

music, sad faces, mourning clothes! – The Church stands on behalf of GOD in front of the grave and it is not a sad thing when a child returns home to his FATHER! The Church is to prepare the people to return home to GOD with joy. Nevertheless, it may not be forgotten to pray for the faithful departed. Because hardly any soul is so perfect as not to need cleansing in Purgatory, however short it may be, until she is able to see GOD's countenance unveiled. For GOD in all His goodness and mercy is also just. Therefore I ask you to remember in your prayers the person who departed this night, e.g. by saying a „Hail Mary“.

Comforting, helping, instructing

So many things would crystallize out, if we saw again GOD's gift of love in the Sacraments, in the Church, GOD's help leading to Heaven those of good will on the stony, thorny, steep path. I saw that with the dying person: whether poor or rich, whether healthy or ill, whether in bliss or misfortune, whether happy or suffering, in everything can the Christian be a happy and grateful child of GOD with the help of the Church!

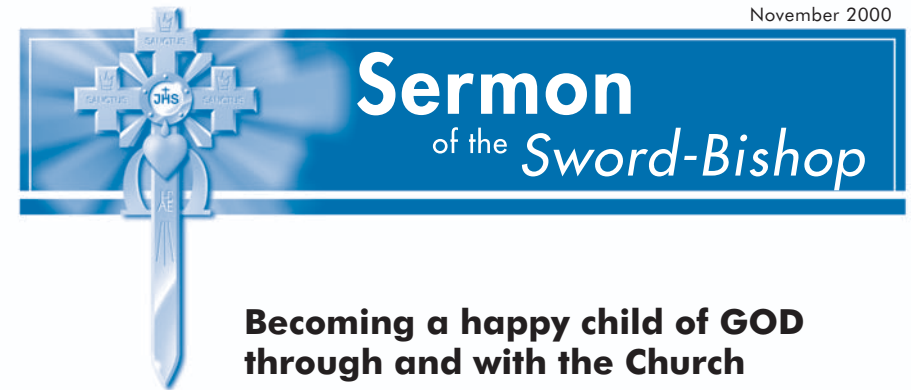
Excerpt of sermon of the Sword-Bishop, 19 November 1989



Schwert-Bischof
JESU CHRISTI

**Be blessed by GOD TRINITY,
the + FATHER and the + SON
and the + HOLY GHOST. Amen!**

Schwert-Bischof
JESU CHRISTI
SB.



Becoming a happy child of GOD through and with the Church

My beloved! Should we mourn or rejoice, if someone goes to meet his Maker? – This night Mrs R... M... passed away. She was a simple woman, and knew in advance that she was soon to die from her disease (cancer). On visiting her, you would always find her a happy woman, although she suffered great pains. She did not, however, seek to be happy; nay, she simply was happy in being allowed to suffer. If you offered her something to drink, she would reject it despite great thirst in order to be able to give GOD this merit. Just as the growing butterfly strips off its cocoon or as the phoenix rises from the ashes, so – being fully conscious – she expired slowly, yet extremely contentedly and happy.

The path

Her death has opened to me something which has always been in me and for which I will do what I can in future. Then, while pondering it, I left her deathbed at night. This morning I had a picture in my mind's eye of a broad, beautifully paved street leading down to Hell, and a very stony, narrow path overgrown with thorns and thistles leading steeply uphill towards Heaven. – You are familiar with this picture from the Catechism.

Is it really so, as the Church expounds it, that this beautiful, comfortable street leads down to Hell? And this stony, slavish path – is that supposed to be the path that GOD offers us? Is GOD then only intent on making our lives burdensome, only interested in creating obstacles for us? I thought it was the Evil One who vexes and plagues us! – No! My beloved, it is not true that the pious person should only have a hard time, is merely condemned to make sacrifices.

With JESUS Heaven did come on earth! Did CHRIST not take upon Himself all suffering? There were refined founders of an order like Francis of Sales, Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Clairvaux, but there were also founders

or superiors of an order as well as Church authorities who believed they had to oppress man for the sake of salvation, just make all things difficult for him and bring him down completely.

It is the Church that started to oppress her children, beat them and put stones in their way, and burden them with them? – I have thought that it is not in accordance with the teaching of CHRIST. How then did the SAVIOUR act? He gave fresh heart to them and comforted them where He could. It was His pleasure to help and He shared out many alms. Never did He oppress! Indeed, even the Apostles were sometimes of the opinion that He was too mild.

We must imitate CHRIST

who as the Giver of blessing walked through the land: serving the neighbour, helping him, freeing him, making him happy. Remember, however, that the SAVIOUR gave us the greatest blessing from the Cross.

At present, Hell, GOD's opponent, the fallen angel, is mightily at work as never before. There is no need to look for sorrows or sacrifices – you should not be looking for sacrifices at all. GOD only wants love, mercy. In these difficult times it is sacrifice enough if you get on well with people, bear with them, help and do them good, even if it is repugnant to you.

The Church stands in need of a theology of liberation

Absolutely! Albeit not as modern theology wants it but as CHRIST wanted it. We must reach a point where the Church demonstrates such cheerful, free image that the heathens say again: „Behold, how happy they are, how they love one another!“

Poverty and riches alike,

both can be holy, noble and respectable, if ones lives it in GOD. In poverty we experience the happiness that GOD is the only true riches. The Church should not only comfort the poor, the sick, the dying with pious words; rather, it is incumbent on her to give assistance with all of her possibilities just as the first Christians have excellently done it. She has a duty to see to it that a poor person does not get into difficulties on account of his poverty, that he does not end up sinning because of it. Thus the SAVIOUR has done it.

In riches we see a small reflection of the riches, the abundance, the Majesty of GOD in Heaven. However, the Evil One makes use of both riches and poverty to tempt us to sin. He fires the poor man's envy, dissatisfaction, railing at fate, resentment – he spurs the rich man on to acquisitive greed, miserliness, dissipation, attachment to this world.

Riches are much more dangerous than poverty! Not for nothing did the SAVIOUR say: „It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.“ Why? – Because the well-to-do man clings to riches very swiftly with his heart, is no longer grateful towards GOD, attributes his riches to his own work, and forgets GOD. Here, too, the help of the Church is necessary.

Lazarus was very rich but the SAVIOUR did not urge him to sell everything or give it away. Also King David was very rich and GOD was well pleased in him! – Be happy, if GOD entrusts you with riches. In case you use it to the greater glory as well as to the praise of GOD, you are even allowed to increase it! But take heed lest you should stifle in it in acquisitive greed, lest your riches should ruin you. Because you never can tell whether you are still alive tomorrow or whether you will lose all your goods and chattels again the day after tomorrow.

Job was one of the richest and most respected men in those days and the Evil One complained with GOD: „Have You not made a fence for Job, and his house, and all his substance round about; You bless the works of his hands, his possession has increased so much in the land. But take away everything from him! Then You shall see that he rails against his fate and blesses You to Your face!“ GOD allowed the Evil One to rob and destroy everything, indeed even to strike Job with leprosy! – But Job spoke: „The LORD gave, the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the Name of the LORD!“ And already here on earth, GOD rewarded Job, who stood the test, for his loyalty and returned to him double the amount of his goods. Thus Job is an example of a life in riches and poverty alike.

Let us contemplate the lives of the Saints

Saints like Francis of Assisi, Don Bosco, Philip Neri, little Theresa and many more: what happy people! What bright faces! – Augustine says: „A sad saint is a sad saint!“ And if you want to be a sad saint, then retire to your room. Because you have no right to infect your fellow-men with your sadness. Even under the cross the SAVIOUR comforted the wailing women: „Weep not over Me...“ For He knew that He would soon be with His FATHER in Heaven!

Death is birth

If in the event of death the next of kin or those who are near weep because suddenly their dearly beloved is no longer present, that is understandable. It behoves the Church, however, to tell of a happy event and to be jubilant if the soul is assumed to have been saved. Dying is birth, an unfolding of the soul being called back to her Maker, into the hand of the Heavenly FATHER. Is there anything more beautiful? What did the Church make of it? Funeral
