

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of John 16: 20-33

Ver. 20.—Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Understand by this that the joy of the world will be changed into sorrow, says Rupertus. But (1.) S. Chrysostom, Cyril, Leontius, Theophylact, and others, explain this of our Lord's sufferings and death, which will cause just sorrow to you, and rejoicing to the Jews, and of His Resurrection on the third day, at which the Jews will be sorrowful, and full of indignation at My victory over them. But in a secondary sense He intended to signify the like sufferings they would have to endure for His sake. Whence (2.) S. Augustine, Bede, and Maldonatus explain of the sufferings which the Apostles would have to undergo in preaching the faith (at which the world will rejoice), and of the eternal blessedness they would afterwards enjoy with Him.

Morally. Holy Scripture frequently teaches that the righteous suffer adversities in this life, and that the ungodly exult in their prosperity. (See Job xxi. 9; Ps. lxxxiii. 2; Jer. xii; Hab. iii.) Daily experience teaches us the same. But Scripture teaches us also that the

tempest overwhelm him, Christ everywhere beholdeth His soldier, and if he dies in persecution for the honour of His name, He gives Him the reward He has promised He will give in the resurrection." And also in the Treatise *de Mortal.*, "He who is a soldier of God, who, stationed in the heavenly camp, is already hoping for things above, should recognise what He is, in order that there may not be any trepidation or faltering in us at the storms and tempests of the world. For the Lord foretold that these things should come to pass, instructing and teaching us beforehand by His word of encouragement, and preparing and strengthening us to meet them." And he says (*Epist. i. ad Cornelium*): "That the soldiers of Christ cannot be conquered, though they can die, and that they are unconquered because they are not afraid to die." And the Confessors, too, who were in prison and destined to martyrdom, wrote thus touchingly to S. Cyprian, as the encourager of Martyrs:—"What more glorious or what more happy can be granted to any man by Divine favour, than fearlessly to confess the Lord God in the midst of his murderers, and that while the various and exquisite torments of the secular power are raging, even with a racked, tortured, and mangled body, to confess Christ the Son of God with his departing but still free spirit? having broken through all worldly hindrances, to present himself before God freed from them all,—than to win the heavenly kingdom without delay, than to become a fellow-sufferer with Christ by suffering in His Name?" And so too S. Chrysostom, when his banishment was in debate, addressed to his people eleven discourses, beginning thus:—"Many are the floods, and huge the waves, but I fear not drowning, for I stand on the rock. But what think they? Lest I should fear death, to whom to live is Christ and to die is gain? lest I should be afraid of exile, though I know that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof? or the proscription of my goods, though I know that I brought nothing into the world, neither can I take anything out? The terrors of the world—I despise them; its pleasures—I deride them. I desire not riches, I dread not poverty, I fear not death."

godly are happy and the wicked are sorrowful at their death; see Luke vi. 25; S. James v. 2, 3; and Rom. viii. 18. "It is difficult (says S. Jerome, *Epist. xxxiv.*), nay, impossible, for any one to enjoy his good things both here and hereafter, to fill his belly here, and his soul there, to pass from delight to delight, to be the first in both worlds, to appear high in glory both in heaven and earth."

Accordingly, Tertullian (*de Spect. cap. 28*), commenting with elegance and tenderness on these words, thus writes: "This is ordered in turns. Now they rejoice, we are in conflict. 'The world will rejoice; but ye will be sorrowful.' Let us mourn while the heathen rejoice, that we may rejoice when they begin to mourn; lest if we now rejoice with them, we shall then also mourn with them. Thou art over-nice, O Christian, if thou desirest pleasure in this world; also most foolish, if thou considerest it pleasure." And again, Pray tell me, cannot we live without pleasure, since we must die without it? For what else is our wish than that of the Apostles, to depart out of the world, and to be received with the Lord? This is our pleasure, as it is also our desire." He goes on, "What greater pleasure than the loathing of pleasure, than contempt of the world, than true liberty, than a pure conscience, than sufficiency of life, than no dread of death, than trampling down the gods of the heathen, than casting out devils, than working cures, than living to God? These are the pleasures of Christians, holy, ever abiding, free, &c. Bestir thyself at the signal of God, awake at the trump of the angel, glory in the palms of martyrdom. Behold uncleanness cast down by chastity, unbelief slain by faith, cruelty beaten by mercy, wantonness overshadowed by modesty. Such are the contests in which we are crowned." And again, "What is that exultation of angels, what the glory of the rising saints, what hereafter the kingdom of righteousness, what the city of the New Jerusalem?" Isaiah graphically describes this (*lxv. 14*).

Hence S. Cecilia, who ever bare the Gospel of Christ in her bosom, and also preached it, converted Tiburtius and others. And she inculcated this first of all: Seek not the fleeting joy of this life, in order that ye may obtain the eternal joy of that life which follows after. In this ye will live but a short time, in that ye will live for ever. And when the Prefect Almachius said that she was foolish in despising the joys of this world and embracing the hard and austere life of Christians, her husband Valerian replied, "The time will come when we shall receive a thousand-fold the fruits of our affliction, and they who are now elated with joy will weep when we are rejoicing." This is the time of sowing. They therefore who sow tears in this life will in that blessed and eternal life reap everlasting joy.

Lastly, S. Cyprian in his treatise *De Mortalitate* (the Pestilence), chap. 3, says:—"If to see Christ is to rejoice, and our joy cannot be, unless we see Him, what blindness is it, what madness, to love the sufferings, the pains and tears of the world, and not rather to hasten to that joy which cannot be taken from us?"

Ver. 21.—*A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.* As hoping that the child will be a support and credit to her in this life, and will succeed her after her death. For since men cannot themselves live for ever, they hope in a sense to live in their children. A queen rejoices in her first-born as having borne a king. This illustration is most apposite. For Christ compares His death to child-birth, and His resurrection to the joy after child-birth. For Christ suffered anguish and tortures like a woman in child-birth, but when He saw Himself rising again through the merit of His death, and knew that we should in like manner rise again, He greatly rejoiced Himself, and inspired the Apostles and all the faithful with great joy. For He brought them forth as His children, by dying for them on the Cross. So S. Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, Euthymius. You may apply this also to the persecutions and sufferings of the Apostles and faithful in this life, and to their joy and exultation at the Resurrection.

A man-child. “Because,” as says S. Augustine (*in loc.*), “the joy is wont to be greater when a boy is born, to signify mystically that the faithful ought to be of a masculine mind both in doing and suffering, for they are called to the contemplation of heavenly things, and even to take heaven by storm, not to the softness of this world,” as says *Gloss. inter.* Moreover, this man-child is afterwards called “a man” to signify the Resurrection of Christ, for by His resurrection Christ, as it were, is born again, not as a child, but as a perfect man. So S. Chrysostom says: By saying a *man* He simply suggests His own Resurrection, and our own blessedness after death; further, says Alcuin, “we shall be born into eternal life.” Whence Bede says, “It ought not to seem a strange thing, if he who departs out of this life is said to be ‘born.’ For as he who comes forth from his mother’s womb into this light, so is he who is freed from the bonds of the flesh raised up to eternal life. Hence the solemnities of the Saints are said to be their birthdays, not their burials.”

Moreover, the sorrow of the disciples is rightly compared to that of a woman in travail: (1.) Because both are painful, and the pain is greater at the birth of a boy. (2.) Because they are short. (3.) And perilous. (4.) Both turned into joy, the one by the birth of a child, the other by the Resurrection of Christ and His followers. So S. Cyril. (5.) As the same child is the cause of pain in being born, and of joy afterwards, so Christ also caused great pain to the disciples by His death, and great joy by His Resurrection. (6.) The joy in either case is surpassing and very great, and swallows up all the preceding pain.

Ver. 22.—*And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, &c.* This is the application of the parable, points out its scope and profitable teaching. He compares the two cases, of a woman in child-birth and the Apostles, both in the present suffering and the subsequent joys. Your joy will remain for ever. For I shall rise glorious and immortal, I shall die no more. I shall be present to aid you in all your persecutions and afflictions; I will make you superior to all adversities, and at last crown you with a glorious martyrdom, and raise you to heavenly and eternal joys which no one will take from you. Christ then speaks first of the joy of the Apostles at His own Resurrection, and secondarily of their own

waiting for any others.

I am not alone. I say not this for My own sake, but for your sake. I need not your protection, as I have the Almighty Father with Me.

Ver. 33.—*These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.* The things I said before (ver. 5, and ch. xvi. 18 and 19). That ye might trust confidently in Me, with a mind calm and tranquil, unmoved, and unterrified by the waves of persecution.

In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. I have begun to overcome it, by My holy Life and heavenly doctrines, but I will now fully and completely overcome it by My Passion and Death. Be confident then, that as I have overcome it, so will ye overcome it if ye persevere in faith and love. If therefore ye abide in Me, ye also, by My example, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, which I will give you, will overcome the world; *i.e.*, all the hatred, persecutions, &c., of the Jews (see 1 John v.). Understand by the world, the prince of the world, and all other adversaries of Christ. So Toletus, Ribera, and others. Be assured then, under every worldly trial, that I have overcome the world, not for Myself but for your sakes I have overcome, that ye might overcome, that I might give you a rule and pattern, that I might obtain from God the grace of victory for you. Contend therefore resolutely, because I will contend in you, and overcome in you, by making you conquerors. For, as S. Augustine says here, He would not have overcome the world, if the world were to conquer His members.

Montanus, and his fellow-martyrs, the disciples of S. Cyprian, trusting in these words were strengthened by them, and exulted in their dark and gloomy prison; for they said, “Where the temptation is great, there is He, the Greater One, who overcomes it in us, and there is no contest in which, by the protection of the Lord, there is not victory.” See their Acts in Surius, Feb. 24. And S. Cyprian himself (*Ep. ad. Fortunatum*) says, “If any one, keeping the commands of the Lord, and boldly cleaving to Christ, has stood against the adversary, he must needs be conqueror, for Christ is unconquerable.” Also in Epist. to Donatus, “He can seek for nothing from the world who is above the world.” And again (Epist. to people of Thibaris), *e.g.* “The Christian soldier, instructed by His precepts and warnings, trembles not at the battle, but is ready for the Crown.” And just before, “The Lord wished we should rejoice in persecutions, because when they come, then the crowns of faith are given, the soldiers of God are proved, the heavens are opened to martyrs.” And again, “He is not alone, whose companion in flight is Christ, who keeping the temple of God, wherever he may be, is not without God. And should a robber assault him when flying in solitude, or on the mountains, or a wild beast attack, or hunger, or thirst, or cold afflict, or when hastening over the sea storm and

with some great and wonderful man, gains thereby great benefit, how much more does he who holds perpetual converse with God?" For "prayer" (as he says elsewhere) "is a talking with God, which makes man a kind of familiar angel with God." See his book "De orando Deum," and Climacus (gradu xxviii), where he gives many excellent testimonies in favour of prayer, and adds, "Prayer is a kind of holy tyranny over God," for it compels Him, as it were, to grant those things which are asked for.

Ver. 28.—*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father.* I came forth, not by birth of the Virgin, as Jansen maintains, but by My Eternal Generation from the Father. So say the Fathers. Listen to S. Augustine (*in loc.*), "He came forth from the Father, because He is of the Father, and He came into the world, because He showed to the world the Body which He took of the Virgin." And Cyril, "To have come forth from the Father, is nothing else than to have been born, and to have shone forth from the Substance of the Father by that going forth by which He is, and is thus understood to be as in proper subsistence." Euthymius, "I came forth from the Father, signifies that He is of the Substance of the Father, or by every right the Son of the Father." So also Bede, S. Thomas, Lyranus, Ribera, Toletus, and others. This will be more clear from verse 30. And so, too, it is said "they came forth from the Joins of their father" (Heb. vii. 10; and Is. xxxix. 7). To go forth from the Father is the same as being begotten of Him.

Ver. 29.—*His disciples say unto Him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly and speakest no proverb:* we now clearly understand that which we did not comprehend before. For Thou spakest obscurely, "A little while, and ye shall not see Me," &c. But now thou explainest it clearly.

Ver. 30.—*Now we know that Thou knowest all things.* "From our seeing and hearing that Thou understandest our secret thoughts, our doubts, and our desires to understand the meaning of Thy words, for Thou hast anticipated our questionings, and hast of Thine own accord cleared up our doubts. And for this cause we believe the more firmly that Thou art in truth the Son of God, and 183 begotten by Him, because Thou knowest all things, and seest the secrets of hearts; which is the property of God." So Cyril; or as Toletus says, "This alone is sufficient to make us believe that Thou camest forth from God, because Thou discoverest our secret thoughts, and makest answer to, them. And if other arguments (many as they are) were wanting, this alone would suffice to make us believe in Thee."

Ver. 31.—*Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?*

Ver. 32.—*Behold the hour cometh; yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.* This first clause is read either as a question (with Theophylact, Euthymius, Jansenius, and others) or as an affirmation. The meaning is the same in either case. Do ye believe? But ye will soon show how little and feeble is your faith. Or else, Ye now have faith in Me, but much feebler than you think, for you will flee away, and leave Me. Each of you hastening away to the place which is nearest, and none of you

resurrection and happiness, which is brought forth by the labour and pain of this life, as a child by the pain of child-birth. S. Cyprian (ad Demetrium) [chap. xi.] excellently says, "A man whose whole glory and happiness is in the world, suffers punishment by worldly misfortunes. He weeps and groans if evil befall him in this world, who cannot fare well when life is past. Whose pleasure is all enjoyed in this life, whose consolations all end here, whose frail and brief life counts upon having some sweetness and pleasure here. But when they go hence, pain and sorrow alone await them. But they whose hopes rest on future blessings, feel no pain at the assaults of present ills. In a word, we are not astounded, or crushed, or grieved by adversities. We murmur not at any disaster, or bodily weakness; living in the Spirit more than in the flesh, we triumph over the weakness of our body by the strength of our mind." And just below: "There flourishes among us the strength of hope, and the steadfastness of faith, and even among the ruins of a falling world our mind is erect, our resolution unmoved, our patience is ever full of joy, and our soul ever rests secure on its God."

Ye have sorrow. Ye are sorrowful on account of My departure and by death, and after My death ye will be sorrowful on account of your impending persecutions and crosses. "And so also will other believers be full of sorrow, who through tears and sufferings are striving after eternal joys," says Alcuin. Moreover, as S. Augustine observes on these sufferings, "we are not sorrowful without joy, but as the Apostle says (Rom. xii. 12) "rejoicing in hope," for the travailing woman to whom we are compared, is gladdened more at the child who is about to be born, than saddened by her present pangs."

Tropologically. The mind of a penitent sinner, and also the mind of a righteous man, when thinking on martyrdom, entrance into "religion," or any other difficult and heroic work, is like a woman in her pangs, because he strives with great pain and labour to bring His conversion, martyrdom, or entrance into religion, to the birth. Read S. Augustine (Conf. viii. 8), where he records with what great effort he brought to the birth his purpose of a new life. As Isaiah says (chap. xxvi. 17.) But yet this travailing causes great joy. But the ungodly in like manner bring their evil deeds to the birth with great labour and pain, which turns into the torments of hell at last. See Isaiah lix. 4; Ps. vii. 14; Wisd. v. 7, and elsewhere.

Again, a preacher, a confessor, or any one else who strives to win souls to God, does it with great travail. Whence S. Gregory (*Moral.* xxx. 9) compares such an one to a labouring hind, which with great difficulty brings forth her young, and bellows through pain. Explaining Job xxxix. 1. Few persons think what labour is displayed in the preaching of the Fathers. With what pangs, with what efforts in faith and conversation, do they bring forth souls. How do they look round with careful observation, so as to be *bold* in their directions, compassionate in infirmities, gentle in their exhortations,

humble in displaying authority, resolute in contempt of earthly things, unbending in enduring hardships, and yet weak in not ascribing their strength to themselves. How pained for those that fall, how anxious for those that still stand, with what fervour they strive to attain to more, with what fear to keep fast what they have already attained to.

And your joy no man will take from you. “Because Christ, who dieth no more, is their joy” (*Gloss Inter.*) And that will be more true in heaven. Hence S. Augustine (*in loc.*), “Nor will any end suffice, save that of which there is no end.”

Ver. 23.—*And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing.* The word *ἐζωπήσατε* signifies either, *ye will ask Me no questions*, or *ye will ask Me for nothing*, make no request.

1. S. Cyril explains it in the first sense: There will be no need to ask Me anything, when I have risen and sent the Holy Spirit. For I by my rising, and He by His coming, will teach you all things which concern your office. They had in their ignorance asked Him many things: ‘Whither goest Thou?’ ‘How can we know the way?’ ‘Show us the Father.’ ‘Why dost Thou manifest Thyself to us, and not unto the world?’ see chap. xiv. 5, 8, 2 2. And here too as to the meaning of the words ‘a little while.’ He fittingly replies, the Holy Spirit will so enlighten you, that ye will have no need to ask questions, as ye did before.” So also Euthymius.

2. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 78), Theophylact, Ribera, and others explain it thus, “After My Resurrection ye will have no need to pray to Me, ye will have only to ask the Father in My name. This is supported by what next follows.”

3. S. Augustine combines both these explanations, and refers to the day of heavenly glory. “He was asked by the disciples,” he says, “when He would restore the kingdom to Israel. He was asked by S. Stephen to receive his spirit. I therefore think that what He here says must be referred to the time when we shall see Him as He is, when nothing will remain to be desired, no secret will have to be inquired about.”

Verily, Verily, I say unto you (I most surely promise you, S. Augustine says, “I swear,” regarding the words as an oath, *whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.* This is a fresh consolation of the Apostles, a fresh instruction given by Christ that they should use His aid, though absent, to obtain all that they needed from the Father, viz., by asking in His Name. Be not distressed at My absence. For I solemnly promise that the Father will give whatever ye ask in My Name. Ye used to ask everything from Me. I am going away, and I put the Father in My place. What ye used to ask of Me, ask now of the Father. He will as readily, as lovingly, and as fully, hear and understand you as I used to do. And object not to the absence or the distance, the Father being in heaven, and you on earth. For the Father is on earth also (since He is everywhere). Nay, He is within you, in your mind and soul, and that not merely by His essence, presence, and power, but also by His Grace. For your soul is His abode and temple, in which He desires to be praised, worshipped, and invoked by you. Therefore invoke Him there as most familiarly and intimately present, and He will hear you then.

Each word is emphatically said. —

another Comforter.” But now there will be no need of My praying, for I shall soon send the Holy Spirit, who will teach you to pray to God in My Name with such great earnestness, that the Father will grant you all things at your prayer, and therefore ye will not then need such prayers as I offered to God when present with you. Hence some Fathers think that Christ does not pray for us in Heaven with prayers, properly so called, but merely by presenting His wounds to the Father. (*See Vasquez, par. iii. tome1, Quæst.* 21). But it is more probable that Christ does pray for us in heaven with prayers properly so called, as I have explained in Rom. viii. 24. Christ means that His earthly presence was not needed in order to pray for them as He used to do.

Ver. 27.—*For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me.* He first loveth us, in calling and urging, us sinners to repentance and love of Him. And we then begin to love Him, and He then pours into us charity and justifying grace, making us His sons and friends. Hence it is clear that charity is the bond between God and man for it causes us to love God, and God in turn to love us, as a friend loves a friend and is loved by him in return.

And have believed that I came forth from God: that is, that I am the Son of God, sent by Him into the world for your and others’ salvation. But you will say: “If God loves us, why does not He give of His own accord those things He knows we need, but wishes to be asked?”

(1.) Because the reverend Majesty of God demands of us that we should reverence Him by our prayers, and testify that we need His bounty, and that no one can relieve our wants but Himself. We owe to Him the tribute of our prayers.

(2.) The state of man requires us to acknowledge that we depend on Him, are fostered and protected by Him, and that in all things we need His aid and bounty. “Nay, let him openly confess,” says S. Augustine, “that he is God’s mendicant. Let him humble himself before Him, and with *bended neck* beg from Him what he needs.”

(3.) The greatness of the thing asked for demands it. For we ask of God grace and glory, and there is nothing more excellent than these. God wishes us therefore to buy them by prayer, as it were by a price, that we may value them the more, and carefully preserve them. See S. Basil (*Conat. Monast.* chap. ii.)

(4.) The utility and the excellence of prayer demands it. For therein we exercise, 1. Faith, in believing that God is Almighty, All-wise, and Most Good. 2. Hope, for we hope that He will give as all things necessary for this life and the next. 3. Love, whereby we as children ask all these things from a most loving Father. S. Chrysostom says thus on Ps. iv., “Prayer is no slight bond of our love towards God: for it accustoms us to speak to Him, and leads us on to the study of wisdom. For if he who holds much converse

compunction, the man gave himself to prayer, watching and fasting, and obtained deliverance from his temptation. Those who are tempted should therefore co-operate with those who are praying for them, in order that they may be heard. Just as a sick man should co-operate with his physician, in order to his cure. But if he refuses to do so, all the labour of the physician is useless.

Ver. 24.—*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name.* Because ye have trusted in My presence, have asked all things of Me in person, and I have gained them from My Father. But now, as I am about to leave you, I refer you to My Father, that ye may obtain from him all that ye require, through the intervention of My Name. For though the Apostles cast out devils, &c., in Christ's Name, yet they did so by asking help from Him who was present with them.

Ask, and ye shall receive. Because I have obtained this from the Father by My merits. Be not sorrowful at My departure, for He will give you greater things than I have ever given, if invoked in My Name. So Euthymius, Maldonatus, &c.

That your joy may be full.

(1.) S. Augustine (*in loc.*) explains thus, "Ask of God to comfort you in My absence, and to confer on you fulness of joy in eternal happiness."

(2.) S. Cyril. If ye ask of God, He will give you the fulness of joy, namely, remission of sins and plenteous grace.

(3.) The word "that" signifies the effect and result of your prayers. Ye will rejoice at My Resurrection, but in order to perfect your joy, ask of the Father in My Name all the graces ye need, so that by obtaining them from the Father ye may have fullness of joy, and wish for nothing more in this life. So Ribera, Toletus, Jansenius, and others. This is the true meaning.

Ver. 25.—*These things have I spoken to you in proverbs; but the cometh when I shall no longer speak unto you in proverbs, but shall show you plainly of the Father.* I said (Preface to Prov.) that a proverb, parable, and adage often meant the same thing, viz, some occult, obscure, and mysterious saying, though it does not contain a parable. This is the meaning here. What I have said about "a little while," "the Holy Spirit," "My departure to the Father," "your joy," &c., seems to you now obscure and enigmatical. But you will soon have full experience of them, both by My own teaching in the forty days, when I shall make known to you the meaning of Holy Scripture (Acts i. 3), and more fully by the Holy Spirit, whom I will send to you at Pentecost, to teach you clearly and distinctly the mysteries of the faith, and to inflame you with the love of them. So S. Augustine, Bede, Maldonatus, and others. S. Gregory (*Moral.* xxx. 5) refers this promise to the state of blessedness in heaven, for there it will be most abundantly fulfilled, when we shall see God face to face.

Ver. 26.—*In that day ye shall ask in My Name; and I say not unto you that I shall pray the Father for you.* I said (xiv. 16), "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you

1.) I promise you, because ye are My intimates, My disciples and Apostles, whom I specially love, that I will have a special care of you, and provide for you in everything. And this is said through the Apostles to the faithful in every age, as represented by them.

(2.) *Whatsoever*, that is, which is profitable for you, and for the honour of God. "Something which is something, and not a mere nothing," (*Gloss Inter.*) And as S. Augustine says (*in loc.*), "something, which is not 'nothing' in comparison with the Blessed Life." He therefore who asks for anything unlawful or hurtful is not heard. And though we may ask for things temporal, as health, wealth, &c., yet ye ought to ask them for a good purpose, that by them we may the more please God, and perform more good works.

(3.) We should ask in a proper manner: that is, humbly, reverently, confidently, ardently, perseveringly.

(4.) *The Father*, as sons asking a father, for He loves you supremely with fatherly affection.

(5.) "*In My Name*," by Me and My merits, not your own.

(6.) "*He shall give it you*," surely and certainly, if ye ask aright.

In My Name. Plead this with the Father, and it will obtain everything. "He sets forth the virtue of His Name" (says S. Chrysostom), "for when He is merely 'named' before the Father, He worketh marvellous things. Think not that ye will be left; My Name will give you full confidence."

But what is it to ask in the Name of Christ? S. Gregory (*Hom.* xxvii.) tells us "Jesus is the Name of the Son. It means Saviour. He therefore asks in the Name of the Saviour, who asks that which pertains to real salvation, for if that is asked which is not expedient, it is not asked in Christ's Name. The Lord therefore says to the Apostles, who were still weak in the faith, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name, because ye know not how to seek for eternal salvation. And hence it is that S. Paul was not heard, because if he had been freed from temptation it would not have profited him" (2 Cor. xii.) And further on, "Weigh well your petitions; see if ye ask in the Name of Jesus. For ye seek not Jesus, in the house of Jesus, if in the temple of eternity ye pray importunately for temporal things; for a wife, a house, clothing, or food." And S. Augustine. "A thing is not asked in the Name of the Saviour, if it be asked contrary to the purpose of salvation; and he who thinks of Christ what he ought not to think of the only Son of God, does not ask in His Name. But he who asks as he ought receives when he ought to receive. For some things are not denied but deferred, in order that they may be given at a fitting time." So Bede, Rupert, and S. Thomas. All this is quite true, not literally but symbolically.

2d. S. Cyril, and after him Jansenius, say more literally, "He speaks in My Name who so speaks that Christ may manifest Himself as the Mediator, and, together with the Father, the Giver of grace. For as God He and the

Father together confer gifts upon us, but as Mediator He presents our prayers to the Father, for He gives us boldness and confidence to approach the Father."

3d. Euthymius says "In My name" means as My people, as Christians.

4th. The genuine meaning is given by S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Toletus, and others, who say, "To ask in the Name of Christ is to ask through the merits of Christ. For He, by His death, merited for us that we should obtain whatever we ask of God. This with respect to us is grace, with respect to Christ is but justice. His name signifies in Scripture His strength, virtue, merits, grace, dignity, and authority. To ask in the Name of Christ, is in asking to allege His merits, and to trust in them, not in our own; that God may thus look, not on our unworthiness and our sins, but upon the face of His Anointed, and for His holiness and merits grant us that which we do not deserve. Christ therefore points here not merely to God, but to God Incarnate, and obedient as far as unto the death of the Cross. For He merited for us, that the Father should hear our prayers. And thus the Church ends all her prayers 'through our Lord Jesus Christ.'" The Jews, in like manner, used to pray through the merits of Abraham, &c. We through the merits of Christ, which infinitely surpass theirs.

Fifthly, Ribera explains thus, "Ask as sent by Me, as though I through you ask this of the Father. Ask not as though it were to be given to you, but to Me, as a king makes request to the Pontiff through his legate, and as the brethren of Joseph prayed him for their father's sake to forgive their iniquity, as though He had taken it upon himself, and demanded that it should be forgiven. In like manner Christ confers on us His merits, the authority and grace which He has with the Father, that we may ask the Father through them."

Again, to ask in the name of Christ, is to ask those things which He wishes and desires to be given us, those namely which concern the salvation of the soul. Hence such a prayer is effectual, and is heard by God. And so too the prayers which many use, "O Lord, give me that which my Lord Christ desires to be in me, which He wishes to be given me, for which He prayed when dying on the Cross, and entreated should be given me: again, what the Blessed Virgin wishes for me, and asks for me, for she greatly longs for my salvation, and knows better than myself what is best for me." This is a pious meaning of the words, but the fourth is more literal, and to the point.

He will give it you. But you will say, 'We find that many ask of God, and obtain not; how then can this be said?' I answer, The reason they obtain not, is because they ask not the things which they ought, nor in the way they ought. As S. James says (iv. 3). For many affirmative propositions in Scripture require certain conditions. And prayer requires:

- (1.) Humility and reverence, and therefore he who has it not, but prays proudly and presumptuously, like the Pharisee, gains nothing.
- (2.) It requires contrition for sin, so that he who prays may be, or may heartily wish to

be, a friend of God. Sinners therefore, wilfully persisting in sin, are not heard by God. Dost thou wish God to hear thee? Do thou first obey His will, and so God will do thy will, and fulfil thy desires. See Isa. i. 15.

(3.) It requires great faith and confidence that we shall obtain what we ask for through the merits of Christ. This confidence many have not, and therefore they obtain not (James i. 6). Hence S. Basil (*Constit. Monast. cap. ii*) assigns the reason for our not being heard, "Thou hast not asked rightly, for thou askedst either with doubting, or when engaged on something else."

(4.) It requires perseverance (see Luke xi. 7 and 8). S. Augustine (Tract. lxxiii.) rightly observes, "God occasionally refuses what we ask for, because this is more expedient for our salvation and His glory: God therefore hears us, not according to our wishes, but as it is best for our salvation. And thus He hearkened not to S. Paul when he prayed to be delivered from the thorn in the flesh, because it was more profitable to him, to humble him, and that he might continually struggle with and overcome it." See 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Give it you. Hence S. Augustine (*in loc.*) thinks that the result of prayer is promised only when we pray for ourselves, but not when we pray for others; for, says he, "The Saints are heard for themselves, not for all. For it is said, 'I will give it you.'" But S. Basil (*Reg. brevior, 261*), Toletus, and others, more correctly, and in a more liberal sense, think that the promise holds good, whether we pray for ourselves or for others. For God gives us that which He gives to others for whom we pray. When we pray, He gives us the fruit of our prayer. And this more accords with the very bountiful beneficence of God. Besides, to pray for others, is a work of greater charity, especially if we pray for our enemies. And such a prayer as this is wont to be heard, as Christ was heard in behalf of His crucifiers, and S. Stephen when praying for Saul. S. Gregory (*Hom. xxvii.*) gives the reason: "The virtue," he says, "of true prayer is the very sublimest charity. And a man obtains that which he rightly asks for, when his mind is not darkened when he prays, even by hatred of his enemy. But we often overcome the reluctance of our mind to pray, when we pray for our enemies."

Moreover, when occasionally we are not heard when we pray for others, it is either our own fault, or the fault of them for whom we pray, who by their sloth or evil disposition render themselves unworthy of the grace of God, and at times rail against Him, and despise His call.

There is an instance in the Lives of the Fathers. A certain man tempted with the spirit of lust, asked the prayers of a holy anchorite, that he might obtain deliverance. He prayed again and again, but to no purpose. When he wondered at this, God replied, He does not deserve to be heard, because by lazily cherishing obscene thoughts and trifling with them, he is the cause of his own temptation. The anchorite told him this, and then, moved with