# SPIRITUAL HOUSECLEANING IN LENT

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Dear faithful, in some monasteries there was a custom that when Lent began, the monks carried everything out of their cells. Everything that was in the cell had to be put outside, in the courtyard. And on Ash Wednesday, after everything had been carried out, they could take back into the cell only what was truly indispensable to them. And at the end of Lent it turned out that a whole mass of things stayed outside, because it turned out that they were not so necessary and indispensable for life after all.

Dear faithful, this season of Lent ought to be, in the life of every Catholic, a time of great housecleaning. And it is worthwhile for each of us, as it were, to carry outside everything that has occupied us over the past year, everything that has consumed our time, our energy, our interest, and to ask ourselves which of these matters I truly need and which is mere dead weight; which of all this serves my soul and helps me on the road to salvation, and which is an obstacle. Dear faithful, each of us should carry out such a review, such a spiritual review, because the life of each of us is extremely cluttered, and we waste a mass of energy, a mass of time, a mass of strength on things that are superfluous, unnecessary, on things that harm us.

In particular, I encourage you all to reflect during this Lent on two matters.

## OUR CONTACTS WITH OTHERS

First, my dear ones, our contacts with other people. Our contacts with people have a great influence on how we live, because our surroundings influence, to a lesser or greater degree, how we think and how we live. And we must ask ourselves whether I surround myself with noble people, whether I surround myself with good Catholics, or whether my company is rather a bad company, a godless company, one that drags me toward hell. It is worthwhile, my dear ones, that from time to time we go through our contacts, even just in our phones, and ask ourselves whether this or that person is needed in my life, whether he is a support to me, a help, or whether he is rather pulling me in the wrong direction, whether contact with him simply corrupts me. And surely the experience of our daily life shows that a whole mass of good souls has been corrupted by bad company.

## THE COMPUTER-AND-SMARTPHONE DISEASE

The second matter to which we should pay attention this year is the matter of the computer-and-smartphone disease. How much time do I spend in front of the computer? How much time do I spend sitting on the phone, mindlessly swiping with my finger or clicking a mouse? How much energy do I lose on senseless things? And I am thinking here, my dear ones, not only of what is evil in itself, not only of entirely immoral, worthless content, but, my dear ones, of the whole mass of time and energy that we devote to various YouTube channels run by various YouTube lay preachers who instruct us what to think.

A few days ago, while on a pastoral visit to a certain family, I heard from an elderly soul: "Your Excellency, you see, I still have to listen to [the name of a channel is mentioned], and then I will know what to think." Dear faithful, a great problem of modern man is that we have stopped thinking, that we lend an ear so that someone may tell us what we are to think. And how does such propaganda, trickled out by every sort of Jewish, leftist media, differ from the propaganda produced by assorted YouTubers of doubtful quality who style themselves Catholics, right-wing activists and so on? This too, and that too, is propaganda. This too, and that too, is meant to bring us to the point where we stop thinking and become dependent on someone who will tell us what to think.

And surely we have a whole mass of channels on YouTube that we have somewhere liked and subscribed to. And now we must answer the question

whether I really need this. Every day there surely comes more than one notification, new content, new material. The method of operation is the same: we are meant, my dear ones, to live in a constant chase after sensation. This is how not only openly Jewish, openly anti-Catholic media work, but also the whole so-called, well, supposedly right-wing, conservative or traditionalist internet. There must be eye-catching graphics, a catchy, loud title meant to seize our attention, and you are to live in a constant search for news, for something new, for some juicy morsel. But do you need it at all, for anything? Does it help you grow in holiness, or is it rather an obstacle on the way to God? It is worthwhile, my dear ones, that here too we carry out such a review and answer the question whether I need this, who this person is to whom I give my attention and time. Is he a person of God, or perhaps simply another provocateur, a Jewish provocateur dressed in the garb of a traditionalist?

## THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT

Dear faithful, and since we are speaking of housecleaning, the Lord Jesus mentions it in today's Gospel too. We hear the story of the evil spirit who goes out of a man, wanders about seeking rest, and not finding it, says: "I will return into my house from whence I came out"; and when he is come, he finds it swept and garnished. Dear faithful, what did the Lord Jesus actually want to convey to us through these words? The Fathers of the Church explain that this story refers to the Jews. The Jews were chosen by God in order to prepare the earthly framework for the coming into the world of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. And so this evil spirit was driven out. God was preparing the Jewish nation for Himself through the Old Testament, purifying it. And what happens next? This expelled evil spirit wanders about. Such is the spiritual state of the nation, of the Jews as a once-chosen nation. They stood higher than the pagans. They were purified by God. Hence the Lord Jesus says that he returns to that house, which he finds swept and garnished. And so the Jews were purified, they were being prepared for the reception of the Messiah. But what happens next, my dear ones? That house turns out to be empty. It is swept, to be sure, it is garnished, but there is no one in it, which is a symbol of the Jews' rejection of the Messiah, the rejection of Jesus Christ. And what happens to such a swept, garnished, but empty house? Then this evil spirit says to himself that he takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there.

And the Fathers of the Church point out: since the Jews rejected Jesus Christ, since they became deicides, they brought a curse upon themselves, and the Jewish nation found itself in the hands of the devil and became an instrument of the devil. Hence, after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Jewish nation fell far deeper spiritually than the pagans fell. And the spiritual state of the Jews is worse than that of paganism.

## THE TIRELESS DEVIL

But, my dear ones, this story is surely playing out all the time, this time with our participation. Through the sacrament of holy Baptism we are cleansed of original sin. Sanctifying grace is given to us. We become friends, servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our soul is swept, adorned, and God Himself begins to dwell in it. But when a man sins gravely, when he loses sanctifying grace, his soul becomes empty again. And what happens then? Then the devil comes, and seeing this emptiness, he takes seven more wicked spirits and they dwell there.

This is, my dear ones, a warning for all of us Catholics. A warning that the devil does not sleep. The devil does not go on sick leave, he does not go away to a sanatorium or on holiday. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, he goes about us, seeking whom he may devour, as Saint Peter the Apostle writes. On this third Sunday of Lent, the holy Church reminds us that if our soul is cleansed, whether by the sacrament of holy Baptism or by holy Confession, when it happens that we commit sin after Baptism, we are cleansed anew. The Fathers of the Church call Confession "a little Baptism." It washes the soul of sin. If this cleansed, swept soul does not strive to preserve God's grace, to keep God living in it, it will fall into the claws of Satan and its spiritual state will be even worse than at the beginning, for the higher the floor you fall from, the more you will be battered.

And so it was, my dear ones, with the Jewish nation. So it was with the Jews, who rejected their election, who rejected Jesus Christ, the one Saviour of every man. But it goes still worse with bad, fallen Catholics. A good beginning, and a wretched end. The history of the Church, especially in the last several decades, shows how great this danger is. How many souls began well, how many souls received a Catholic upbringing, how many priests received a Catholic formation. And what became of all of them? They fell, and their fall is a terrible thing. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* The corruption of the best is the greatest, the worst. A great warning for all who call themselves Catholics of Tradition. May we, my dear ones, not share the lot of the faithless Jews. May we not share the lot of so many wretched Catholics who betrayed the Lord Jesus, who denied Him, who without batting an eye rejected the religion of God and accepted the comfortable religion of man.

## RESOLUTIONS FOR LENT

My dear ones, on this third Sunday of Lent let us resolve firmly that we will make this spiritual review of our lives, that we will look in particular at our contacts, at whom we keep company with, who my company is. One might say: tell me who you keep company with, and I will tell you who you will be. And second, my dear ones, let us consider whether we are not gravely sick with the computer-and-smartphone disease. How much time, how much energy we waste every day on foolish things, on superfluous things.

How many more Lents, my dear ones, do we need in order finally to put our soul in order, to set everything, as it were, outside and look at it, and answer the question: what do I really need in life?

## A SICK MAN'S WITNESS

In the year of Our Lord 2021, in the time of the covidiocy, one of the faithful in Podkarpacie suffered a stroke, and since May 2021 he has been in hospitals, and now in a nursing and care facility. In a moment it will be five years, five years of paralysis. His right side is completely paralysed, he is essentially deprived of speech, and for five years he has been lying in bed. In the meantime his wife died, and he has been chained to his bed all the while, day and night, and so for five years, my dear ones, a fully conscious man. When I come to him with the sacraments, with holy Communion, when I enter the ward, a broad smile at once appears on this man's face, and he rejoices, and you can even hear how he rejoices, how he laughs. I administer the holy sacraments. With his left hand he makes the Sign of the Cross, the right is limp. When I say the *Confiteor*, he strikes his breast and answers: "Amen." He can literally say a few words, but, you understand, I ask him how long he has been lying here, and he shows me on his fingers; he knows how long he has been chained to this bed of sorrows.

And in the situation in which he finds himself, my dear ones, I have never seen a grimace of pain, of dissatisfaction, of impatience on his face. Always smiling, and we talk. I say: "Mr. Emil, do you know why you suffer so here?" "Yes." "Yes. You suffer in order to make reparation for your own sins and for the sins of other people, for the sins of the Poles." "Yes, yes, yes." A man who, humanly speaking, my dear ones, has lost everything. He has only a little life left. God alone knows how much. Surely everyone around is amazed, as the nurses, the doctors comment that he is still alive. So much time, so much time. But in him there is that desire, my dear ones, for satisfaction. This is a soul of sacrifice, a soul ready for penance, a soul ready to carry its cross, and he understands perfectly that this cross, this suffering has value, that it is not senseless, but he offers all of it up in atonement for sins.

## GRATITUDE TO GOD

Dear faithful, let us answer the question: is there in me a readiness to offer up anything? Am I ready to accept some small suffering, to make some small renunciation? Am I grateful to God for what He gives me every day? Do I value God's grace? Or perhaps I am an insufferable grumbler? Everything always wrong, never good, right? Yes. This is, my dear ones, our attitude, our bad, wretched attitude is the fruit of the clutter of our lives, of the fact that we no longer know what else to grab hold of in life, what else to

experience, where to travel, what to do, what to buy.

Let us answer the question, my dear ones, honestly, on this third Sunday of Lent: what do I truly, indispensably need in life, and am I able to be grateful and to rejoice in what God gives me?

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ.