happiness and love. The more they love Him, the more they feel themselves moved to love Him; and we ourselves upon earth, if we could see Him such as He is, could not help loving Him and would never grow tired of loving Him. One glimpse of His glory and majesty would forever deprive us of our will, and even of the power to displease Him; our happiness would be similar to that of the heavenly spirits, and the earth would become another paradise. St. Paul was one day carried into the third heaven, and for a moment he beheld the ineffable light which the elect enjoy. This magnificent spectacle, which the eye of man has never seen,

threw him into inexpressible admiration, and from this time life became a burden to him and he longed to die in order to go and possess God forever.

Yet how does it come that we love such an amiable God so little, and that we have such love for the vanity, the goods and pleasures of this world? Blind as we are, we prostitute our hearts to idols of flesh and blood, we sigh only after vain riches and frivolous dress, and we do not realize that all that is beautiful and perfect here below comes from God who is the author of all things. We love the creature, and we do not love the Creator; we admire the work, and we forget the workman who made it. Oh, children of men, harden not your hearts (Hebr. III, 8).

2nd Motive. Gratitude — If you are insensible to the voice of justice, perhaps you will listen to the voice of gratitude. Since God loves you so much, will you not feel yourselves bound to love Him in return! Measure, if you can, the full extent of the love which God bears you, and count the benefits with which He overwhelms you every day. Without speaking of those you have received in the order of nature, such as life, health, goods, talents, what has He not done for you in the order of grace? Children of a guilty father, you were in His eyes only objects of wrath and vengeance. Eternal damnation would have been infallibly your lot, if God, who alone could redeem you, would not have had mercy on you. What, therefore, has the Lord done to save you, or, rather, what has He not done? He had a Son, an only Son, the only object of His complacency, God like Him, eternal, almighty, and perfect like Him; and this Son He sacrificed, He immolated for you, as if He loved you more than He loved His own Son.

And the Son of God Himself, the Saviour, how far did He not push the excess of His love? Consider Him in the stable of Bethlehem, follow Him into the Garden of Olives, into the various tribunals of Jerusalem and up the mount of Calvary; does your heart not speak to you at the sight of so many prodigies of pain, annihilation, and love? Tell me, if one of you had been condemned to death by human justice, and if the only son of a king should be willing to die in his place, could the condemned man remain insensible to such love! And, nevertheless, remark that the only Son of God, the King of kings, not only died for you once on the cross, but He immolates Himself still every day on our altars and, what is still more incomprehensible, in His ineffable love He found a way to remain always with us; even to give Himself to us, to nourish us with His divine substance, and identify Himself, so to say, with us! Can one conceive a prodigy of love like this; and could God, all-powerful as He is, do anything more? How in considering all this could we refuse to love a God who loved us so much? ***If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema*** (I. Cor., XVI. 22). His heart would be harder than the stones that were rent at Jesus' death on Calvary, more insensible than the dead themselves who then arose. We would have to say that he who refuses to love God has no heart at all.

3rd Motive. Our Own Interest. — To the reasons we have to love God, drawn from motives of justice and gratitude, I wish to add a last motive, not less powerful, that of your own interest. My brethren, do you desire to be happy in this world and in the next? Love God.

In this world, happiness is possible only in so far as one has peace with his conscience, peace with God: *There is no peace to the wicked* (Is. XLVIII. 22). But if our heart is penetrated with the love of God, what sweetness, what consolation is ours! St. Paul, even in chains and in the horrors of a dungeon, tells us that he abounded with joy (II. Cor. VII., 4). St. Xavier, in the midst of the fatigues of his apostolate and in a foreign land, among idolatrous peoples, cried out: *“My heart is too full of joy, O Lord, my happiness is too great!”* Have you not sometimes experienced the joy of God's love? Remember the day of your first communion, of a good confession. Have you ever enjoyed happier days?

But it is especially in heaven that we shall taste the unspeakable joys and sweetness of divine love. In this world, God lets fall His sweetness only drop by drop; but in heaven, it is in torrents. In this world, *we see God through the shadows of faith, but in heaven we shall see Him face to face and such as He is* (I. Cor. XIII. 12). And in seeing Him we will love Him with the most holy and most perfect love. Oh! who could express the whole extent of happiness which the saints find in the ecstasies of this love! One day St. Monica was conversing on this subject with her son Augustine, when, suddenly, her heart became so inflamed with the divine love, that she lost all power of speech and fell into an ecstasy. Having come to herself again, she cried out: *“O God, what am I doing here below, and what can bind me still to this earth? Why is it not given me to flee at this very moment into Thy holy tabernacles?”* And we, also, my brethren, would look with disgust upon all the perishable things of the earth, and we would sigh only after the eternal felicity, if we rightly understood the happiness that is awaiting us there.

III. How should we love God We must love Him with our whole heart, with our whole mind, and with all our strength (Matt. XXII., 37). This means we must love Him with a sincere love, with a love of preference, and with an efficacious love. To love God with a *sincere love* is to love Him not only with our lips, but from the bottom of our heart. To love Him with a *love of preference*, is to love Him more than all that is dearest to us in this world, more than father and mother, more than one's own life. To love God with an conscious love, is to be disposed to observe faithfully all His commandments and those of His Church; it is to be resigned to the orders of His Providence in all the trials He sends us, in all the afflictions that befall us; it is to refer to Him all our actions, all our pains, and to have no other intention but to do in all things His holy will. To love God "*with one's whole heart, with one's whole mind, and with one's whole strength,*" is to fly with horror and to detest sovereignly all that displeases Him; it is to be firmly and sincerely resolved to sacrifice riches, honor, and even life itself, rather than to commit a venial sin. Finally, it is to think often of God, to be happy in His presence, to love to visit Him in His temple, to pray to Him, and to converse with pious and fervent persons.

Can we say, my brethren, that thus far we have really loved God with this sincere, sovereign, and efficacious love? You, for instance, who totally neglect the duty of prayer, the services of the church, the sacraments, can you say that you love Him? Surely you do not. And you who live in hatred of your neighbor, who unjustly retain his goods, who daily tarnish his honor by your calumnies and slanders, can you say that you love God? Surely not. And you who have criminal relations with persons of the other sex, who live in the habit of sin and shame, can you say that you love God? Surely not. And you who respect no law of the Church, who observe neither fast nor abstinence, who do not receive Holy Communion even during Easter time, can you say that you love Him? Surely not. And you, lukewarm and indifferent souls, who fulfill your duties only by half, who do everything with disgust, and rather through custom and routine than through devotion, who are not afraid at all to commit venial faults, can you say that you love God and love Him above all things! No, you do not love Him.

O, my God, what a number of ungrateful children you behold here today at your feet! Pardon us, O Lord, our iniquities, our lukewarmness, and our indifference. Yes, we acknowledge that until now we have been far from loving Thee as we should have done, but in future we shall love Thee all the more. It is very late, indeed, that we begin to love Thee, O beauty ever ancient and ever new; but we commence at last and we shall try to love Thee always more and more, to love Thee above all things and to love Thee until death, in order to deserve to love Thee perfectly and to possess Thee eternally in heaven. Amen.

SECOND INSTRUCTION ON CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR

AFTER having treated of the motives and characters of the love of God, there remains for us to speak of the necessity of loving our neighbor and the manner in which we should love him. **These two loves are inseparable, and the one is not less indispensable than the other;** for, says St. John, *if any man says, I love God, and hateth his neighbour, he is a liar* (I. John IV, 20). This is why in the act of charity, after declaring that we love God above all things, we immediately add: "*And our neighbor as ourselves.*"

Three principal motives should induce us to love our neighbor: the voice of nature, the voice of grace, and the formal command of God.

I. The Voice of Nature — We are all children of the same father and members of the same family. Rich and poor, great and small, Christians and infidels, we all have the same origin which is God, the same nature and the same destiny which is heaven. Hence, that sympathy by the natural inclination we feel for our fellowmen, when we are not influenced by selfishness and passion. Man naturally seeks the company of man; he loves it, he desires it, and he feels miserable and unhappy if he is condemned to live in solitude.

Men are born to live in society, to help one another in their pains and needs; they are not made to live in a savage state, like the animals in the woods. But without this benevolent charity, and without this mutual love of which we speak, how would society be possible? Is it not evident that without it men would soon come to treat one another like ferocious beasts, always ready to surprise and to devour one another; whilst by charity man becomes to man like a second Providence, by the good offices he renders him.

My brethren, if we would all love one another, what a happy change would soon take place in the world! How compassionate would the rich be to the poor! How honest and obliging would the poor be to the rich! What peace and good order would reign in families, in parishes, and communities. There would be an end of all disorders, divisions, and hatreds, which so often bring on terrible catastrophes and even threaten to overthrow society! Whence arises that dissatisfaction which exists today more than ever in society, that violent antagonism between the poor and the rich, those mutterings of discontent and that rumbling of a strife that threatens to subvert society? It is because there is no longer any charity among men. People have become selfish, each one seeks only his own interest, and envies all that are above him in rank and fortune, and men are not ashamed to employ the most unjust means to elevate and to enrich themselves at the expense of others. Show me a country, a parish, a family where charity reigns and you will see that there is neither trouble, nor discord, nor theft, nor slander. Peace reigns supreme therein, and the members have a foretaste of paradise. How happy and peaceful men would be, if everybody would practice charity!

II The Voice of Grace. — We are not only rational and social beings, but we are also Christians, brothers of Jesus Christ, and members of the same holy Church. What a powerful motive for union and mutual love. Behold, says the apostle St. Paul to the Romans, the different members which compose the human body; how anxious they are to assist one another! When one of them is suffering, how all the others feel uneasy, how they exert themselves, as if they were anxious to assist it! When you happen to get a pin in the foot, says St. Augustine, the eye quickly tries to discover it, the back bends down, and the hand makes efforts to tear it out. When somebody wounds you in any part of the body, the tongue cries out: You hurt me. It does not say: You hurt my foot or my hand, but: You hurt me; showing the intimate union which reigns among the various members of the body.

So, also, are we all members of the mystic body of Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ we should sympathize with the miseries of one another, assist one another in our needs, and love one another with the most sincere and most efficacious love. Look at our divine Saviour, our chief and our model, and see what wonderful examples He has given us of this charity during His whole mortal life. Was there ever a man that loved his fellowmen as Jesus Christ loved us? Follow Him in all the circumstances of His hidden life, as well as of His public life, study Him in all His words and in all His actions, and you will see that His every word and action was dictated by the most tender charity. I shall not enter into detail about all that He did in favor of men, to relieve them in their evils and to do them good. I would have to quote the entire Gospel; let it be sufficient to remind you of the stable of Bethlehem and of Calvary. What more could He do to show us His love? Now, my brethren, should not the disciple follow in the footsteps of his Master? And how can we flatter ourselves to be disciples of Jesus Christ, if, instead of this fraternal love and this sympathizing charity with which the whole Gospel breathes, we have for our brethren only indifference, hatred or contempt?

III. The Formal Precept Which God Has Given Us. — If there is in the Gospel a positive and fundamental law, it is certainly the law of charity. One day a Doctor of the Law asked our divine Saviour which was the greatest precept of the Law, and He answered: *Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength. This is the greatest and the first commandment. and the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* (Matt. XXII, 37-39). During His whole lifetime, Jesus Christ often reminded His disciples of this obligation; but in order that it should never be effaced from their memory, He returns to it again on the eve of His death, and in that wonderful discourse which He made at the Last Supper, and which we may regard as His last will, He said to them: My children, my little children, *filioli mei*, I am going to leave you. But before I separate Myself from you, I wish to give you a new commandment, which is to love one another, as I have loved you (John XV., 12). Why does Jesus Christ call this commandment new? It is not new, indeed, as to the substance, because it dates not only from the law of Moses, but from the very origin of the world; but it is because Jesus Christ asks of us a more perfect love than that which had been prescribed until then. In another place He adds that it is not only a new precept which He wishes to give them, but it is *His* precept: *This is my commandment.* As if He were saying to them that this is His whole law, and that all the other obligations which He imposes on them can be reduced to the one: To love one another as He has loved us, *That you love one another as I have loved you* (John XIII., 34).

And in order that there may not be the least doubt about His words, and to make us understand the importance He attaches to this commandment, He adds, in the same place, that it is by this mark, that it is by this fraternal love that

everybody will know whether we are His disciples. By this shall know all men that you are my disciples (John XIII., 35). It is not, says St. Augustine, by the power of driving out devils, or raising the dead to life, or by working the greatest miracles, that Christians will be known, but they will be known by fraternal charity. Our Saviour wished that charity should be the distinctive character of the Christian, the mark by which everybody could recognize His true followers.

How, then, can we doubt the necessity of fraternal charity, and how can one believe himself to be a Christian if he does not love his neighbor? Consider the life of the early Christians, instructed in the school of the Saviour; what peace, what union, what charity! There was never among them the least hatred, the least discord; never any lawsuits nor litigations; even poverty was unknown among them, because those who had goods shared them with those that had none. In a word, the Acts of the Apostles tell us that *they had but one heart and one soul* (Acts. IV., 32). Even the pagans, those sworn enemies of the Christian religion, were astonished and amazed at the charity which reigned among the Christians: *Behold how they love one another*, they said, thus rendering involuntarily testimony to the word of our divine Master, who had said: *By this shall aid men know that you are my disciples*.

How, then, can any one call himself a Christian if he has no charity? You, hateful and revengeful spirits, who never let pass an occasion to injure your neighbor, can you call yourselves Christians? And you, unjust retainers of another's goods; you, indefatigable litigants, going to court for the most trivial causes; you, men without heart, and you who let the poor die of hunger or cold rather than assist them, can you say that you are the disciples of a God who died a victim of love for us? Can you claim to be members of a religion whose distinctive mark is charity and benevolence? No, you are not Christians, and if you continue to walk in your evil ways, you cannot expect to share one day in the rewards of Jesus Christ.

My brethren, it is related in Church history, that the Apostle St. John, while living at Ephesus and being unable to walk, on account of his great age, caused himself to be carried into the church on the arms of his disciples, and not having the strength to make long discourses to them, he contented himself with saying: *"My children, my little children, love one another."* And when his disciples, somewhat tired of hearing him always repeat the same thing, remonstrated with him, he made to them the beautiful answer: *"I always repeat this to you, and this alone, because it is the precept of the Lord, and it alone is sufficient, provided it is well observed."* Neither can I, my brethren, repeat these words too often: love one another. Charity, the Gospel, behold the abridgment of the Christian religion! Without charity all the rest is useless; I would deem myself happy, if I had convinced you of the absolute necessity of charity, especially if I could win you to practice it always. Oh, how happy the parish, how happy the family would be, if charity reigned triumphant! O God, if there is any desire in my heart, it is that charity may reign among this little flock entrusted to my care, which I love with my whole heart, and to which I desire to consecrate my cares and my life! Amen.

THIRD INSTRUCTION

ON CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR (*Concluded*)

IN THE last instruction I demonstrated the necessity of fraternal charity; today, I am going to show you its practice. Our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself taught us this when He said: *This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you* (John XV., 12). Jesus Christ loved us to the extent of suffering and dying for us; our charity must, therefore, be sincere and efficacious. Jesus Christ loved us solely for our salvation; our charity must, therefore, be pure and holy. Jesus Christ loved us all and without exception, because He suffered and died for all men; our charity must, therefore, be universal.

I. Our charity must be *Sincere and Efficacious*. *Let us not love in word, nor in tongue*, says the apostle St. John, *but in deed and in truth* (John III., 18). Our Lord says, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (Matt. V. 43). The love we bear to ourselves must, therefore, be the measure of the love we bear to our neighbor. We must wish and do to others what we desire that others should wish and do to us. "Therefore, let us examine," says St. Augustine, "how we love ourselves and from this let us conclude how much we should love our neighbor." Everyone loves himself, and no one likes to hear others speak ill of him; let us, therefore, never speak ill of our neighbor. Everyone wishes to raise himself to honor and fortune, to succeed in his affairs; let us, therefore, not be jealous of the honor, the fortune, and

the success of others. Everyone wishes to have his faults tenderly dealt with, to be consoled in affliction and to be helped in sickness and want; let us, therefore, do to our neighbor what we wish that he should do to us.

If charity consisted only in words, or in protestations of compassion and love then, indeed, there was never a century more charitable than ours. But we must come to actions. We must make sacrifices to relieve the unfortunate, to give bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked. We must not stop at words of pity. Our actions must demonstrate our charity, else we lay ourselves open to the charge that we love our neighbor with our lips, but our heart is far from him. It is easy to love our neighbor in words, but the true test of charity lies in the sacrifice of our goods, our pleasures, and ease and comfort for the sake of the unfortunate. Charity in words is mere egotism. Like the Jews of whom the Gospel speaks, who seeing a man lying by the road, covered with wounds and half-dead, and seeing him passed by, so do we often remain insensible to the miseries of others. Ah! my brethren, let us imitate the good Samaritan, let us prove by works that we love our neighbor as ourselves, and let us treat him as we would wish to be treated !

II. Charity must be *Pure and Holy*. What motives have we to love our neighbor as ourselves? We are all children of the same father who is God, members of the same body which is the Church, and because Jesus Christ, our Head, commands us to do so. Therefore, we must love all in God and for God's sake. The natural affection which we feel for certain persons, on account of their character or physical or moral qualities, is not charity. This attachment may be good, but it has its dangers. "*Would it not be loving for hell,*" says St. Chrysostom, "*if one would love another only with evil intentions and wicked designs?*" Religion does not disapprove the human affection which one has for his parents, benefactors, and friends. It is a law which God has implanted in our hearts. But that natural affection, without relation to the Creator, is not what religion prescribes. To love our neighbor only with a natural and interested love would be loving him as the pagans do, and there would be no merit. "The true Christian," says St. Francis of Sales, "loves God in his neighbor, and his neighbor in God." He loves God in his neighbor, because he refers to the Creator all the affections he has for the creature, and because he loves his neighbor only on account of God. He loves his neighbor in God and for God, that is for the salvation of his soul, and because God wills it.

This is that pure and holy charity, that sacred fire which Jesus Christ came to bring upon earth. How beautiful and precious it is, and what blessings it would procure us, if we would practice it according to the example of the Saviour! But alas! where are they who truly love their neighbor? Some love, because nature inclines them to love, and their heart can no more be without love than the sun can be without heat and light. Some love only those whose character and opinions agree with their own, or those who do them good, or who are able to help them. Some love their companion in pleasure, or the accomplices in crime. They damn the souls of others they love, while damning their own. What strange charity! Is this the love commanded by the Gospel? And are not those scandals and disorders that we see all around us, those quarrels, those family dissensions, the fruit of a perverted and criminal love? Young people of both sexes be careful never to permit the fire of impure love be enkindled in your hearts.

III. Charity must be *Universal*. Such was the charity of our divine Saviour. He loved poor and rich, pagans and Jews; those who persecuted Him as well as those who loved Him. He suffered and died for all men. He wants us to imitate His example and love all men without distinction of character, country, condition, and even of religion. He wishes that we love the stranger, as we love our nearest and dearest neighbor, Jews, Mohammedans, and heretics, just as we love the members of our own true Church. *Thou shalt love thy neighbor*, says Christ. He excepts nobody, not even our enemy. *You have heard*, says the Saviour, *that it had been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father that is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and ruineth upon the just and unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also heathen do this?* (Matt. V., 43-47). If, then, we desire to be true Christians, we must love all our fellowmen, without distinction. And if there were in the world only one single person, whom we did not love, we would not have charity. But you may say: How can I love those who, far from loving me, seek, on the contrary, to injure me in every possible manner? I know that the love of our enemy is something very difficult. Perhaps it is the most difficult precept of the entire Gospel. But God commands it and we must obey. But, you may say, to love my enemy I must pardon him; and if I

pardon him I will be looked upon as a coward. No, my dear brother, do not believe this; on the contrary, you will be only the more respected and esteemed by all good people, for there is no greater victory, no victory more honorable than the victory over self. In the Lord's Prayer you say: "*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*" But if you do not pardon, why do you ask to be pardoned? And by asking God to treat you as you treat your neighbor, you ask Him not to pardon you. You cannot recite this prayer without condemning yourselves. In temptations to anger or revenge, look on the crucifix. Think of Christ on the cross. Can you call yourselves the disciples of a God who pardoned His very executioners and prayed for them on the cross, if you cannot forgive an injury, or even an unkind word? O cross of my Saviour, what hatreds and wraths hast Thy remembrance extinguished? It was the cross which disarmed John Gualbert, when, having met his enemy unarmed and alone in the forest, he was about to revenge himself for the murder of one of his relatives. After this victory over himself, God rewarded him with such extraordinary graces, that he became a great saint. It was the cross that caused the tomahawk to fall from the hands of a savage at the moment when he was going to strike the holy bishop of Bardstown, Monseigneur Flaget. This pious missionary uncovered his breast and showed to the Indian his crucifix, saying: "Behold the image of Him who died for you on the cross; strike, if you dare!" Instantly the savage fell at the feet of the holy bishop and asked to be baptized.

Imitate these beautiful examples and pardon your enemies, not once but "seventy times seven times," in the words of our Saviour, that is, always. Do not content yourselves with pardoning your enemy in your heart, but go and reconcile yourselves with him, salute him, speak with him when he desires to speak with you.

Has your charity all the marks of true Christian love? Charity must be *sincere and efficacious*. Do you give to the poor according to your means; do you bear with patience the faults of others., Charity must be *pure and holy*. Do you love everybody in God and for God's sake, or do you nourish at the bottom of your heart an impure and criminal affection? Charity must be universal. Do you harbor hatred against any one? Do you love everyone as you love yourselves? Do you wish to everyone the same good which you desire for yourselves?

St. Paul enumerates the qualities of true charity: Charity is patient and full of kindness; it envies not; it is not puffed up, it is not evil, rejoices not in inequity, but rejoices with the truth; it bears all things, believes all things, helps all things, and endures all things. (I. Cor. XIII., 4-7).

May God grant that your charity be such, and that after having been united by the bonds of an intimate charity here on earth, you may love one another in a happy eternity. Amen.
