

1945

*Retreat at Solesmes during holy week from
26 March-2 April, 1945*

Thoughts and resolutions

(1) He that trusted in God shall never fare the worse. The events of my life during the last three months are a constant source of amazement and confusion to me. I have had to renew very frequently my good resolution not to preoccupy myself with my future or try to obtain anything for myself!

Here I am now, transported from Istanbul to Paris, with the initial difficulties of introduction overcome, I hope successfully. Once again my motto Oboedientia et Pax has brought a blessing. All this is a good reason for mortifying myself and seeking a more profound humility and trustful confidence, in order to consecrate to the Lord, for the sanctification of my own soul and the edification of others, the years I still have to live and serve Holy Church.

(2) I must not disguise from myself the truth: I am definitely approaching old age. My mind resents this and almost rebels, for I still feel so young, eager, agile and alert. But one look in my mirror disillusioned me. This is the season of maturity; I must do more and better, reflecting that perhaps the time still granted to me for living is brief, and that I am drawing near to the gates of eternity. This thought caused Hezekiah to turn to the wall and weep. I do not weep.

(3) No, I do not weep, and I do not even desire to live my life over again, so as to do better. I entrust to the Lord's mercy whatever I have done, badly or less than well, and I look to the future, brief or long as it may be here below, because I want to make it holy and a source of holiness to others.

(4) The Divine Office! Familiarity with these Benedictine monks and taking part in their liturgical services during Holy Week has given me new and greater fervour in reading my Breviary. Now that I have found a study for myself near the chapel, I shall always say my I Tours in the chapel, saying Matins the evening or the night before, and following the monastic rules about rising and remaining seated, especially at Matins. Even this external discipline of the body is an aid to spiritual recollection. I shall also make a more intense study of the Book of Psalms, in order to know and understand them more thoroughly. There is so much doctrine and so much poetry in the Psalms!

(5) In order to simplify everything I shall bear in mind the theological and cardinal virtues. The first cardinal virtue is prudence. This is what Popes, Bishops, kings and commanders have found difficult, and it is in this that they frequently fail. It is the characteristic quality of the diplomat, so I must cultivate it, with particular care. Every evening I must examine myself strictly on this point. My ready tongue often betrays me into saying far too much. Beware, beware! Know how to preserve silence, how to speak, with moderation, how to refrain from judging people and their attitudes, except when this is an obligation imposed by Superiors, or for grave reasons.

On every occasion say less rather than more and always be afraid of saying too much, remembering St Isidore of Seville's praise of St Fulgentius. And be particularly careful to preserve charity. This is my Rule.

1947

*Retreat, 8-13 December, 1947. Paris, Clamart, at
Villa Manresa, the House of the Jesuit Fathers'*

Thoughts and resolutions

(1) Thus is the end of my third year as Nuncio in France. The sense of my unworthiness keeps me in good company: it makes me put all my trust in God. The fact that I live constantly under obedience also gives me courage and banishes all fear. The Lord has pledged himself to help me. I bless him and thank him: "his praise shall always be in my mouth."

(2) I have returned to the Exercises followed by the common, according to the old method. There are about thirty of us here, mostly secular priests, a few religious, perhaps one missionary. The preacher is a young Jesuit, Father de Soras, an assistant in Catholic Action, intelligent and full of zeal. Good doctrine, expounded in an interesting way, but quite modern in construction, speech and imagery. I made my confession to him, covering the period from my Easter retreat at Solesmes March, 1945, until now. I feel content and encouraged.

(3) As regards my life, the central thought of these days is of my death, which is perhaps near, and of my preparation for it. Now that I am in my sixty-seventh year, anything may happen. This morning, 12 December, I celebrated Mass for 'the grace of a good death'. In the afternoon, while adoring the Blessed Sacrament, I recited the penitential psalms together with the Litany, and also the prayers for the departing soul.

I think this is a good devotional practice. I shall make frequent use of it. This rendering myself familiar with the thought of death will lessen and soften the shock when my hour comes.

(4) In view of this I have revised my will, which was drawn up in the 1930s, and needs to be adapted to the new circumstances of my family at Sotto il Monte. The Lord sees my detachment, in a spirit of absolute poverty, from the things of this world. If there is anything left it will be given to the parish at home and for the poor.

(5) No temptation of honours in the world or in the Church can now affect me. I am still covered with confusion when I think of what the Holy Father has done for me, sending me to Paris. Whether I shall receive further promotion in the hierarchy or not is a matter of complete indifference to me. This gives me great peace of mind and makes it easier for me to do what I must do here, at all costs and at any risk. It will be a wise thing for me to prepare myself for some great mortification or humiliation which will be the sign of my predestination. May heaven grant it may mark the beginning of real holiness in me, as was the case with those elect souls who, in the last years of their lives, received the touch of grace which made them truly holy. The thought of martyrdom frightens me. I distrust my resistance to physical pain. And yet, if I could bear Jesus the witness of my blood, oh what grace and what glory in heaven for me!

(6) I am fairly pleased with my devotional practices which bring me near to God. After having skimmed through the doctrine of various authors, I am now quite content with the Missal, the Breviary, the Bible, The Imitation and Bossuet's Meditations sur l'Evangile. The holy liturgy and Sacred Scripture give me very rich pasture for my soul. So I am simplifying everything more and more and find it is better so. But I want to give more faithful and devout attention to the holy Eucharist, which I am blessed in being allowed to keep under my own roof, with direct access from my apartment. I shall take more pains about my visit to the Blessed Sacrament, making it more varied and attractive, with reverent and devout exercises such as the recital of the penitential psalms, the Way of the Cross, and the Office for the Dead. Are not all these contained in devotion to the holy Eucharist?

(7) I have filled my room with books which I love to read: all serious books dealing with the requirements of Catholic life. But these books are a source of distraction which often creates a disproportion between the time I must give primarily to my current affairs, to preparing reports to the Holy See and similar matters, and the time that in actual fact I spend in reading. Here a great effort is

needed and I shall set about it with all my might. What is the use of all this anxiety to read and to know, if it is detrimental to my immediate responsibilities as Apostolic Nuncio

(8) All goes well in my home. I bear with patience my own imperfections and those of my household. But I must remember St Isidore of Seville's praise of St Fulgentius, which I added to my notes of the retreat in 1942 at Istanbul. It is a wonderful passage. I select a few phrases very applicable to (in), life here in Paris and my relations with my colleagues and my servants: 'He must live at peace with his brethren and never alienate any member but above all it behoves the Bishop `to be distinguished as much by his humility as by his authority, so that he may neither cause the vices of his subordinates to flourish, through his own excessive humility, nor exercise his authority with immoderate severity'. And I shall also remember to preserve charity, `which excels all other gifts and without which all virtue is nothing'. For `charity is the safeguard of chastity too', as St Isidore insists, and above all I must pay attention to his words: `Besides all this he will preserve a perfect chastity', a chastity I want to obtain at all costs. So I shall keep a careful watch on conversation, which must be free from all rash judgments, and show no disrespect to anyone's episcopal dignity, or to our ecclesiastical Superiors, of high or low degree, on whom the Nunciature depends. Even if this costs me inner mortification and personal humiliation I am determined to succeed in this. My colleagues will understand and that will be a source of satisfaction The same with regard to the `kindness and charity' of the hospitality of the Nunciature. St Isidore says that the Bishop's house must `give shelter to all'.

(9) My own temperament and training help me to show friendliness to all and forbearance, with courtesy and patience. I will not give up this way of behaving. St Francis de Sales is my great teacher. Oh if I could really be like him, in everything! In order not to disobey the Lord's great precept, I will be ready to endure even scorn and mockery. To be `meek and lowly of heart" is still the brightest glory of a Bishop and a papal representative. I leave to everyone else the superabundant cunning and so-called skill of the diplomat, and continue to be satisfied with my own bonhomie and simplicity of feeling, word and behaviour. In the end, all turns out for the good of those who are faithful to the teaching and example of the Lord.

(10) The longer I stay in France the more I admire this great country, and the more sincerely fond I grow of `thus most noble Gallic people'. I am, however, aware of a contrast, which sometimes gives me a twinge of conscience. I am delighted to praise these dear brave Catholics of France, but I feel it is my duty, one inherent in my mission, not to conceal, through a desire to be complimentary and not to give displeasure, a certain disquiet concerning the real state of this `elder daughter of the Church' and certain obvious failings of hers. I am concerned about the practice of religion, the unsolved question of the schools, the insufficient numbers of the clergy and the spread of secularism and Communism. My plain duty in this matter may be reduced to a question of form and measure. But the Nuncio is unworthy to be considered the ear and eye of Holy Church if he simply praises and extols all he sees, including even what is painful and wrong. This means a continual watch over what I say. A gentle silence, without severity, kind words full of mercy and forbearance, will do more than statements, even if made in confidence and for a good purpose. For the rest, `there is one who discerns and judges'.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in this land which he has especially honoured and blessed, the Holy Virgin, `Queen of France', St Joseph, patron saint of diplomats and my special `light and guide', with all the saintly protectors of France, be to me a help, comfort and blessing!

1948

*Annual retreat, 23-27 November, 1945.
Benedictine monastery of the Sacred Heart at
En Calcat (Dourgne)*

Notes

(1) This as November I enter the sixty-eighth year of my age. Yesterday evening; I made my confession to the Father Prior, Germain Barbier of Auxerre My mind is at peace. I rots my small Benedictine bed I have made my preparation for a good death, reciting; very slowly the eight prayers set by Bossuet for this exercise I now consider sty life has come to its end Whatever else the Lord may scud tree, be it years or days, I shall receive as something, extra. I must often repeat the words of St Paul, and live them : 'For I have died, and my life is hid with Christ in God' (Cf. Col. 3 : 3).

(2) This state of mystical death now means more decidedly than ever, absolute detachment from all earthly tics: from myself, my own pleasures, honours, successes, material and spiritual benefits, and complete indifference to and independence of all that is not the Lord's will concerning me.

(3) During this retreat I have read over again the notes written last year when I ,was with the Jesuit Fathers at the Villa Manresa at Clamart. I find they correspond entirely to my present circumstances. It is trot necessary to repeat them. It will he enough if I re-read them every now and then, in order to, correct myself ;end tee find encouragement for further effort.

(4) The more mature I grow in years and experience the more I recognize that the surest -,way to retake myself holy and to succeed is the service of the Holy See lies in the constant effort to reduce everything, principles, aims, position, business, to the utmost simplicity and tranquility; I must always take care to strip my vines of all useless foliage and spreading tendrils, and concentrate on what is truth, justice and charity, above all charity. Any other way of behaving is nothing but affectation and self-assertion; it soon shows itself in its true colours and becomes a hindrance and a mockery.

Oh, the simplicity of the Gospel, of The Imitation of Christ, of the Little Flowers of St Francis and of the most exquisite passages in St Gregory, in his Moralia: `The simplicity of the just man is derided', and the words that follow! I enjoy these pages more and more and return to them with

joy. All the wiseacres of this world, and all the cunning minds , including those in Vatican diplomacy, cut such a poor figure in the light of the simplicity and grace shed by this great and fundamental doctrine of Jesus and his saints! This is the surest wisdom, that confounds the learning of this world and, with courtesy and true nobility, is consistent, equally Well and even better, with the loftiest achievements in the sphere of science, even of secular and social science, in accordance with the requirements of time, place and circumstance. `This is the height of philosophy, to be simple -,with prudence' , as was said by St John Chrysostom, my great patron saint of the East.

Lord Jesus, preserve in me the love and practice of this simplicity which, by keeping me humble, makes me more like you and draws and saves the souls of men.

(5) My own temperament inclines me towards compliance and a readiness to appreciate the good side of people and things, rather than to criticize and pronounce harsh judgments. This and the considerable difference in age, mine being more full of experience and profound understanding of the human heart, often make me feel painfully out of sympathy `with my entourage. Any kind of distrust or discourtesy shown to anyone, especially to the humble, poor or socially inferior, every destructive or thoughtless criticism, makes me writhe with pain. I say nothing, but my heart bleeds. These colleagues of mine are good ecclesiastics: I appreciate their excellent qualities, I am very fond of them and they deserve all my affection. And yet they cause me a lot of suffering. Oil certain

days and in certain circumstances I am tempted to react violently. But I prefer to keep silence, trusting that this will be a snore eloquent and effective lesson. Could this be weakness on my part I must, I will continue to bear this light cross serenely, together with the mortifying sense of my own worthlessness, and I will leave everything else to God, who sees into all hearts and shows them the refinements of Ills love.

(6) In this connection I reaffirm all that I wrote in no. 8 of my notes written during the Exercises at Villa Manresa at Clamart last year. How well I remember, after more than forty years, the edifying conversations in the Bishop's residence at Bergamo with my revered Bishop Mgr Radini Tedeschi ! Never was there a single reference to a Vatican official, from the Holy Father downwards, that was lacking in reverence, affection or respect. As for women, and everything to do with them, never a word, never; it was as if there were no women in the world. This absolute silence, even between close friends, about everything to do with women was one of the most profound and lasting lessons of my early years in the priesthood; and I am grateful still to the kind and illustrious man who taught me this discipline.

(7) I have not been able to read much Holy Scripture during this time. But I have carefully meditated upon the General Epistle of James the Less. Its five chapters are a wonderful summary of Christian life. The teaching about the exercise of charity, the right use of the tongue, the power of the man of faith, collaboration for peace, respect for others, the awful fate awaiting the rich, unjust and hateful man, and finally the appeal for trust, hopefulness and prayer . . . all this and more make it an incomparable treasury of directives and exhortations, particularly and alarmingly applicable to those of us who are ecclesiastics, and to lay folk of all times. One should learn it by heart and return to it from time to time to enjoy the heavenly doctrine line by line. At my time of life, on the threshold of my sixty-eighth year, there is nothing but old age before me. But wisdom is there in the divine book. Here is an example:

`Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his good works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace' (James 3 : 13-18).

1950

*Spiritual notes written during my brief retreat at
Oran (Algeria, 6-9 April, 1950, Thursday,
Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Day*

Three days of rest at the end of my long journey in North Africa which began on 19 March, the twenty-fifth anniversary of my Episcopal consecration, and ends on 9 April, Easter Day.

The Bishop of Oran, Mgr Lacaste, I has welcomed me with brotherly hospitality, for which I am grateful to him. In my prayers, meditations and silences I share in the immense yearning of loving souls who, all over the world and in all churches, are gathered around Jesus, suffering and victorious, during these three holy days of prayer before Easter. It is now a quarter of a century since Holy Church made me, poor and unworthy as I am, a Bishop, and I like to think of my past, my present, and my future.

Holy Thursday: my past

I have brought with me on this journey the bundles of spiritual reflections made during these years, 1925-1950, to jolt me out of any complacency and inspire me with repentance and an increase of Episcopal fervour, notes written on the various retreats that I was able to make from year to year in Bulgaria, Turkey and France. I have read them all over again, with calm, as if in a confession, and I recite the Miserere, which is all my own, and the Magnificat, which is entirely the Lord's, as my penance and as an exercise in sincere and trustful humility. At a distance of twenty-five years I have re-read no. 4 of the first notes I made at Villa Carpegna, 13-17 March, 1925, while preparing for my impending Episcopal consecration which took place on 19 March, the feast of St Joseph, at San Carlo al Corso.² I then resolved: I will often re-read chapter IX, book III of *The Imitation of Jesus Christ*: 'That all things are to be referred to God as to their final end.' This has impressed me profoundly in the solitude of these last few days. Indeed, in these few words there is everything! It was on the eve of my new life that I wrote this; I feel the same way now, and so I enjoy returning to that time and reconsidering this teaching of Christ's after a quarter of a century of trials, weaknesses and recoveries, although, thanks to the Lord, my will has remained firm, faithful and convinced, in spite of all the seductions and temptations of the spirit of this world.

O Jesus, how much I thank you for having kept me faithful to this principle: 'From me, as from a living fountain, the humble and the great, the poor and the rich draw the water of life.' Ali, I am numbered among the humble and the poor! In Bulgaria, the difficulties of my circumstances, even more than the difficulties caused by men, and the monotony of that life which was one long sequence of daily pricks and scratches, cost me much in mortification and silence. But your grace preserved my inner joy, which helped me to hide my difficulties and distress. In Turkey the responsibilities of my pastoral work were at once a torment and a joy to me. Could I not, should I not, have done more, have made a more decided effort and gone against the inclination of my nature? Did the search for calm and peace, which I considered to be more in harmony with the Lord's spirit, not perhaps mask a certain unwillingness to take up the sword, and a preference for what was easiest and most convenient for me, even if gentleness has indeed been defined as the fullness of strength? O my Jesus, you search all hearts: the exact point at which even the striving after virtue may lead to failure or excess is known to you alone.

I feel it is right not to boast of anything but to attribute all to your grace 'without which man has nothing, and very strictly do you demand my thanks in return'.² So my Magnificat is complete, as it should be. I like so much the expression: 'My merit, your mercy' and St Augustine's words: 'When you crown our merit you are crowning your own gifts'.

My gratitude to you will never cease, Jesus: 'For divine charity overcomes all and enlarges the powers of the soul. I judge rightly, I rejoice in you alone, in you alone I hope, "for none is good save God alone" (Luke 18: i9), who is to be praised above all else, and blessed in all things.' So, as the conclusion of my twenty-five years as Bishop, I put the last words of the same little chapter of *The Imitation* with which I began them. I still have, to the proper mortification of my spirit, the memory of my faults, 'in thought, word and deed', which are so many, so very many in twenty-five years. But I still have also my unalterable faith in my daily Sacrifice, the divine and immaculate Host, offered 'for my countless sins, offences and negligences'. Twenty-five years of Episcopal Masses, offered with all the splendour of good intentions, and all the dust of the road, oh, what a mystery of mingled grace and shame! The grace of Jesus' tender love given as 'Bishop and Shepherd' to his chosen priest, the shame of the priest who finds his consolation only in trustful self-surrender.

Good Friday: my present

Last night I said Matins by myself; this morning in chapel I said the Hours with the Miserere four times and today's liturgy, uniting myself in spirit as I followed it in my Missal, as if I were attending the ceremony in some great church, or as if I were still presiding over it in Sofia, or in the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit at Istanbul.

My present: here I am then, still alive, in my sixty-ninth year, prostrate over the crucifix, kissing the face of Christ and his sacred wounds, kissing his heart, laid bare in his pierced side; here I am showing my love and grief. How could I not feel grateful to Jesus, finding myself still young and robust of body, spirit and heart? 'Know thyself': this keeps me humble and without pretensions. Some people feel admiration and affection for my humble person; but thanks be to God, I still blush for myself, my insufficiencies and my unworthiness in this important position where the Holy Father has placed me, and still keeps me, out of the kindness of his heart. For some time past I have cultivated simplicity, which comes very easily to me, cheerfully defying all those clever people who, looking for the qualities required in a diplomat of the Holy See, prefer the outer covering to the sound, ripe fruit beneath. And I keep true to my principle which seems to me to have a place of honour in the Sermon on the Mount: blessed are the poor, the meek, the peacemakers, the merciful, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the pure in heart, the suffering and the persecuted.' My present, then, is spent in faithful service to Christ, who was obedient and was crucified, words I repeat so often at this season: 'Christ was made obedient. So I must be meek and humble like him, glowing with divine charity, ready for sacrifice or for death, for him or for his Church. This journey in North Africa has brought home to me more vividly the problem of the conversion of the peoples without the faith. The whole life and purpose of the Church, of the priesthood, of true and good diplomacy is there: 'Give me souls; take all the rest.'

Holy Saturday: my future

When one is nearly seventy, one cannot be sure of the future. 'The years of our life are three score and ten, and even if we are strong enough to reach the age of eighty, yet these years are but toil and vanity; they are soon passed and we also pass away' (cf. Psalm 89: 10-11). So it is no use nursing any illusions: I must make myself familiar with the thought of the end, not with dismay which saps the will, but with confidence which preserves our enthusiasm for living, working and serving. Some time ago I resolved to bear constantly in mind this reverent expectation of death, this joy which ought to be my soul's last happiness when it departs from this life. I need not become wearisome to others by speaking frequently of this; but I must always think of it, because the consideration of death, the *judicium mortis*, when it has become a familiar thought, is good and useful for the mortification of vanity and for infusing into everything a sense of moderation and calm. As regards temporal matters, I will revise my will once more. I am poor, thank God, and I mean to die poor.

As for my soul, I shall try to make the fame burn more brightly, making the most of the time that remains as it passes more swiftly away. Therefore, total detachment from the things of this world, dignities, honours, things that are precious in themselves or greatly prized. I want to redouble my efforts to complete the publication of the *Visita Apostolica di San Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo*, but I am also ready to accept the mortification of having to give this up.

There are some who, to flatter me, speak of the Cardinalate. Nothing here of any interest to me. I repeat what I have already written. Were this not to happen, as is quite possible, I shall think this also was predestined, and thank God for it.

For the rest, on my return to Paris I shall resume my ordinary life without impatience, but with absolute fidelity to my duty and to the service of the Holy See, with care, with charity and patience and in close union with Jesus, my King, my Master, my God, with Mary, my sweet Mother, and with St Joseph, my dear friend, model and protector.

I must comfort myself with the thought that the souls that I have known, loved and still love are now almost all in the other world, waiting and praying for me. Will the Lord call me soon to the heavenly fatherland? Here I am, ready. I beg him only to take me at a good moment. Has he perhaps reserved for me many more years of life? I will be grateful for them, but always implore him not to leave me on this earth when I have become an encumbrance and of no further use to Holy Church. But in this also the Lord's holy will, that is enough.

I end these notes to the sound of the Easter bells ringing from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart near by, and I remember with joy my last Easter homily in Istanbul, when I preached on the words of St Gregory Nazianzen, 'the will of God is our peace'.

1952

*Retreat at Montmartre, with the Carmelite nuns
Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Holy Week
10-12 April, 1952*

Three days that have been rather like the days Our Lord spent in the tomb, because I thought it best to admit my nuns of the Nunciature to the Maundy Thursday Mass. In the afternoon I visited on foot four churches of the sacred city: Saint-Pierre, Saint Jean, Notre Dame de Clignancourt, and the Martyrium. On Friday two more hours in the afternoon were spent presiding at the liturgy in the Byzantine rite at Saint Julien-le-Pauvre, and making my confession to Father Fugazza at the Church of the Lazarist Fathers. However, the continuity of recollection was not too greatly disturbed. I am particularly happy to have sought shelter, like a swallow, under the roof of the great basilica of the Sacred Heart and to be about to end this retreat in the splendours of the holy eve of the Resurrection, according to the ancient ceremonial of the recently restored Easter Vigil. The circumstances of this retreat have prevented me from making many notes, either for my examination of conscience or for meditation. I will just put down a few thoughts that may be good for my soul if I re-read them every now and then.

(1) Let us give thanks. The ordinary term of human life, seventy years, is now completed. I think back on all my seventy years, I must admit, 'in bitterness of soul.' Alas! I still feel shame and grief for my 'countless sins, offences and negligences', for the little I have achieved and the much more that I could, and should, have done in the service of the Lord, of Holy Church and of souls. But at the same time I cannot forget the wealth of graces and mercies which Jesus has lavished so generously upon me, contrary to all my deserts: 'Therefore His praise shall be always in my mouth.'

(2) 'Simplicity of heart and speech!' The older I grow the more clearly I perceive the dignity and the winning beauty of simplicity in thought, conduct and speech: a desire to simplify all that is complicated and to treat everything with the greatest naturalness and clarity, without wrap

ping things up in trimmings and artificial turns of thought and phrase. 'To be simple with prudence'-the motto is St John Chrysostom's. What a wealth of doctrine in these two phrases!

(3) Friendliness, serenity and imperturbable patience! I must always remember that 'a soft answer turns away wrath. What bitterness is caused by a rough, abrupt or impatient manner! Sometimes the fear of being underestimated as a person of little worth tempts us to give ourselves airs and assert ourselves a little. But this is contrary to my nature.

To be simple, with no pretensions, requires no effort from me. This is a great gift that the Lord has bestowed on me: I want to preserve it and to be worthy of it.

(4) I must have a great understanding and respect for the French people. My prolonged stay with them enables me to appreciate the very noble spiritual qualities of this people and the fervour of Catholics of every school of thought. At the same time, however, it has enabled me to see their failings and excesses also. This means I have to be very careful in what I say. I am free to form my own judgment, but I must beware of any criticism, however slight and friendly, that might wound their susceptibilities. Oh, this never doing or saying to others what we would not wish to have done or said to us! We are all rather remiss about this. Great care then to avoid the slightest expression that might lessen the effectiveness or the dignity of our conduct. I say this for myself, but I must be the guide and example of those around me, my colleagues. In every case, a caress is always better than a scratch.

(5) Greater alacrity in the more important business, especially the nominations of Bishops, relations with the Holy See, and dealing with timely and important information. No haste, but no delay. I will make this the special object of my daily examinations.

(6) In all things `consider the end'. The end is drawing nearer as my days follow one another. I must be more concerned with the thought of imminent death, and with dying well, than with lulling myself with dreams of a longer life. But I must not be sad about this or talk too much about it. `The will of God is our peace', always, in life and, still more, in death.

(7) The thought of what lies in store for me, honours, humiliations, opposition, etc., nothing of all this causes me any anxiety or preoccupation. This year I hope to complete the publication of the Atti della Visita Apostolica di San Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo. This satisfies my ambition as a good Bergamasque, and I desire nothing else.

(8) My only wish is that my life should end in a holy manner. I tremble at the thought of having to bear pain, responsibilities or difficulties beyond my poor capacity, but I trust in the Lord, without claiming any successes or extraordinary or brilliant merit.

(9) My spiritual life must be intensified. No overloading with devotions of a novel and secondary character, but fidelity to those which are fundamental, with passionate fervour. Holy Mass, the Breviary, the rosary, meditations, the reading of good books, close and frequent union with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

(10) This retreat has not been marked by laborious meditations and practices, but in re-reading my notes of past retreats I have found in them a motive and encouragement to `gather speed as I near the end'. I think my conscience is quiet, and I trust in Jesus and in his glorious and well beloved Mother who is my Mother too, in my darling St Joseph, and in St John the Baptist around whom I like to see my own kith and kin gathered) And now I get ready to go up to the Church of the Sacred Heart, where they are awaiting me for a solemn, splendid night that is meant to be the symbol of the resurrection of souls, of Holy Church and all nations. The Cross of Jesus, the Heart of Jesus, the grace of Jesus : these are everything in this world, and this is the beginning of future glory, reserved for the elect for evermore. `Heart of Jesus, our life and our resurrection, our peace and our reconciliation, the salvation of all who hope in you, the hope of all who die in you, the joy of all the saints.

Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.'