

October 23*

MEDITATION ON THE VIRTUES OF SAINT ROMAIN, ARCHBISHOP OF ROUEN

181.1 First Point

From his earliest years Saint Romain was a model of all the virtues. His very devout parents took care to bring him up as a Christian no less than as a nobleman, so that he might fulfill worthily the illustrious work for which he was destined. He clearly showed how well he had profited by such an education, for, having become Chancellor of France, he displayed as much vigilance over himself to preserve his piety toward God as zeal to deliver justice. He was constantly on guard over himself in order not to lose his innocence in the corruption of the world. He kept himself as pure in his exalted position as if he had lived in the most hidden seclusion.

What a source of confusion for us who so easily lose in our exterior occupations this spirit of piety which we have acquired in our interior exercises! Let us learn from the saint to live and act in the world without sharing in the corruption of the spirit and the maxims of the world.

181.2 Second Point

This great saint, after enlightening by the lustre of his virtues the people who live in the secular world, was chosen by God to be a burning torch on the chandelier¹⁰²⁰ of the Church. Chosen Archbishop of Rouen, he applied himself with tireless zeal to the elimination of idolatry among the people and of simony among the clergy. He strove to win as many adorers for Jesus Christ and as many perfect faithful for his Church as the demon tried to steal away. In this world he feared nothing but sin, and his soul was always clothed in the robe of his baptismal innocence. He did not hesitate to confront a dragon which not only was ravaging the crops of the fields, but was also devouring human beings.

Let us strive to preserve the baptismal innocence of the children who are, or will be, entrusted to us. If we ourselves have been unfortunate enough to lose it, let us strive to recover it through penance proportionate to the greatness of our sins. How happy we would be if we could recover the state of original justice! To encourage ourselves in this endeavor, let us reflect on these words of Saint Ambrose, There are only two roads to heaven, innocence preserved, or innocence restored by penance.

181.3 Third Point

Saint Romain having led such a pure life, merited that God reveal to him the time of his death, which was to come while he was celebrating holy Mass. This knowledge persuaded him to withdraw into solitude, where he could think only of himself. There the demon assailed him with furious temptations, but the constant thought of the eternal truths and his assiduous prayer made him victorious and gave him the occasion to increase his merits.

It is only by these two means that we can strengthen our souls against all the attacks of the enemies of our salvation. Meditation on the truths taught by faith is a two-edged sword, as Saint Paul says, which reaches even to the division between the soul and the spirit, the sinews and the bones.¹⁰²¹ But it is not enough to be convinced of the truths of salvation; we must also through fervent prayer ask God to aid us in our weaknesses and to give us the grace to practice what his Holy Spirit has made us realize he desires of us.

* The six meditations (103,184,168,181,83 and 188) appear, with the short biographies of Saint Yon and Saint Cassian, at the end of CL 12 (and the original Edition of the Meditations). It seems quite clear from the vocabulary and style that they were not written by De La Salle (See CL 47, pp. 539-540). The numbers of the Meditations are those of the 1882 Edition.

1020 Jn 5:35; Mt 5:15

1021 Heb 4:12