



March 2, 1845

4th Sunday of Lent

On the means of sharing in the virtues that others practice, through the charity that one rejoices in them, regarding this saying from the previous evening in the refectory: “Whoever receives the righteous as righteous receives the reward of the righteous, and whoever receives the prophet as a prophet receives the reward of a prophet,”¹ by explaining this saying of Scripture, “Charity is not envious, it does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.”²

” The merit of all virtues lies in charity; he who rejoices in the honor rendered to the King of Heaven by the righteous and the prophet, and who honors and receives Him³ because of his love for God, bears witness to a pure and charitable love of the glory and honor of God, which makes him worthy of the reward of the righteous, all the more so since it is more difficult for fallen man to love the glory of God in others, and he⁴ is more inclined to envy and jealousy, to discouragement, to sadness when he sees himself surpassed.

This teaching is greatly necessary in Religious Life, first of all⁵ because, with the great desires we should all have, it is nevertheless impossible for us to render all services to God at once; we cannot be poor and give alms, be devoted to the service of souls and be very solitary, remain in our homes observing our Rule and go on missions to convert souls and suffer martyrdom, etc. But we can rejoice in the good works that others do, honor them in them, participate in them through charity, and we will have the merit through the effect of the Communion of Saints and the strength of charity. ⁶, and from this must come love, esteem, and honor for all religious institutions that work to do a good different from our own, and also for those that do the same good, especially if they do it better; which is why we must fight against the nature that would not rejoice in being surpassed even for the glory of God and in a work that concerns it so little as its service, and [we must also] be wary of the pretexts that we give ourselves for not wishing others to succeed perfectly, for not rejoicing in it and not contributing to it.

2. This teaching is still necessary among us so that we may rejoice in the advancement of our Sisters and so that we may peacefully see ourselves as poorer in virtue than any of them, taking our joy in the glory they render to our common Master and thereby resisting even the temptation to rejoice as we are all too inclined to do when we perceive that others have our cowardly inclinations, that they make our mistakes, or that they are more Imperfect even as we are, “[Charity] does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth”; truth is justice. Now, between us, this should be all the more so the closer the Community of merits, and if we are faithful to Religion—that is, careful to contribute our share to preserving the regularity and good spirit of observance, if we are united by devotion and charity to our Sisters and to the work they do—

Religion, like a good mother, will share with us all their merits. A third disposition for receiving assuredly a share in the highest merits of others is, along with charity which maintains unity⁸, with zeal for observance and work which maintains the Community itself in which these merits occur, spiritual poverty which, by dispossessing us of what is ours, gives us a right to what is of others'.

1. Mt 10:41.
2. 2 Cor 13:6.
3. “and the prophet...” “and receives him”: an addition.
4. First draft: “would like more.”
5. The first one seems to have been added during proofreading.
6. First draft: “2nd,” crossed out and moved to a later section.
7. 2 Cor 13, 6.
8. 1st draft: “self-denial, religious observance”, crossed out.