

Religious Bulletin
December 9, 1930

The Novena of Thanksgiving Tomorrow.

We begin tomorrow the public payment of a debt of gratitude to God for one of the boons of modern times, the decree on Frequent and Daily Communion. The decree has meant so much to Notre Dame that its Silver Jubilee should be celebrated with all possible fervor. Our indebtedness is both individual and collective; consequently our thanksgiving should be both public and private. It is fitting, therefore, that all of who have profited by this salutary practice should do all in our power during these nine days to show God that we are grateful. You are invited to partake in the following exercises of the Novena:

1. Daily Communion during the nine days;
2. Daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
3. Public prayers and Benediction at 5:15 p.m. daily;
4. Daily prayers in private (the Litany of the Holy Name and the Litany of the Sacred Heart are recommended).

History of the Decree.

Twenty-five years ago the Catholic world was still suffering from the chilling effects of the heresy of Jansenism. While this heresy of the seventeenth century is too large a question to discuss here, it may be stated briefly that it was a recrudescence of the denial of free will which the Church had condemned in Lutheranism and Calvinism. While in the main its tenets had been rejected by Catholics on their condemnation by Rome, one important false principle persisted because it appealed to pious people: its false exaggeration of the respect due to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

While it is perfectly true that we can never show enough respect for the Blessed Sacrament, it is also true that God demands love before respect; and when Jansenists excluded Christians from frequent Communion unless they were free not only from venial sin but from all "affection" to it, they robbed men of the source of love. Among the objections they raised were the following: "our unworthiness, our backwardness in virtue, our ill-tamed passions, lapses into grievous sin, fear lest some one may be led to receive sacrilegiously, a dread of evils commonly expressed by those very vague terms 'want of reverence' and 'over-familiarity,' the danger of carelessness in preparation and thanksgiving, diminution of devotion in receiving, or, what is constantly mistaken for this, mere dulness of the emotions and lack of sensible experiences," -- Zuleta, The Eucharistic Triduum.

For the radical correction of this un-Catholic attitude, Divine Providence raised up Pope Pius X. He was Padre Giuseppe Sarto, and even when he was made Patriarch of Venice, he did not cease to be at heart the simple parish priest who knew the needs of his flock. On the death of Leo XIII, in 1903, the Austrian veto excluded the brilliant Rampolla from the succession, and the choice of the Cardinals fell on Padre Giuseppe as Santo Padre.

As a glorified parish priest, he opened the treasures of the Church to the people, particularly in the matter of indulgences and daily Communion. On December 20, 1905, he promulgated the decree, Sacra Tridentina Synodus, in which he declared that "no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches with a right and devout intention" can be lawfully hindered from daily Communion. One word from the Holy Father set at rest all the controversy; and this generation, which is surrounded by the vicious philosophy and gilded vice of neo-paganism, was admitted to the graces that offset those dangers to the soul.

PRAYERS: One deceased relative, three deceased friends; a relative dying; three relatives ill; two friends ill; six special intentions. Relatives of Arthur Cavender and August von Bocklin are ill.