

Fourteenth Meditation: On matters related to his work on which a Brother of the Christian Schools must give an account to God

First Point

Since God has called you to your ministry in order to procure his glory and to give children the spirit of wisdom, the insight to know him, and to enlighten the eyes of their hearts, you will give account how well you have instructed those who have been under your guidance. This is an inescapable obligation for you, and you will be punished for their ignorance in these matters (if it is your fault), just as you yourselves had been ignorant of them.

You will give account to God whether you have been exact to teach catechism, and whether you have taught it on all the days and for all the time prescribed for you; whether you have taught your disciples the things in the catechism that they should know according to their age and ability; whether you have not neglected some students because they were the slowest, perhaps also the poorest; and whether you did not show favoritism toward others because they were rich, or pleasant, or naturally possessing more lovable qualities than the others.

You will give account whether you have instructed them well how to assist at Holy Mass and to confess their sins well; whether you have not preferred to teach secular subjects, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, though you must not neglect these, since they are strictly required of you; nevertheless, those lessons that contribute to the support of religion are of much greater importance; whether during all the time available for your assignments you have not wasted some on useless activities, or even on useful ones that were not your duty, finally, whether you have taken care to instruct yourselves (during the time assigned to you for this) about the things you are obliged to teach those for whom you are responsible.

Are your accounts in good order and are you ready to give them? If that is not the case, put them in order without delay, and examine yourself seriously on what your conduct has been in this regard. If there has been any negligence in your conduct, take a firm resolution to correct yourself. Before God be determined to do better in the future so that death will not surprise you in such an

unfortunate condition.

Second Point

When you appear before God, it will not be sufficient for you to have instructed the children entrusted to you, but you will be found guilty if you have not watched over their conduct. For it is your duty to watch over them exactly, as obliged to give an account to God for their souls. Have you considered carefully what it means to give account to God for the salvation of a soul that is damned, because you did not take care to lead it to what is right and assist it to live accordingly?

Are you convinced that you are obliged to take care of your disciples during all the time they are in church as much as when they are in school, in order to prevent them from doing anything even the least displeasing to God? Is it not also your responsibility to be attentive during the prayers you have them say, in order that they do so with the great piety, decorum, and respect as speaking to God?

Do you believe, perhaps, that you are responsible for your disciples only during the time of school, that your vigilance need not extend to their behavior outside of school, to help them as far as you are able to live everywhere in a Christian manner, that they not associate with bad companions during the entire time they are under your guidance?

For to say give account for their souls means to give account for everything that concerns their salvation, and to watch exactly means to watch over everything with diligence, omitting nothing, neglecting nothing.

If you have not applied yourself to all these things, consider yourself guilty before God and have a great fear to appear before God at the moment of your death after you have lived in such negligence of all that concerns his service.

Third Point

What you say and do need not be as great a concern in the account you will

have to render to God as the intention and the manner of these actions. For the faults of speaking and acting are usually more tangible and come more readily to your mind. Of intention Saint Paul says that whether we speak or whether we act, we must do all things in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, not in order to please men but to please God. This is the purpose you must have and the sole motive that God wants you to have in your work.

Is it not true that often you have hardly thought of this at all, that usually you have had no intention whatsoever, or if you have had one it was purely natural and human? This single fault, then, would have corrupted all that you did, however good it might have been in itself and would have blocked God's blessing on your action.

You will give God no less an account concerning your ministry, whether you have worked with wisdom and seriousness, without undue familiarity with those whom you teach. This seriousness is what Saint Paul recommended so strongly to Titus, his disciple, for a minister of the Gospel, and which he believed more necessary for him than any other good quality. After zeal for instruction and purity of morals, this serious self-control is one of the most useful virtues for those who are responsible for instructing youth.

Nevertheless, do not overlook the account you will have to give of your patience and the control of your passions. This again is a very important point to which you must be very attentive, especially when the children in your care do something out of order, and you are required to reprove or correct them. There is nothing you must be more on your guard against than somehow allowing your passions to run away with you.

This must be one of the main points of the examination you ought to make regarding the account that God will ask of you concerning your work. Consider this very seriously.