

lusts and passions, because it will be reigning in everlasting incorruption, once the sting has been taken out of death.'

Euty chius answered that be that as it may, he still denied the possibility of the body rising again in tangible form, and he stated his views in a pamphlet. Our protracted controversy over the matter became so serious that there was every likelihood of an open rupture between us. Then the Emperor Tiberius Constantine of pious memory sent privately for us both, and asked what the quarrel between us was about. He heard the arguments of either side, and refuted Euty chius' pamphlet on the resurrection by arguments of his own, and decided that it ought to be consigned to the flames. No sooner had we left his presence than I was seized by a serious illness and Euty chius by a fatal one. When he was dead I refrained from pursuing the matter further, since practically nobody accepted his views. But while he was still alive, and I was in the grip of a violent fever, some of my friends used to visit him, and they told me that he would hold up the skin of his hand before their eyes and say, 'I confess that we will all rise again in this flesh'.



### GAMALIEL

*We have great pleasure in introducing Gamaliel to our readers, to answer, as far as he can, any questions they may wish to put on matters of doctrine, Bible, liturgy, prayer, morals. We hope that he will be answering readers' questions regularly, if not perhaps quite every month, from now on. All questions that are not answered in our pages will receive a personal reply. The identity of questioners will be concealed under fictitious names, initials, or soubriquets. Questions should be addressed to Gamaliel, c/o the Editor, THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, Rugeley, Staffs.*

Q. I have always been baffled by a homily of St Ambrose, in the Dominican breviary, on one of the gospels for a feast of many martyrs; the gospel is the beatitudes from Luke vi. St Ambrose compares St Luke's four beatitudes with St Matthew's eight, and says that the latter in his eight 'has unlocked a mystical number.

For many psalms are written *pro octava*: and you receive the command to give a part to those eight, perhaps blessings. For just as *octava* is the perfection of our hope, so *octava* is the sum of virtues.' What *does* this mean? As far as I am concerned, the mystical number is locked up more securely than ever.

O.P.

A. The Benedictine editors of St Ambrose's works agree with you that 'a more than Cimmerian darkness enshrouds this passage'. Let us take it piecemeal.

(a) 'Many psalms are written *pro octava*.' He is referring to the titles of some of the psalms, e.g. Ps. vi, whose title, as Ambrose's version would have had it, runs: 'To the end, in songs, a psalm of David, for the octave'. This last phrase was possibly some musical rubric. Ambrose probably interpreted it as meaning, mystically, 'for the eighth day'.

(b) 'The command to give a part to those eight, perhaps blessings.' He is alluding to Ecclesiastes xi, 2. The whole passage runs: 'Cast your bread on the surface of the water, because after many days you will find it. Give a part to seven, and indeed to eight, because you do not know what evil there will be on the earth.' What the Preacher is actually saying, according to some commentators, is: 'Be ready to take risks, but don't put all your eggs in one basket'. Ambrose tentatively interprets him as saying mystically: 'Live up to the eight beatitudes'; *fortasse benedictionibus* should be translated 'perhaps beatitudes'.

(c) The conclusion, 'For just as *octava* is the perfection of our hope, so *octava* is the sum of virtue'. Ambrose is in a tradition that goes right back to the New Testament (see 1 Peter iii, 20, 2 Peter ii, 5 for oblique allusions to it), when he interprets the number 8, and especially the eighth day, as standing for the resurrection, for the consummation of all things, for eternity. The reason is not far to seek; our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week, which is also the eighth because it fulfils the seventh day sabbath of the old dispensation. St Ambrose then seems to be saying something like this: 'It is generally agreed that 8 stands for our hope of resurrection; hence those psalms written "for the eighth day" (the psalms were assumed to be nearly all written in the name of Christ). But 8 also has a mystical moral significance, exemplified obscurely by Ecclesiastes and plainly by St Matthew.'

It stands for the perfection of virtues whose practice will bring us to the perfection of our hope, namely to the resurrection.'

Q. A friend of mine who is totally blind complains to me every year when October devotions come round, that for a whole month they prevent her from *hearing* mass. Since we have been continually encouraged by Rome to take an active part in the mass, there would seem to be a contradiction here. Is there in fact any reasonable answer to my friend's objection against the public recitation of the rosary during mass? I am told there has been some recent pronouncement about simultaneous offices. Is that so?

PASTOR PERPLEXUS

A. It would seem that in this matter a genuine conflict of laws has come about. First in the field were Pope Leo XIII's encyclicals on the rosary. The Pope prescribed that the rosary and the complementary prayers of the devotions were to be recited during October at benediction. Wherever the blessed Sacrament was not reserved, or for other good reasons could not be exposed for veneration, the rosary and prayers were to be recited at mass. We should remember that in those days evening services were very much better attended, and that the Pope was providing for the recitation of these prayers at mass instead of at benediction very much as an exceptional arrangement. It seems unlikely that he ever envisaged its occurrence on a Sunday or a holiday of obligation.

His zeal for the rosary has been emulated by his successors, not least by Pius XII. But the late Pope also went further than any of his predecessors in promoting the active participation of the faithful in the mass. None the less Leo XIII's prescriptions were not modified, and there is no denying that the situation has been growing increasingly anomalous; especially as the decline in attendance at benediction has made the recitation of October devotions at mass more the rule, if anything, than the exception.

But it seems quite clear that this anomaly has now been removed by the instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on sacred music and liturgy, which was issued in September 1958 as almost one of the last pontifical acts of Pius XII. Para. 12 of this document says plainly: 'It is not lawful to mix liturgical services and public

devotions one with the other; but if there is any reason for it, public devotions may precede or follow liturgical services' (Fr Clifford Howell's translation).

As far as I can see then, the holding of October devotions during mass is from now on to be regarded as an abuse, and your friend would have the right, perhaps even the duty, of complaining about it to the proper authorities.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### SOME REFLECTIONS ON MARRIAGE

The Editor,

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

DEAR EDITOR,

Several months ago (I have given the issue away, so don't have it to check the date) your magazine had an article—a very good one—on the similarities between divine love and human love. The last line, however, to the effect that the pleasures of divine intimacy were not usually the lot of those to whom God gave the pleasures of conjugal love, somewhat bothered me. And even though it finally occurred to me that, after all, it is not primarily pleasure that we seek in the service of God, still it seems that there was an aspect of the question left unexplored.

For the participation of human love in divine love is not limited to the reflection that human love bears to the divine in its own nature. To the extent that human love results from, and is ruled by the love of God, it participates this divine love as it is in itself, even as it is in God, in God the Father, and God the Son, spirating God the Holy Spirit. And to this very love whence, *ad intra*, proceeds the Holy Ghost and whence, *ad extra*, we ourselves proceed as creatures in the image of the Son by way of Love, parents are united when by an act of love—of God and of each other in God, overflowing to their children—they bring forth children in their own God-imprinted image. And when procreative love is thus united to the creative love of God, so that it bears not only a natural but also a supernatural similitude to the