**I. Restoration to the Divine image in which we were made is only possible by our imitation of God's will**

If, dearly beloved, we comprehend faithfully and wisely the beginning of our creation, we shall find that man was made in God's image, to the end that he might imitate his Creator, and that our race attains its highest natural dignity, by the form of the Divine goodness being reflected in us, as in a mirror. And assuredly to this form the Saviour's [grace](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06689a.htm) is daily restoring us, so long as that which, in the first [Adam](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01129a.htm) fell, is raised up again in the second. And the [cause](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03459a.htm) of our restoration is naught else but the mercy of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), Whom we should not have loved, unless He had first loved us, and dispelled the darkness of our [ignorance](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07648a.htm) by the light of His [truth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm). And the Lord foretelling this by the [holy](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07386a.htm) Isaiah says, I will bring the blind into a way that they [knew](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) not, and will make them walk in paths which they were [ignorant](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07648a.htm) of. I will turn darkness into light for them, and the crooked into the straight. These words will I do for them, and not forsake them. And again he says, I was found by them that sought Me not, and openly appeared to them that asked not for Me. And the Apostle John teaches us how this has been fulfilled, when he says, We [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) that the [Son of God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14142b.htm) has come, and has given us an understanding, that we may [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) Him that is [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm), and may be in Him that is [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm), even His Son , and again, let us therefore [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), because He first loved us. Thus it is that [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), by loving us, restores us to His image, and, in order that He may find in us the form of His goodness, He gives us that whereby we ourselves too may do the work that He does, kindling that is the lamps of our minds, and inflaming us with the fire of His [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm), that we may [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) not only Himself, but also whatever He loves. For if between men that is the lasting friendship which is based upon similarity of character notwithstanding that such identity of wills is often directed to [wicked](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05649a.htm) ends, how ought we to yearn and strive to differ in nothing from what is pleasing to [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm). Of which the [prophet](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12477a.htm) speaks, for [wrath](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01489a.htm) is in His indignation, and life in His pleasure , because we shall not otherwise attain the dignity of the Divine Majesty, unless we imitate His [will](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15624a.htm).

II. We must love both God and our neighbour, and our neighbour must be interpreted in its widest sense

And so, when the Lord says, You shall [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) the Lord your [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), from all your heart and from all your [mind](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10321a.htm): and you shall [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) your neighbour as yourself [Matthew 22:37, 39](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat022.htm#verse37), let the faithful [soul](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14153a.htm) put on the unfading [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) of its Author and Ruler, and subject itself also entirely to His [will](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15624a.htm) in Whose works and judgments [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) [justice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08571c.htm) and tender-hearted compassion never fail. For although a man be wearied out with labours and many misfortunes, there is [good](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06636b.htm) reason for him to endure all in the [knowledge](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) that adversity will either prove him good or make him better. But this godly [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) cannot be perfect unless a [man](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09580c.htm) [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) his neighbour also. Under which name must be included not only those who are connected with us by friendship or neighbourhood, but absolutely all [men](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09580c.htm), with whom we have a common nature, whether they be foes or allies, slaves or free. For the One Maker fashioned us, the One Creator breathed life into us; we all enjoy the same sky and air, the same days and nights, and, though some be good, others bad, some righteous, others unrighteous, yet God is bountiful to all, kind to all, as [Paul](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11567b.htm) and [Barnabas](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02300a.htm) said to the Lycaonians concerning God's Providence, who in generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left Himself not without [witness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15677a.htm), doing them good, giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and [gladness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07131b.htm). But the wide extent of [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) [grace](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06689a.htm) has given us yet greater reasons for loving our neighbour, which, reaching to all parts of the whole world, looks down on no one, and teaches that no one is to be neglected. And full rightly does He command us to [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) our enemies, and to [pray](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm) to Him for our persecutors, who, daily grafting shoots of the wild olive from among all nations upon the [holy](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07386a.htm) branches of His own olive, makes men reconciled instead of enemies, adopted sons instead of strangers, just instead of ungodly, that every knee may bow of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things under the earth, and every tongue confess that the [Lord Jesus Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) is in the [glory](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06585a.htm) of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) the Father [Philippians 2:10-11](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/phi002.htm#verse10) .

III. We must be thankful, and show our thankfulness for what we have received, whether much or little

Accordingly, as God wishes us to be good, because He is [good](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06636b.htm), none of His judgments ought to displease us. For not to give Him thanks in all things, what else is it but to blame Him in some degree. Man's folly too often dares to murmur against his Creator, not only in time of want, but also in time of plenty, so that, when something is not supplied, he complains, and when certain things are in abundance he is ungrateful. The lord of rich harvests thought scorn of his well-filled garners, and groaned over his abundant grape-gathering: he did not give thanks for the size of the crop, but complained of its poorness. And if the ground has been less prolific than its wont in the seed it has reared, and the vines and the olives have failed in their supply of fruit, the year is accused, the elements blamed, neither the air nor the sky is spared, whereas nothing better befits and reassures the faithful and godly [disciples](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05029a.htm) of Truth than the persistent and unwearied lifting of praise to [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), as says the Apostle, Rejoice always, [pray](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm) without ceasing: in all things give thanks. For this is the [will](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15624a.htm) of [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) in Christ Jesus in all things for you [1 Thessalonians 5:16](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1th005.htm#verse16) . But how shall we be partakers of this devotion, unless vicissitudes of fortune train our minds in constancy, so that the [love](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm) directed towards God may not be puffed up in prosperity nor faint in adversity. Let that which pleases [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), please us too. Let us [rejoice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07131b.htm) in whatever measure of gifts He gives. Let him who has used great possessions well, use small ones also well. Plenty and scarcity may be equally for our good, and even in spiritual progress we shall not be cast down at the smallness of the results, if our minds become not dry and barren. Let that spring from the soil of our heart, which the earth gave not. To him that fails not in good will, means to give are ever supplied. Therefore, dearly beloved, in all works of godliness let us use what each year gives us, and let not seasons of difficulty hinder our [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) benevolence. The Lord [knows](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) how to replenish the [widow's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15617c.htm) vessels, which her [pious](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12748a.htm) deed of hospitality has emptied: He [knows](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) how to turn water into wine: He [knows](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) how to satisfy 5,000 hungry [persons](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11726a.htm) with a few loaves. And He who is fed in His poor, can multiply when He takes what He increased when He gave.

IV. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three comprehensive duties of a Christian

But there are three things which most belong to religious actions, namely [prayer](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm), [fasting](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05789c.htm), and almsgiving, in the exercising of which while every time is accepted, yet that ought to be more [zealously](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15753a.htm) observed, which we have received as hallowed by tradition from the [apostles](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01626c.htm): even as this tenth month brings round again to us the opportunity when according to the ancient practice we may give more diligent heed to those three things of which I have spoken. For by [prayer](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm) we seek to propitiate [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), by [fasting](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05789c.htm) we extinguish the [lusts](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09438a.htm) of the flesh, by [alms](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01328f.htm) we redeem our [sins](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14004b.htm): and at the same time God's image is throughout renewed in us, if we are always ready to praise Him, unfailingly intent on our purification and unceasingly active in cherishing our neighbour. This threefold round of duty, dearly beloved, brings all other [virtues](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15472a.htm) into action: it attains to God's image and likeness and unites us inseparably with the [Holy Spirit](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07409a.htm). Because in [prayer](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm) [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm) remains steadfast, in [fastings](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05789c.htm) life remains innocent, in almsgiving the mind remains kind. On Wednesday and Friday therefore let us fast: and on Saturday let us keep vigil with the most blessed Apostle Peter, who will deign to aid our supplications and fast and [alms](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01328f.htm) with his own [prayers](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm) through [our Lord Jesus Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm), who with the Father and the [Holy Ghost](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07409a.htm) lives and reigns for ever and ever. [Amen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01407b.htm).

**I. The prosperous must show forth their thankfulness to God, by liberality to the poor and needy**

The transcendent power of God's [grace](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06689a.htm), dearly beloved, is indeed daily effecting in [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) hearts the transference of our every desire from earthly to heavenly things. But this present life also is passed through the Creator's aid and sustained by His [providence](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12510a.htm), because He who promises things [eternal](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05551b.htm) is also the Supplier of things temporal. As therefore we ought to give [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) thanks for the hope of future [happiness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07131b.htm) towards which we run by [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm), because He raises us up to a perception of the [happiness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07131b.htm) in store for us, so for those things also which we receive in the course of every year, God should be honoured and praised, who having from the beginning given fertility to the earth and laid down [laws](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09053a.htm) of bearing fruit for every germ and seed, will never forsake his own decrees but will as Creator ever continue His kind administration of the things that He has made. Whatever therefore the cornfields, the vineyards and the olive groves have borne for man's purposes, all this God in His bounteous goodness has produced: for under the varying condition of the elements He has mercifully aided the uncertain toils of the husbandmen so that wind, and rain, cold and heat, day and night might serve our needs. For men's methods would not have sufficed to give effect to their works, had not God given the increase to their wonted plantings and waterings. And hence it is but godly and just that we too should help others with that which the Heavenly Father has mercifully bestowed on us. For there are full many, who have no fields, no vineyards, no olive-groves, whose wants we must provide out of the store which [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm) has given, that they too with us may bless God for the richness of the earth and [rejoice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07131b.htm) at its possessors having received things which they have shared also with the poor and the stranger. That garner is blessed and most worthy that all fruits should increase manifold in it, from which the hunger of the needy and the weak is satisfied from which the wants of the stranger are relieved, from which the desire of the sick is gratified. For these men God has in His [justice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08571c.htm) permitted to be afflicted with various troubles, that He might both crown the wretched for their patience and the merciful for their loving-kindness.

II. Almsgiving and fasting are the most essential aids to prayer

And while all seasons are opportune for this duty, beloved, yet this present season is specially suitable and appropriate, at which our [holy](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07386a.htm) fathers, being Divinely inspired, sanctioned the Fast of the tenth month, that when all the ingathering of the crops was complete, we might dedicate to God our reasonable service of abstinence, and each might remember so to use his abundance as to be more abstinent in himself and more open-handed towards the poor. For forgiveness of [sins](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14004b.htm) is most efficaciously [prayed](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm) for with almsgiving and [fasting](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05789c.htm), and supplications that are winged by such aids mount swiftly to God's ears: since as it is written, the merciful man does good to his own [soul](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14153a.htm) [Proverbs 11:17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/pro011.htm#verse17), and nothing is so much a man's own as that which he spends on his neighbour. For that part of his material possessions with which he ministers to the needy, is transformed into [eternal](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05551b.htm) riches, and such [wealth](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15571a.htm) is begotten of this bountifulness as can never be diminished or in any way destroyed, for blessed are the merciful, for God shall have mercy on them [Matthew 5:7](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat005.htm#verse7), and He Himself shall be their chief Reward, who is the Model of His own command.

III. Christians' pious activity has so enraged Satan that he has multiplied heresies to wreak them harm

But at all these acts of godliness, dearly-beloved, which commend us more and more to [God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608a.htm), there is no [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm) that our enemy, who is so eager and so skilled in harming us, is aroused with keener stings of [hatred](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07149b.htm), that under a false profession of the [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) name he may corrupt those whom he is not allowed to attack with open and bloody [persecutions](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11703a.htm), and for this work he has [heretics](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm) in his service whom he has led astray from the catholic Faith, subjected to himself, and forced under various [errors](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm) to serve in his camp. And as for the deception of primitive man he used the services of a serpent, so to mislead the minds of the upright he has armed these men's tongues with the poison of his falsehoods. But these treacherous designs, dearly beloved, with a shepherd's care, and so far as the Lord vouchsafes His aid, we will defeat. And taking heed lest any of the [holy](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07386a.htm) flock should perish, we admonish you with fatherly warnings to keep aloof from the lying lips and the deceitful tongue from which the [prophet](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12477a.htm) asks that his [soul](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14153a.htm) should be delivered ; because their words, as says the blessed Apostle, do creep as does a gangrene [2 Timothy 2:17](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2ti002.htm#verse17) . They creep in humbly, they arrest softly, they bind gently, they slay secretly. For they come, as the Saviour foretold, in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves [Matthew 7:15](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat007.htm#verse15); because they could not deceive the [true](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm) and simple sheep, unless they covered their bestial rage with the name of [Christ](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm). But in them all he is at work who, though he is really the enemy of enlightenment, transforms himself into an [angel](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01476d.htm) of light [2 Corinthians 11:14](http://www.newadvent.org/bible/2co011.htm#verse14) . His is the craft which inspires [Basilides](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02326a.htm); his the ingenuity which worked in [Marcion](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09645c.htm); he is the leader under whom Sabellius acted; he the author of Photinus' headlong fall, his the authority and his the spirit which [Arius](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01718a.htm) and Eunomius served: in fine under his command and authority the whole herd of such wild beasts has separated from the unity of the [Church](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm) and severed connection with the Truth.

IV. Of all heresies Manicheism is the worst and foullest

But while he retains this ever-varying supremacy over all the [heresies](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm), yet he has built his citadel upon the [madness](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08041a.htm) of the Manichees, and found in them the most spacious court in which to strut and boast himself: for there he possesses not one form of misbelief only, but a general compound of all [errors](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm) and ungodlinesses. For all that is [idolatrous](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07636a.htm) in the [heathen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11388a.htm), all that is blind in carnal [Jews](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08399a.htm), all that is unlawful in the secrets of the magic art, all finally that is profane and [blasphemous](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02595a.htm) in all the [heresies](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm) is gathered together with all manner of filth in these men as if in a cesspool. And hence it is too long a matter to describe all their ungodlinesses: for the number of the charges against them exceeds my supply of words. It will be sufficient to indicate a few instances, that you may, from what you hear, conjecture what from modesty we omit. In the matter of their [rites](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13064b.htm), however, which are as indecent morally as they are religiously, we cannot keep silence about that which the Lord has been pleased to reveal to our inquiries, lest any one should think we have trusted in this thing to vague rumours and uncertain opinions. And so with [bishops](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm) and [presbyters](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm) sitting beside me, and [Christian](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm) nobles assembled in the same place, we ordered their elect men and [women](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm) to be brought before us. And when they had made many disclosures concerning their perverse tenets and their mode of conducting festivals, they revealed this story of utter depravity also, which I blush to describe but which has been so carefully investigated that no grounds for [doubt](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm) are left for the incredulous or for cavillers. For there were present all the [persons](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11726a.htm) by which the unutterable crime had been perpetrated, to wit a girl at most ten years old, and two [women](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm) who had nursed her and prepared her for this outrage. There was also present the stripling who had outraged her, and the [bishop](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm), who had arranged their horrible crime. All these made one and the same confession, and a tale of such foul orgies was disclosed as our ears could scarcely bear. And lest by plainer speaking we offend chaste ears, the account of the proceedings shall suffice, in which it is most fully shown that in that [sect](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13674a.htm) no modesty, no sense of [honour](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07462a.htm), no [chastity](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03637d.htm) whatever is found: for their law is [falsehood](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05781a.htm), their religion the [devil](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04764a.htm), their [sacrifice](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm) immorality.

V. Every one should abjure such men, and give all the information they possess about them to the authorities

And so, dearly beloved, renounce all friendship with these men who are utterly abominable and pestilential, and whom disturbances in other districts have brought in great numbers to the city : and you [women](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm) especially refrain from acquaintance and intercourse with such men, lest while your ears are charmed unawares by their fabulous stories, you fall into the [devil's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04764a.htm) noose, who, [knowing](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) that he seduced the first man by the [woman's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm) mouth, and drove all [men](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09580c.htm) from the bliss of paradise through feminine credulity, still lies in watch for your sex with more confident craft that he may rob both of their [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm) and of their modesty those whom he has been able to ensnare by the servants of his falseness. This, too, dearly beloved, I entreat and admonish you loyally to inform us , if any of you [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) where they dwell, where they teach, whose houses they frequent, and in whose company they take rest: because it is of little avail to any one that through the [Holy Ghost's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07409a.htm) protection he is not caught by them himself, if he takes no action when he [knows](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm) that others are being caught. Against common enemies for the common safety all alike should exercise the same vigilance lest from one member's wound other members also be injured, and they that think such men should not be given up, in Christ's judgment be found guilty for their silence even though they are not contaminated by their approval.

VI. Zeal in rooting out heresy will make other pious duties more acceptable

Display then a [holy](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07386a.htm) [zeal](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15753a.htm) of religious vigilance, and let all the faithful rise in one body against these savage enemies of their [souls](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14153a.htm). For the merciful God has delivered a certain portion of our noxious foes into our hands in order that by revelation of the danger the utmost caution might be aroused. Let not what has been done suffice, but let us persevere in searching them out: and by God's aid the result will be not only the continuance in safety of those who still stand, but also the recovery from [error](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm) of many who have been deceived by the [devil's](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04764a.htm) seduction. And the [prayers](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12345b.htm), and [alms](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01328f.htm), and [fasts](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05789c.htm) that you offer to the merciful God shall be the holier for this very devotion, when this deed of [faith](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05752c.htm) also is added to all your other godly duties. On Wednesday and Friday, therefore, let us fast, and on Saturday let us keep vigil in the presence of the most blessed Apostle Peter; who, as we experience and [know](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08673a.htm), watches unceasingly like a shepherd over the sheep entrusted to him by the Lord, and who will prevail in his entreaties that the [Church of God](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03744a.htm), which was founded by his preaching, may be free from all [error](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05525a.htm), through Christ our Lord. [Amen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01407b.htm).