

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Reverence the House of God

“My house is a house of prayer” (Luke, 19:46)

Our Blessed Lord always showed great reverence for the temple of Jerusalem. It was to this majestic edifice that He came at the age of twelve to manifest His reverence for His heavenly Father. Hence, when He found in the temple certain activities repugnant to the respect and the honour due to the house of God He showed justifiable anger in driving out those who were engaged in buying and selling and money-changing. St. John tells us that on this occasion Christ used a whip to put to flight those who were busy with this trafficking (*John, 2:15*).

If the temple of Jerusalem, where only symbolic sacrifices were offered, mere images of the sacrifice that was to be offered on Calvary, was so worthy of reverence, certainly much more deserving of honour is the Catholic church in which the holy sacrifice of the Mass is daily offered with Christ Himself as the principal Priest and Victim. The Catholic church is not a mere meeting-house where the congregation assembles to listen to a sermon, as is the case with Protestant churches. The Catholic church is the dwelling place of the Son of God, for Christ remains present on the altar night and day under the lowly appearances of bread, that He may give grace and consolation to those who come to kneel before Him.

This is the reason why Catholics manifest such great reverence in their churches. When a Catholic enters the church, his first thought should be that he is coming into the presence of Jesus Christ. His first act of homage should be to the Blessed Sacrament. Before he pays homage to any of the saints, or even to the Blessed Virgin, he should visit the altar on which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved—generally the high altar in our country—and there kneel in adoration. The Church grants an indulgence to those who, on entering a church, proceed immediately to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament and there make even a brief act of adoration (*Raccolta, n. 147*).

Because of the reverence due to the church, Catholics should not converse unnecessarily, and still less laugh and joke boisterously in church. Such conduct is likely to happen at weddings. Finally, when a Catholic man is passing before the church, he should tip his hat, and a woman should bow as an act of adoration to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. This act is also indulged by the Church (*Raccolta, n. 146*).

Practical Application

If you were invited to visit a distinguished personage, you would manifest all the required marks of respect. When you enter a Catholic church you are in the presence of the Lord of heaven and earth. Show Him the reverence due to God Himself.