

EXCELLENCE OF RELIGIOUS VOWS

THERE ARE ON EARTH TWO DEGREES OF SANCTITY. THE FIRST, IN ITS ESSENTIALS, CONSISTS IN NOT SEPARATING ONE'S SELF FROM GOD BY MORTAL SIN: THE SECOND RISES TO A HIGHER DEGREE OF PURITY AND UNION WITH GOD. TO ATTAIN THESE TWO GRADES OF SANCTITY, THERE ARE TWO CLASSES OF MEANS: FIRST, THOSE WHICH GOD RIGOROUSLY EXACTS: SECONDLY, THOSE WHICH PERTAIN TO HIS PLEASURE. THERE ARE ACTIONS WHICH ARE OBLIGATORY: THERE ARE OTHERS, WHICH ALTHOUGH NOT ENJOINED BY ANY LAW, ARE MOST PLEASING TO GOD. OUR LORD IN HIS GOSPEL AND THE HOLY GHOST BY THE GOOD INSPIRATIONS INVITE US TO THIS HIGHER PERFECTION. WE GIVE THE NAME OF COUNSELS TO THESE INVITATIONS AND THE NAME OF PRECEPTS TO THE COMMANDMENTS.

THE VOWS WE ARE ABOUT TO RENEW BELONG TO THESE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS: THEY ARE THE QUINTESSENCE OF THE ADVISE GIVEN BY OUR LORD TO THE YOUNG MAN, WHO, HAVING FULFILLED THE COMMANDMENTS, WAS ANXIOUS TO DO WHATSOEVER WOULD BRING HIM INTO THE POSSESSION OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

THESE VOWS WE ARE ABOUT TO RENEW REMOVE THE INTERIOR OBSTACLES, WHICH PREVENT A COMPLETE TURNING OF OUR AFFECTIONS TOWARDS GOD. THE FIRST OBSTACLE IS COVETOUSNESS AND THIS IS CURBED BY THE VOW OF POVERTY. THE SECOND IS CONCUPISCENCE OF THE FLESH AND THIS IS EXCLUDED BY THE VOW OF CHASTITY. THE THIRD IS DISORDER IN THE WILL AND THIS IS DONE AWAY WITH, BY THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE, WHICH PLACES THE WILL UNDER THE DIRECTION OF GOD HIMSELF, COMMANDING IN THE PERSON OF THE SUPERIOR.