



THE SENSE OF THE SACRED

Part 1

The flight from the world, the love of solitude and prayer, and the delicacy of conscience cannot but produce another important virtue similar to them: the sense of the sacred.

Religion is the exercise of everything related to worshipping and reverence for the Lord and the things related (consecrated) to Him. That which makes these practices virtuous is the spirit, which we call the sense of the sacred, i.e., the affection & esteem that a person has for God, the way he manifests it and the end for which he does it. The priest has the sense of the sacred if he loves God in his heart, esteems and practices external honouring of God with due respect and veneration, with the only aim of giving the Lord due homage and honour.

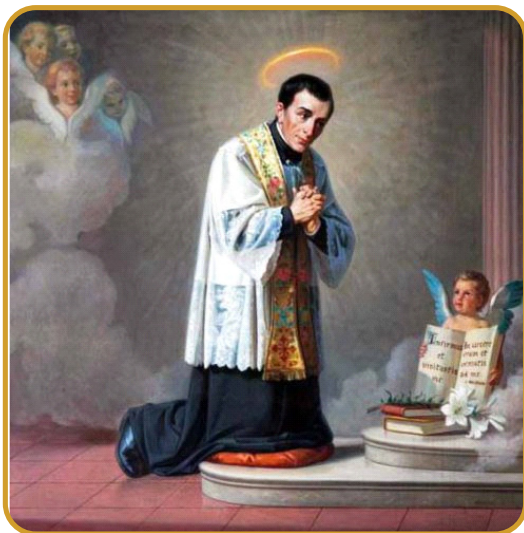
We will see three things:

- The importance of the sense of the sacred in the Priest.
- How does the priest manifest the 'sense of the sacred'?
- The dangers and evils that will befall the priest who neglects it.

We consider the priest's day in the Church, at home, and in sacred functions to show that in all these, he can do immense good if he has a sense of the sacred or causes great evil if he does not.

● IT'S IMPORTANCE

The priest who does not relish the practices of worship of the Lord and who does it out of compulsion; who, finding himself there, does not put in that commitment, that seriousness & decorum which is required by those sacred functions; who avoids them when he is not strictly obliged; does not have the sense of the sacred. These priests are like majestic columns that adorn mansions. They give beauty and grandeur to the mansions. They appear capable of supporting any weight, but it is not so! Go near and touch them, and the sound immediately reveals they are hollow! Some priests are like these columns: they appear to be strong pillars supporting the grand edifice of the Church with their preaching, administration of the Sacraments, example,



solemn conduct of sacred functions, attendance to the retreat, and prayer, ... but it is all merely an outward show because they do not have that spirit which is proper to their vocation. They do not produce any fruit and are often scandalous! And why? All a show! They appear to be good priests; they dress like priests, and they take their place in functions, but in their hearts, they are empty. They are empty of that spirit which gives life and value to external actions. They are empty and devoid of that love and esteem for their ministry. Observe them as to how they perform their duties: what dissipation, what light-headedness, what haste, what confusion! Rather than inspiring love and respect, it will only give rise to aversion to our ministry. It cannot be otherwise in a priest who lacks the sense of the sacred.

A priest who lacks a sense of sacredness is like a servant who lacks the desire or inclination to serve his master. In fact, he feels the burden of it, does not pay attention to what is helpful to his master, does not respect him, does not love him, and does not care to please him! He works only when duty calls him, and he does it badly and rudely, which displeases the master!

The priest who does not have the sense of the sacred behaves in the following way:

- If you tell him not to celebrate Mass in a hurry but with seriousness and decorum, he will reply, saying that the Lord wants the heart and not an outward show!
- If you tell him to be more decent and modest and show greater veneration in the functions, he will reply that we should not have scruples because everyone does that way!
- If you tell him to do some work, he will reply that he cannot because he has no time or that he is not obliged to, or he will ask, 'How much will you pay me?'

Until they are filled with this spirit, all attempts prove useless. They don't change. They remain the same.

● THE MEANS TO APPROPRIATE

The sense of the sacred is essential for the priest. But how is it to be appropriated? First and foremost, the priest should have a correct notion of his priesthood: that he is and that he has to be different from others; that priesthood is one of stress, sacrifice and reserve; that the priest should flee from the world; that the priest should love solitude and prayer. In this way, he will certainly be filled with the spirit of his state and the sense of the sacred.

Where and when will the sense of the sacred shine? The Church is the main place where due worship is given to the Lord. The main ways this worship is given are the sacred functions and practices established and approved by the Church. This is the material object of the sense of the sacred, which is so proper to the priest: So, the priest should love and respect the sacred places (the Church); love and reverence the liturgical functions; love and esteem the practices of piety promoted and recommended by the Church. The sense of the sacred consists in these.

(To be concluded in the next issue)