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"To Keep A True Lent."

In spite of the heresy implied in the following poem by Robert Herrick, it has some sound thought on the spirit of Lent.

Is this a fast, to keep  
The larder lean,  
And clean  
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish  
Of flesh, yet still  
to fill  
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,  
Or ragged to go,  
Or show  
A downcast look, and sour?

No; 'tis a fast, to dole  
Thy sheaf of wheat  
And meat  
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,  
From old debate,  
And hate;  
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;  
To starve thy sin,  
Not bin;  
And that's to keep thy Lent.

The heresy? Abstinence from meat is an act of the virtue of mortification, especially for those who hate fish. Fasting for an hour is an act of the virtue of mortification. The "downcast look, and sour" and the "platter high with fish" are not acts of self-denial, true enough, but it is heresy to say that self-denial is not a virtue, even though "fasting and alms" are twin virtues of the spiritual life.

The point is this: the world decries physical mortification and extols alms. The man who engages in reasonable bodily mortification strengthens his will and punishes himself for his sins; and it is easier for him to give alms and practice charity than it is for the man who indulges his bodily appetites. Our Lord fasted forty days: do you remember that? He had no bread to give away but the bread and fishes he borrowed from a boy and multiplied for the multitude.

St. Joseph's Day Transferred to Monday.

Offer your Holy Communion that day for the grace of a happy death.

PRAYERS: Russell O'Shea needs the operation for mastoiditis; pray the the complications will clear so that this may be performed. Thos. Gallagher, John Beglcy, Francis O'Donnell, and John Maddock ask prayers for relatives who are very ill. Frank and Richard Moody, alumni, lost their mother Wednesday night. Four special intentions. -- Prayers for good health are in order; epidemics are prevalent in several sections of the country.