

must not only pray for the love of God, but we must strive to keep the commandments. We must also use our minds to reflect and excite divine love in our souls. Hence, we should frequently think about God's infinite Perfections, which render him deserving of all our love. His infinite Goodness towards us as manifested in our Creation, Preservation, Redemption, and in all the corporal and spiritual blessings conferred upon us in this life, and in the eternal glory prepared for us in the next. These are the most powerful means of exciting the love of God in our souls.

To this love of God we must add the love of our neighbor. "This commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 Jn 4:21). Our love for our neighbor must have the same qualities as our love for ourselves. In other words, we must wish him well from our hearts. We must act towards him with kindness, and provide assistance whenever he needs it, and we are to provide it without entertaining negative thoughts; we must do for our neighbor out of love.

The love which we owe to our neighbor must extend even to our greatest enemies. We must love them for God's sake, so as to sincerely forgive all the injuries they had done against us. We must comply with command of Christ: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For

if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:43-48).

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The Christian's Rule of Life

The Catholic Religion was founded by Jesus Christ, and as the work of God, is a divine, unchangeable institution. Unlike human institutions, it does not vary with time or circumstances. Her doctrines on faith and morals are the very same now as they were when they were instituted by Jesus and his Apostles. This constant uniformity is proof that the Church is divine, and raises her above all flawed man-made Christian denominations and societies. These organizations may retain the name of Christian, but when I speak of the Christian Religion, I refer to the Religion of which Christ is the founder—that Religion which is called in the Apostles' Creed, "*The Holy Catholic Church*," and in the Nicene Creed, "*The One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church*." That Religion is essentially one.

It was foretold that men would be setting up their own opinions as revealed truths and calling them the doctrines of Christ. The founder of the Catholic Church called these men strangers, thieves, and robbers, ravaging wolves, and false prophets: "A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers" "All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them" "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." "He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees

because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. (Jn 10:5, 8, 10, 12-13). “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” (Matt 7:15); and both He and his Apostles caution us against them: “Then if any one says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, 'Lo, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out; if they say, 'Lo, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. (Matt 7:15; 24:22-26.

These are branches cut off and dead: the very date of their separation or of their origin stands against them and destroys the force of every argument, which they bring forth in their favor. Instead of proving their *own* doctrines to be true, they assert all their powers in misrepresenting Catholic teaching and then railing against these truths.

It may be said that from the fall of Adam there has been only one true Religion. Before the coming of Christ all hope of salvation was through the merits of the promised Redeemer (Acts 4:12). The Prophets all foretold him. Judaism prefigured him and expressed the most ardent desires of his coming. Hence, the Catholic Religion may be said to have existed from the beginning. Christ as its founder, by fulfilling the prophecies and substituting the *reality* in place of the ancient types and figures: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the

prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt 5:17).

After a lapse of more than 4000 years, Jesus the Christ lays the foundation of our Religion by calling together his twelve Apostles (Lk 6:13-16), of whom he makes Saint Peter the head (Matt 16:18-19). He taught them the mysteries of salvation and the most sublime maxims of morality. He confirmed his teaching by miracles, for at his word, the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead rise again (Matt 9:3-5). All nature is obedient to His voice!

After his death and resurrection he gave full power and commission to His Apostles to teach his doctrines to the whole world, and to establish His Church. He enabled them to accomplish this great work, by sending the Holy Spirit to abide with them (Jn 14:16-17), and he promised to be with them till the end of time (Matt 28:20). Thus prepared and empowered the Apostles embarked upon their mission to preach and convert the nations. Entire peoples came to know and accept the faith of Christ and the Catholic Religion increased. This Religion against which the gates of hell would not prevail (Matt 16:18), has continued ever since. From this meager beginning the Catholic Religion is now known throughout the world. We should thank the providence of God for having provided for us the happiness of being members of Christ's one, true Church.

The Christian's Rule of Life

The Catholic Religion sets down the following Rule of Life:

The first thing we are bound to do by this rule is, to detest sin above all other evils, and be resolved never to commit a willful sin, for the love of God. In an effort to develop such a hatred of sin, we should reflect of the greatness of the evil of sin. We should consider that sin is the greatest of all evils because it is directly opposed to the infinite goodness and perfection, which we ought to love above all things. Also, because the consequences of sin are infinitely worse than any other evil that might befall us, for nothing else can rob us of heaven or condemn us to hell. We cannot, therefore, have too great a horror and detestation of sin.

The next thing we are required to do by the Rule of Life is to love God above all things with our whole heart. We must love him with a love of preference. We are required to prefer God's will before all else; even before our dearest friends, interests, or pleasures, or even our very life. The lack of this preference will condemn many Christians—for instances, married persons who prefer husband or wife before God, or parents, who love their children more than they love God, all those persons in every walk of life who prefer the creature before the Creator.

How are we to enliven in our hearts the love of God above all things? We must earnestly beg it of God, for as it is a pure gift, it must be sought in the most necessary means of prayer. God will not grant this precious gift of his love unless We show the sincerity and earnestness of our prayers, and by using such means as are in our power to render our petitions effectual. Therefore, we