

# SPIRITUAL STEPS TO CHRISTMAS





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Daily Meditations for Sanctifying Advent



Msgr. Aloysius F. Coogan

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Dedicated to the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and to my own family, father, mother, sisters, brothers, who, under God, have taught me the true meaning of Christmas.

May the peace of Christ and the joys of the Christmas season dwell in families and hearts, that our homes may be more fruitful nurseries for vocations, and that Priests, Brothers, and Sisters may increase in the family of the Lord to insure the peace of Jesus Christ in the family of nations.

Then shall our Christmas have a real meaning and be a happy, blessed, and merry Christmas.

The Author  
Feast of the Sacred Heart  
June 12, 1953





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# PREFACE



The theme of this book suggests that man has gotten away from the true nature of Christmas.

Today, Christmas is celebrated without Christ in many quarters.

Christmas means Christ's Mass. But the Protestant revolt has denied the true sacrifice of the Mass. It has uprooted His altar and replaced it with a pulpit. There are some who profess to be ministers of Christ and yet deny His divinity.

The Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament has been removed from their altars and the voice of man has usurped His place. The pivot and focal point of the Protestant Church is not the altar but the pulpit. Man's presence has replaced God's presence; private interpretation has taken the place of God's authority.

Christ is sacrificed in the Mass and the Mass is Christ present with us. Take away the tabernacle of God and, since nature abhors a vacuum, the pulpit of man is ushered in to replace it. Remove the Mass, where Christ is offered and

adored, and the result is that man is dehumanized whereas he should be super-naturalized. Man exalts himself instead of humbling himself and adoring God. Without God, man is not even himself. He is dehumanized. He is less than man. For man, as God made him, is just “a little less than the angels.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, since the Immaculate Conception, the highest creature in the universe is a member of our own human race, who God chose as the means to give the Christ His human nature.

And yet, even though Christmas is the season when we celebrate God joining mankind in the form of a child, in how many homes, because Christ is uninvited, children, too, unhappily, are no longer welcome. Christmas, like *Emmanuel*, means “God with us.” If we celebrate Christmas without God, we have lost its meaning. If we refuse an inn to God’s children as the fruit of marriage, we repeat the sad tale of Bethlehem that refused an inn to Mary and Joseph and the Child. We too deny welcoming Christ into our homes, into our lives, missing the nature of Christmas.

Christmas today, for the average worldling, means nothing more than feasting and food—a holiday, with tinsel and tree, and an exchange of gifts. It is externalized and made pagan in its concept.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 8:6.

Christmas should, as it is intended to, mean attendance at Mass—at Christ’s Mass on Christmas day. It should be a day of great dignity, of rejoicing, as evidenced in a temperate use of food and drink and a meeting of loved ones under the star and spirit of Bethlehem. It should mean not so much a receiving as a giving to Christ’s poor in imitation of God who gave Himself to the poor in the greatest of all gifts—His only-begotten Son.

This book is written with the hope and intention of bringing to our minds the thoughts of Advent that we may think and pray with Mary who brought Christ to us. Advent, like Lent, is a time of preparation in thought and deed for a great event. Certainly, if a king or a cardinal were to come to our home as a guest, we would prepare for his advent. Should we not prepare, then, for the great King of the universe during these days? Instead of coming to our homes, however, His Advent, or “coming,” is one into our hearts, and it depends on how we pray and meditate during these preparatory days leading up to Christmas.

In thinking of Christmas, we always conjure up in our mind’s eye the happy days of childhood, the memory of our parents who may have passed on to their eternal reward, and of our early home—all these are most joyous recollections. Certainly Advent should not be observed in a lugubrious or melancholy manner. Penance is a joy



when it is performed for God; when imposed upon us for a selfish motive, it is a drudgery.

These Advent days, then, can be—rather, should be—most joyful, our recollection of former years can be most happy if we dedicate them to God. In simple terms, we can be happiest when all things are in harmony and in their proper place. This is the definition of health. This is the understanding of peace. This is the “tranquility of order.” It is our aim here to put Christ back into Christmas, to welcome the Christ Child in our souls, to enjoy the Godliness of having Christ’s Mass at Christmas.

Merry Christmas to you! May Christ and His Mother bless you by their presence because of your goodness in giving to them your will and understanding during these Advent days.



# LITURGICAL CALENDAR BY YEAR



Through Advent 2050

YEAR	2023 - B 2028 - A 2034 - C 2045 - B	2029 - B 2035 - A 2040 - C 2046 - C	2024 - C 2030 - C 2041 - A 2047 - A
<b>1st Sun</b>	<b>Dec. 3</b>	<b>Dec. 2</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b>
M	Dec. 4	Dec. 3	Dec. 2
T	Dec. 5	Dec. 4	Dec. 3
W	Dec. 6	Dec. 5	Dec. 4
Th	Dec. 7	Dec. 6	Dec. 5
F	<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	Dec. 7	Dec. 6
S	Dec. 9	<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	Dec. 7
<b>2nd Sun</b>	<b>Dec. 10</b>	<b>Dec. 9</b>	<b>Immaculate Conception</b>
M	Dec. 11	Dec. 10	Dec. 9
T	Dec. 12	Dec. 11	Dec. 10
W	Dec. 13	Dec. 12	Dec. 11
Th	Dec. 14	Dec. 13	Dec. 12
F	Dec. 15	Dec. 14	Dec. 13
S	Dec. 16	Dec. 15	Dec. 14
<b>3rd Sun</b>	<b>17—O Wisdom</b>	<b>Dec. 16</b>	<b>Dec. 15</b>
M	18—O Adonai	17—O Wisdom	Dec. 16
T	19—O Root of Jesse	18—O Adonai	17—O Wisdom
Ember W	20—O Key of David	19—O Root of Jesse	18—O Adonai
Th	21—O Rising Dawn	20—O Key of David	19—O Root of Jesse
Ember F	22—O King of the Nations	21—O Rising Dawn	20—O Key of David
Ember S	23—O Emmanuel	22—O King of the Nations	21—O Rising Dawn
<b>4th Sun</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>23—O Emmanuel</b>	<b>22—O King of the Nations</b>
M	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	23—O Emmanuel
T	n/a	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>
W	n/a	n/a	<b>Christmas Day</b>
Th	n/a	n/a	n/a
F	n/a	n/a	n/a
S	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sun	n/a	n/a	n/a

2025 - A 2031 - A 2036 - B 2042 - B	2026 - B 2037 - C 2043 - C 2048 - B	2027 - C 2032 - B 2038 - A 2049 - C	2022 - A 2033 - C 2039 - B 2044 - A 2050 - A
Nov. 30	Nov. 29	Nov. 28	Nov. 27
Dec. 1	Nov. 30	Nov. 29	Nov. 28
Dec. 2	Dec. 1	Nov. 30	Nov. 29
Dec. 3	Dec. 2	Dec. 1	Nov. 30
Dec. 4	Dec. 3	Dec. 2	Dec. 1
Dec. 5	Dec. 4	Dec. 3	Dec. 2
Dec. 6	Dec. 5	Dec. 4	Dec. 3
Dec. 7	Dec. 6	Dec. 5	Dec. 4
<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	Dec. 7	Dec. 6	Dec. 5
Dec. 9	<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	Dec. 7	Dec. 6
Dec. 10	Dec. 9	<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	Dec. 7
Dec. 11	Dec. 10	Dec. 9	<b>Immaculate Conception</b>
Dec. 12	Dec. 11	Dec. 10	Dec. 9
Dec. 13	Dec. 12	Dec. 11	Dec. 10
Dec. 14	Dec. 13	Dec. 12	Dec. 11
Dec. 15	Dec. 14	Dec. 13	Dec. 12
Dec. 16	Dec. 15	Dec. 14	Dec. 13
17—O Wisdom	Dec. 16	Dec. 15	Dec. 14
18—O Adonai	17—O Wisdom	Dec. 16	Dec. 15
19—O Root of Jesse	18—O Adonai	17—O Wisdom	Dec. 16
20—O Key of David	19—O Root of Jesse	18—O Adonai	17—O Wisdom
21—O Rising Dawn	20—O Key of David	19—O Root of Jesse	18—O Adonai
22—O King of the Nations	21—O Rising Dawn	20—O Key of David	19—O Root of Jesse
23—O Emmanuel	22—O King of the Nations	21—O Rising Dawn	20—O Key of David
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	23—O Emmanuel	22—O King of the Nations	21—O Rising Dawn
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	23—O Emmanuel	22—O King of the Nations
n/a	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	23—O Emmanuel
n/a	n/a	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>
n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>Christmas Day</b>

## Notes

- **A/B/C** — The letters indicated after the years refer to the corresponding cycle of readings from the *Lectionary for Mass* for the **Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite**. Thus, **Advent 2019** (and the rest of the 2020 liturgical year) used readings from Cycle A, while **Advent 2020** (and the rest of liturgical year 2021) used readings from Cycle B, and **Advent 2021** (and the rest of liturgical year 2022) used readings from Cycle C.
- **NB: The Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite** does not have cycles, but has the same readings every year for its lectionary. As this work was written in 1953, all references to readings for the Mass and the Divine Office made in this work refer to the Roman liturgy prior to the Second Vatican Council.
- **4th Week of Advent** — The length for the season of Advent varies. The Fourth Sunday of Advent could be *as early as* Dec. 18, a full week before Christmas (as in 2016 and 2022), or not at all if it is on its latest date, December 24, as Christmas Eve is a more important liturgy (as in 2017 and 2023).



- **O Antiphons** — During the eight days before Christmas (December 17–24), the liturgy changes in an octave of preparation for Christmas day. The traditional “O Antiphons,” which give various prophesied titles of the Messiah in the Old Testament, are used during the Evening Prayer of Liturgy of the Hours and in the Alleluia Verse before the Gospel reading at Mass. Additionally, special readings are used in this time during weekday Masses.
- **Ember Days** — “Ember days” are the days at the beginning of the seasons ordered by the Church as days of fast and abstinence. The purpose of their introduction, besides the general one intended by all prayer and fasting, was to thank God for the gifts of nature, to teach men to make use of them in moderation, and to assist the needy.” They were definitely arranged and prescribed for the entire Church by Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) for the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after St. Lucy’s (December 13), after Ash Wednesday, after Pentecost, and after the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Mershman, “Ember Days,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909).



# SPIRITUAL STEPS TO CHRISTMAS







# FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT



## First Sunday of Advent: Preparing for Christmas

“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and stars; and on the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the sound of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear and expectation of the things which shall come upon the world: for the powers of heaven shall be moved. And then they shall see the Son of man coming on a cloud with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads: because your redemption is at hand.’ And he spoke to them a similitude: ‘See the fig-tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, ye know that summer is nigh. So also, when the kingdom of God is at hand. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words

shall not pass away.”<sup>3</sup> The Catholic Church is the most interesting institution in the world. Like her Founder, she is both human and divine. She is human because her members are of human origin; she is divine because Christ, the Head of these members, is divine. The Catholic Church is the greatest storyteller in the world. She is the greatest of all narrators because, being human, she is like a great nourishing mother, *Alma*<sup>4</sup> *Mater*, as she soothes her children with the happiest of tales in a most loving manner. She is the most profound and interesting storyteller, for she tells the story of God in His relations with men, the greatest story ever told: the story of God becoming man, the Incarnation.

Now, how does holy Mother Church tell this story and where does she get her facts? The Church tells the story by her liturgy, by her chant and, as it were, by painting word-pictures in the liturgy, thus arresting our attention by turning over the pages of the life of Christ for our spiritual growth.

The first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the storytelling by narrating the anticipation of Christ's coming and by highlighting the story in the word-picture of the day's liturgy. The liturgy of the Catholic Church is most impressive and contains a world of meaning if we will

<sup>3</sup> Luke 21:25–33.

<sup>4</sup> “Alma” is a Latin word which can be translated as “nourishing, kind, genial, or indulgent.”



but look beneath the surface and meditate reflectively. Every movement of the priest and the people, every psalm, every prayer that is uttered has a meaning and contains a fund for spiritual enrichment that the witness is left to ponder in his heart and unlock the riches of wisdom.

It is our purpose in these thought pieces, in preparation for Christmas, to show the role that prayer and penance play in the life of each member of the Mystical Body of Christ to unlock these rich mysteries and truths. Thus, by a close following of the Gospels for the Sundays and by our thinking with the Church in a liturgical sense, we shall listen to the story related by our fostering, holy Mother Church concerning the greatest character of all history, Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

There is a pamphlet by Dom Gueranger<sup>5</sup> entitled, “Advent, Its Meaning and Purpose,” which tells of the

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<sup>5</sup> Dom Prosper Gueranger, OSB (1805–75) was a key figure in spreading the restoration of the Benedictine Order in the nineteenth century. Dom Gueranger was the founder and abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Solesmes, arguably one of the most powerful institutions in the recovering of beauty in the liturgy amid the liturgical decadence of post-Revolutionary and Napoleonic French Catholicism. His *magnum opus*, *The Liturgical Year*, is a fifteen volume work examining the Roman Liturgy, while under his leadership, his monastery compiled the authoritative book of chant, *Liber Usualis*, which the Roman Church adopted as the

preparation that should be made by Christian hearts before Christmas. In such a spirit of prayer during these Advent days, we come to the feet of our holy Mother; we listen to the most interesting of all storytellers and to the greatest story of them all. In spirit we go to a church in the City of Rome, St. Mary Major's, where we kneel before what holy tradition has presented to us as the Crib of Bethlehem.<sup>6</sup> On the first

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liturgical book by which all chanted liturgies were sung, up until the promulgation of the *Novus Ordo Missae*.

<sup>6</sup> The Crib of Bethlehem is one of the oldest and longest revered relics of the Church. Saint Jerome had a great devotion to the Crib while it was in Bethlehem in the Patristic age, and the relic stayed there until the rise of Islam in the seventh century jeopardized the relic's safety. Legend has it that Saint Jerome appeared to a monk three times, telling him to bring the relic to Rome. The holy relic was indeed taken to Rome where it has stayed since. The Crib is kept in Santa Maria Maggiore, also known as Saint Mary's Major, Our Lady of the Snow, and Our Lady of the Crib, due to a few pieces of wood being kept on the altar. On Christmas night, the rest of the relics in their majestic reliquaries are brought in a solemn procession to the main altar of the church and stay there for three days for public veneration. In 2019, a small part of the Crib was sent to Bethlehem under the protection of the Custodia Terrae Sanctae at Saint Catherine's Church, which is adjacent to the Church of the Nativity. See *Sacred Heart Review*, Volume 3, Number 2, December 7, 1889; See also "Vatican returns Jesus 'crib fragment' to Bethlehem," *DW*, accessed June 2, 2022, <http://dw.com/en/vatican-returns-jesus-crib-fragment-to-bethlehem/a-51463805>.

Sunday of Advent all Christians in the spirit of the liturgy of the Mass make their way to this station. It is for this reason we find the prayers of the Mass centering around the birth of Christ and the Virgin Mother and the crib.

The story of the long awaiting for the coming of Christ is told in the words of Isaiah the prophet, who of all the prophets Sacred Scripture speaks most directly and explicitly of the Messiah. For each day of Advent, Holy Mother Church has her priests and religious pray something from the writings of this great prophet in their recitation of the Divine Office.

In this prophecy Isaiah speaks of the Lord, who exalted His children only to have them despise Him; he speaks of Israel, “who hath not known the Lord and His people, who hath not understood.” And he continues: “They have forsaken the Lord, they have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel; they have gone backwards.”<sup>7</sup>

The words of the Prophet should make a deep impression on our hearts at the beginning of the holy season of Advent. Who of us can hear without trembling this voice of the Lord, who is despised and unknown even at the very time when He is to come and visit His people? “If today you hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 1:3–4.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 94:8.



The story is being retold. The Church, in accents of solemnity, in colors of penitential purple vestments, in notes of solemn music is repeating for us the burden of her message. Christ is coming to save the world, which, as Isaias says, is sickened—"the whole head is sick and the whole heart is sad."<sup>9</sup> Christ is coming to judge the world, for "the powers of heaven shall be moved, and then they shall see the Son of man coming on a cloud with great power and majesty. When these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand."<sup>10</sup>

Members of Christ's Mystical Body, hearken to the words of "the greatest story ever told" as recounted by the greatest mother of them all. The story is Christ's coming, or Advent. The mother is the Church. Now is the hour for us to rise from sleep, to save the world from chaos, to rescue souls from materialism, and to save them for the all-powerful dignity of incorporation in Christ's Mystical Body. We shall do this by beginning to reform ourselves, by spending Advent prayerfully, by "casting off the works of darkness . . . and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 1:5.

<sup>10</sup> Luke 21:26–28.

<sup>11</sup> Romans 13:12, 14.

## *Prayer*

Blessed Savior of men, You prepared us, Your servants, for long years by prophecies and symbols to foretell of the Coming of the Anointed One, the Messiah, who would redeem the world and reopen for us the gates of Paradise.

This Advent we pray and beseech You to accept our humble offering of preparation of our bodies and souls. May each day be for us a step, each step a prayer, each prayer a pilgrimage toward Bethlehem with Jesus and Mary and Joseph. Help us to pray fervently, to walk valiantly, and to persevere to the end, You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Monday of the First Week of Advent: Christmas Is the Feast of the Home

G. K. Chesterton has noted that Christmas is a divine paradox. Christmas is the Feast of the Homeless One who had to find shelter in a cave and to be warmed by the breath of oxen, yet the same feast is celebrated in every home. For this reason it is good for us in this holy season



of Advent to reflect on the importance of the home and Christian civilization.

One of the most historic shrines of France, attended annually by thousands of visitors, is Malmaison, the home of Napoleon and Josephine. It was here that Napoleon came after his brilliant military victories. Each room is arranged exactly in the same manner as when this great military leader occupied it. There is the very chair in which sat this monarch of world empire, there is the desk at which he wrote, and there the pen with which he mapped out his great victories.

As the visitor passes through these rooms exuding a martial atmosphere, he comes into the suite occupied by Josephine. There is a marked contrast. No martial note here. Only the little incidentals that minister to the needs of womankind and echo forth the dominant note of her heart are present. True, here in this room is a beautiful harp, a symbol of domestic peace and homely concord. Upon further inspection, however, we note that its strings are broken. It stands there mute and silent as an ironic reminder that discordant notes of domestic strife once filled this chamber. To every informed visitor it is a symbol and a reminder that the great Napoleon who conquered Europe failed in the altogether crucial building of the most important empire of all—the empire of his



own home. Indeed, the inspired writer has written the epitaph for this story when he said: “Greater is he who governs himself than he who rules cities.”<sup>12</sup>

With the authority as the Vicar of Christ coupled with the kindly voice of a shepherd caring for his sheep, Pope Pius XI’s papal encyclical *Casti Connubii* reminds all peoples that the home is the foundation of human society.<sup>13</sup> He who undermines the home, the Father of Christendom points out, blasts at the solid bedrock upon which not only society but all stable government alike is built. No expedient yet devised by the sociologist or political scientist constitutes so mighty a bulwark for the protection of human society and orderly government as the teaching of Christ’s Church concerning the sanctity of marriage, the indissolubility of its bond, and the permanence of the Christian home.

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<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 16:32.

<sup>13</sup> “How great is the dignity of chaste wedlock, Venerable Brethren, may be judged best from this that Christ Our Lord, Son of the Eternal Father, having assumed the nature of fallen man, not only, with His loving desire of compassing the redemption of our race, ordained it in an especial manner as the principle and foundation of domestic society and therefore of all human intercourse, but also raised it to the rank of a truly and great sacrament of the New Law, restored it to the original purity of its divine institution, and accordingly entrusted all its discipline and care to His spouse the Church.” Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* (December 31, 1930), no. 1.

The mother is the “heart,” the father is the “head” of the home. It is the plan of an all-wise and provident God that a child be reared in a home where principles of proper thought and action are instilled by a loving mother and a kindly ruling father. After years of study and research, experts in child psychology now assure us that impressions received during early childhood undoubtedly set up mental patterns and modes of conduct, in the light of which all the experiences of later life are interpreted and evaluated. Indeed, this is merely an affirmation of a truth spoken thousands of years ago by the inspired writer of the Book of Proverbs, wherein we read: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”<sup>14</sup>

The home dominated by the mother and father occupies the all-important position in life, for the most important things are their primary concerns. A mother need not be learned as measured by worldly standards; she need only have a knowledge of God and a loving, kindly, living fear of the Lord in order successfully to train her child. A father need not know the ways and means of ruling an empire! Indeed, if he did, he, like the great Napoleon, might neglect the empire of his home. A father need only

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<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 22:6.

have an understanding of the words, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,”<sup>15</sup> and live out and instruct his children in this wisdom. Such a father placed in rule over a child, with his loving spouse at his side, is indeed the builder of nations and is beloved of God!

Our Holy Father Pope Pius XII reminds us in his encyclical letter on “Christian Education”<sup>16</sup> that the home precedes both the Church and the State in the matter of education.<sup>17</sup> For, since the mother is the first and most effective teacher of the child, the home becomes the first and most important school. No lay teacher, sister, or priest can be an adequate substitute for the mother as a teacher.

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<sup>15</sup> Proverbs 9:10.

<sup>16</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Divini Illustrius Magistri* (December 29, 1931).

<sup>17</sup> “The Angelic Doctor with his wonted clearness of thought and precision of style, says: ‘The father according to the flesh has in a particular way a share in that principle which in a manner universal is found in God. . . . The father is the principle of generation, of education and discipline and of everything that bears upon the perfecting of human life.’ (S.T., 2-2, Q. 102, a. 1) The family therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the State, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth.” Pope Pius XII, *Divini Illustrius Magistri*, nos. 31, 32).

These agencies are only meant to be complementary and supplementary to the training given the child in the home.

The Church for our edification and inspiration points to the model home of Nazareth, where Jesus dwelt in obedience to Mary and Joseph. Thus did our divine Lord set up an example for youth everywhere, for Scripture tells us, "He was subject to them."<sup>18</sup>

Great has been the example of good homes through the ages! Look to the saintly influences of St. Monica in praying for her son, Augustine. Look to the example of the queenly mother Blanche and her influence over her son, St. Louis of France. Look about the world today and wherever you see priests and sisters you will know the influence of the home that is good. Look into your own heart today! Remember the joys of your happy home life! Is it any wonder that a ballad comes down through the years, sung by a thousand voices, a thousand times over, "Home, Sweet Home"?

Somewhere in heaven today there is a mother reaping the reward of a Christian home she founded upon earth. To such noble women we pledge our loyalty to preserve these ideals for America, under God, and in filial devotion and prayer, we say:

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 2:51.

Mother, upon me gaze tonight  
From thy beautiful home above;

And tell me are the stars as bright  
As the beacon of thy love?

Mother, does sometimes upon thy knee  
While the angels stand and stare,

The Christ-Child sit and tell thee of me,  
And finger thy silvery hair?

Mother, when life's short years are run,  
And the Gleaner beckons to me,

Oh, pray the God in that Little One  
To bring me home to thee.