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“Each year that ends is a step that takes us nearer to Heaven”

When you look back on your life, which seems to have been marked by no great efforts or achievements, think how much time you have wasted, and how you can recover it with penance and greater self-giving.

(Furrow, 996)

December 31

It had been said in countless ways,
some more poetical than others that,

by the grace and mercy of God, each year that ends is a step that takes us nearer to Heaven, our final home.

When I reflect on this, how well I understand St Paul's exclamation when he writes to the Corinthians, *tempus breve est* [1]. How short indeed is the time of our passing through this world! For the true Christian these words ring deep down in his heart as a reproach to his lack of generosity, and as a constant invitation to be loyal. Brief indeed is our time for loving, for giving, for making atonement. It would be very wrong, therefore, for us to waste it, or to cast this treasure irresponsibly overboard. We mustn't squander this period of the world's history which God has entrusted to each one of us...

Let us take a good honest look at our own lives. How is it that sometimes we just can't find those few minutes

it would take to finish lovingly the work we have to do, which is the very means of our sanctification? Why do we neglect our family duties? Why that tendency to rush through our prayers, or through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? How are we so lacking in calm and serenity when it comes to fulfilling the duties of our state, and yet so unhurried as we indulge in our own whims? You might say these are trifling matters. You're right, they are, but these trifles are the oil, the fuel we need to keep our flame alive and our light shining. (Friends of God, 39-41)

[1] 1 Cor 7:29