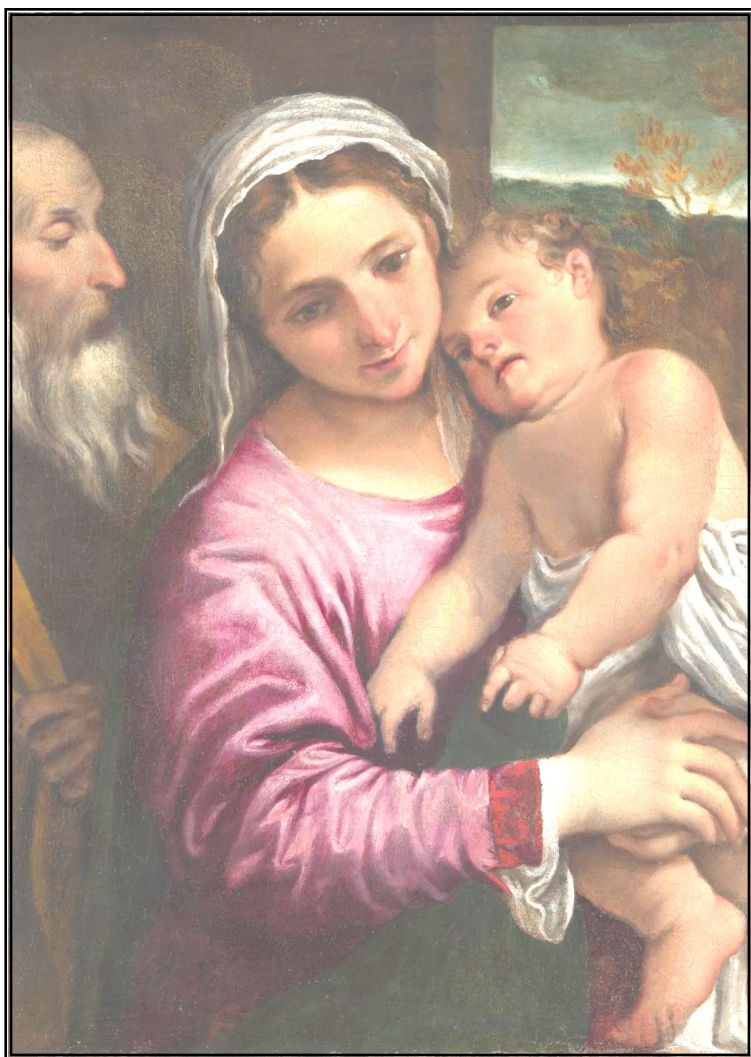


# THE SERAPH

January 2019

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*In essentia - Únitas. In dúbio - Libertas.  
In ómnibus - Cáritas.*

# THE HOUSE OF GOD

*Bishop Giles, OFM*

---

The Catholic Church is the House of God. We are, in one respect, guests in His Home; and, in another respect, the Church is our home. We have been made by God and for God – we belong to Him and with Him. As members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church is our home. This dual relationship that we have with the House of God imposes upon us a delicate balancing act. We should feel welcome and at home in the Church, but we should not lose respect, decency, and courtesy that are proper here.

We should frequently visit our church even outside of the Mass or other public worship. Children, as well as adults, should become familiar with the various rooms or parts of the church and their relative purpose and importance. As we enter the church, we usually begin in the outer porch. Here is where we collect ourselves and leave the world outside. Next, we enter the vestibule where we further

distance ourselves from the world and all its cares and concerns. We check our clothing and make sure that we are presentable before we enter before the Presence of God. Our hair should be neat, our hands, and faces should be clean. This is not the place for food or chewing gum. These are not allowed in school classrooms, and if it is not proper in such places, it is definitely out of place here. If these things need further attention or care we should be familiar with the restroom. There may be one near the vestibule or in the parish hall.

We should have on our best as we present the best we have to offer as we come before God. Men, both young and old, should have their best dress on. This may be a suit and tie for some, and for others, it may be a modest dress shirt and pants. Shorts, tee-shirts, play clothes, work clothes, etc. are usually not our best and we should refrain from such wear.

Similar requirements apply to women and girls. They should wear their best. They should wear dresses or skirts and have a proper head covering. As with the men, modesty is important – tight-fitting or revealing clothing is not appropriate. The church is not a ballroom, a beach, or a local bar. Your dress should reflect a finer femininity.

As with all rules, there are exceptions. Those who have come for the first time to church and are unaware of the dress code should still be welcomed and gently reminded that the next time they should wear their best. Sometimes people must go directly to work or come directly from work when they come to the church. In this case, they may be excused for wearing their work uniforms. Sometimes, illness or bodily injury prohibits the wearing of our best. This too is excusable. In any situation, we should always strive to do the best that we are capable of. Let us approach as nearly as possible proper modest and decent dress.

Alongside our outward appearances, we should consider

our inward dispositions. Men and boys are expected to be gentlemen and women and girls to be ladies. We must remind ourselves that we want to put our best foot forward as we come before Jesus in His Home. We should encourage one another and especially our younger members by our attitude, dress, and comportment. It is not a competition, but there should be a mutual help as well as worthwhile examples.

Let us observe what is placed in the vestibule. There may be statues or pictures of saints. (It is not out of place to make a short prayer to these saints to help us to worthily present ourselves before God.) We might find extra veils for the women and girls who may have forgotten their own. Often there are various publications or pamphlets available for our spiritual instruction or edification. We may find various announcements and even a donation box. There may be an image of our bishop. (Let us always remember to pray for him and our priest as we likewise should do for our parents.) The vestibule is not the place for conversation.

Whispers are permitted if necessary – remember we are here to speak with God, not one another. Our whispers should be confined to the vestibule as much as possible, and not allowed to enter any further into the church.

Sometimes, nearby the vestibule, we find a cry room. This room usually has a large window so that parents may take their babies and attend to their needs without disturbing others and still attend Mass. This room is not a playroom for children. Nor is this room a place to get away from the Mass. It is for occasional or temporary use. Children should understand that this room is for babies and not big children. Those older than infants should be taught and be able to behave in church. They should know how to pray, to be quiet, and to pay attention according to their age and ability. They may have their own age-appropriate prayer-books to hold their attention, as well as devotion to the various saints represented by pictures or statues. Toys and food and drinks should not be necessary. If parents find them necessary, then they must use

them and teach the children to use them as discretely as possible. They should be taken out of the church and not left on the floor or in the pew. Children can soon understand that God is here and they must try to be on their best behavior. Attending Mass is a privilege and not a chore. It is not a punishment to go to church. It is a punishment to have to be taken out of the church because of bad behavior. We miss so many spiritual graces and opportunities if we miss part of the Holy Mass. Not only does the child miss these, but also the adult who must remove a misbehaving child.

From the vestibule, we enter into the nave of the church. This is where the people gather together. We see benches and kneelers for our use. Right near the entrance, we find a holy water font. It is proper for us to dip the tip of our finger into the water and bless ourselves with the Sign of the Cross. Along the wall, we find the Stations of the Cross. These are beautifully arranged for public or private devotion. There are usually statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and particular saints, and

sometimes of Jesus. Often, these have votive candles that we may light and make a monetary donation to help support the church and cover the expense of the candles. It is customary to make a request through prayer to a particular saint and have the burning candle continue our prayer even after we must leave.

Our attention, however, is first directed to the tabernacle in the sanctuary where Our Lord Jesus Christ is waiting. After we have blessed ourselves with holy water, we normally first approach the bench where we will worship Him, then before entering the bench we reverently greet Jesus with a simple genuflection. (This is done before we leave the church as well) It is proper to formally fold our hands as we touch the floor with our right knee while keeping our bodies erect and slightly bowing our heads. Those who are feeble or impaired in some way should strive to meet this requirement to the best of their ability. Some may need to hold onto the pew or bench to support themselves when genuflecting. Others may only be able to bow their heads or

strike their breasts. Some acknowledgment should be made to God as we enter. It is rude and insulting not to greet the host when we are invited into his home; it is even ruder and more insulting not to greet Jesus in His House. If the Blessed Sacrament is out of the tabernacle or exposed for our veneration and we are entering or leaving it is proper to make a double genuflection. (This is done by placing both knees on the floor and profoundly bowing our bodies at the waist.)

Once we enter our pew and take our place, we should kneel at least for a few moments to pray. We can greet Jesus and ask God's help to receive His graces properly and worthily. We can beg forgiveness for our sins, offenses, and negligence. We may read prayers from our prayer-book or some other pious material. If we are praying with others, we should conform as best we can so as not to be different or singular in our prayers.

Somewhere within the nave or off to a side is a confessional. This is a small divided room

where we can secretly confess our sins to the priest. Here we tell Jesus how sorry we are for our sins, and Jesus (through the priest) forgives our sins.

We may also find in the nave or in a small room off of the nave a Baptismal font. Here is where the Sacrament of Baptism is administered.

Usually, toward the back of the nave is a space for a choir. Sometimes the space is raised higher than the rest of the seating of the nave and is called a choir loft. Here is where the singers of the sacred music play or sing for the greater honor and glory of God.

We have briefly mentioned the sanctuary, and now it is time to focus our attention here. The sanctuary is the Holy of Holies. It is usually set apart from the nave by the Communion Rail. The laity does not enter the sanctuary – it is reserved for the priest and those serving at the altar. The priest brings Jesus to us, and we approach to receive Him at the Communion Rail. In the sanctuary, we see the altar where the Holy Sacrifice of

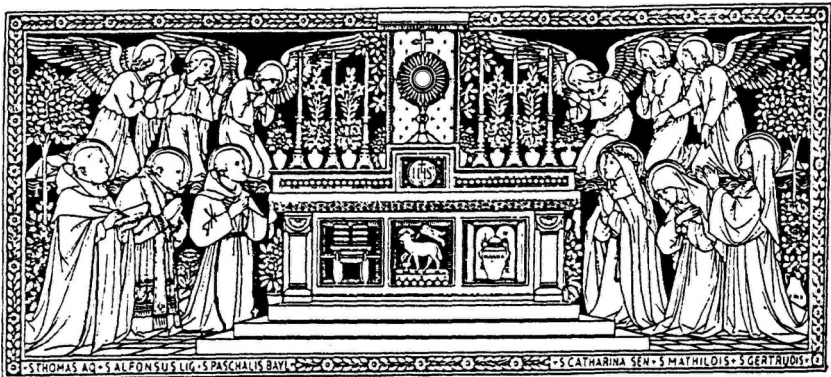
the Mass is offered. Upon the altar is the tabernacle where Jesus is present under the appearance of bread in the Holy Eucharist. There are candles on the altar for Holy Mass. Sometimes there are relics of canonized saints and there may also be flowers. Within the altar, under the altar cloths, encased in stone there is a relic of a canonized saint (altar stone). On temporary altars, there may simply be substituted a “Greek corporal” this is a cloth with a relic of a canonized saint sewn into the material. Above the altar is a crucifix. This keeps before our minds that the Holy Mass is the renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner. On the Epistle side of the altar (to our right) is a small table called the credence table. It is covered with a cloth, and a small crucifix and two candles. The cruets containing water and wine, a small dish and a cloth for washing the priest's fingers, Mass bells, and a Communion paten are all set out on the credence table. There may be a pulpit on the left side (Gospel side) from which the priest reads the Epistle and Gospel in English

and preaches a sermon. There may also be more statues of Jesus, Mary, or saints in the sacristy.

Behind the Sanctuary is the sacristy. Here is where the priest vests for Mass and many things used in the church are stored here also. There is generally a cabinet for the vestments and a table where the vestments are placed for the priest when he vests (dresses) for Holy Mass.

We should all become familiar with our parish church. It is good and proper for us to make frequent visits even when there are no public ceremonies for us to participate in. We may stop in to greet Our Lord before or

after work or school. Very often we find that when we are alone in the church with Jesus we can more easily or freely open up our hearts to Him and receive so many graces that help us advance our spiritual lives. These times are wonderful teaching opportunities for parents to instruct and train their children to pray, behave and maintain proper respect and decorum in God's House. Children enjoy stopping in for a little while and saying a few prayers and perhaps lighting a votive candle. In these moments they can see their parents pray and will naturally follow them. The best and finest teaching is through example.





# A CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

## BOOK TWO

*Father Anthony Lentz, OFM*

---

*Note: These next two articles are from my second paper dealing with Catholic education. We will be turning our focus upon understanding the various false philosophies of education, and how they affect education today.*

*It is becoming more and more evident with each passing year that Catholics, who desire the salvation of their children, will have to start homeschooling them. Homeschooling can seem like a daunting task, but there are options. There are many homeschool programs, such as those from Our Lady of Victory and Memoria Press Online School, that offer online tutoring and lesson plans that help the parents give their children a well-rounded education. Yes, this requires sacrifice – both time and money – but sacrifice has been the history of Catholic education in this country.*

*As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, if not earlier, the Catholic hierarchy of the United States quickly saw that they could not*

*send Catholic children to the public schools. They knew that the souls of these young ones under their care would be at risk, for they would quickly be indoctrinated into false materialistic philosophies. Hence the bishops established the parochial school system. Originally, at least not until the 1940's, Catholic schools did not receive any federal funding and were supported by Catholics like you. There were many sacrifices made, but the salvation of the children's souls were well worth it. Unfortunately, the Catholic hierarchy eventually compromised and accepted funding from the government, and thus accepting their conditions. This, along with the heresies of Vatican II, led to the down fall of Catholic education.*

*As not only a priest but also as a product of a solid Catholic education, I encourage every parent and grandparent reading this article to read or re-read the last three articles, so that you*

*will have a good understanding of what a truly Catholic education is! You can give this to your children - you should give this to your children! Pax et bonum!*

Where there is one truth, there can be a thousand lies! This is true in philosophy, religion, and education. The Catholic philosophy of education is based on the Catholic Principles of Life. This is the true philosophy of education because it recognizes man's whole and entire nature revealed through the mediums of his intellect and divine revelation. It recognizes that men are composed of both a material body and a spiritual soul. His spiritual soul will pass from this world into eternity. Depending on how a man has lived will determine as to whether or not his eternity will be happiness with God in Heaven or eternal separation from God in the torments of Hell. Man was made to live a good life by knowing, loving and serving God. This is only accomplished by recognizing the hierarchical order in nature, and observing the natural law which stems from this order. Furthermore, since man is

incapable of forming even one good thought without the help of God's grace, he needs the Sacraments, he needs to pray, and he needs the true religion! Since man has a free will he may choose to comply with the laws of God or he may disregard them. The difficulty of this arises from man's fallen nature – inherited by Adam as a result of Original Sin. This fallen nature has left man with an intellect less able to understand truth, a will less able in conforming itself to right order, and a propensity towards sin. This is why an education founded upon true principles and true religion is necessary. This education begins and ends with the school of Christ – His life and His teachings. Simply, this is the purpose of all education – to help form Christ in the souls of children.

This second book in Drs. Redden and Ryan's work, *A Catholic Philosophy of Education* discusses and refutes those current false philosophies of education which are based upon false principles of life. Each false philosophy of education stems from its refusal to accept the entire truth revealed by God, both

natural and supernatural, as well as the false philosophy's narrow-mindedness. This paper's goal is to touch upon those salient points that are particular to each false philosophy of education and to present, when necessary, the counter argument given by the Catholic Church. In addition to this we will touch upon the important message in the last chapter of this book "Education for Democracy." This chapter gives a true interpretation of democracy, and it explains the importance of it being studied and properly understood in these United States.

### NATURALISM AND EDUCATION

Naturalism has its roots in the humanism of Protestant reformers during the later Renaissance period (Note: Humanism maybe defined as *a devotion to those studies that promote human culture, literary culture, especially through the pursuit of the study of Roman and Greek classics*). According to naturalism the ultimate explanation of all reality is to be found in nature. As time went on the naturalism of the sixteenth century became

subject to rapid development and its views were being accepted in both the nineteenth century and twentieth century.

Naturalism has been given various definitions by many distinguished authors (e.g., Joyce, Hocking, Ward etc.), so there is no set definition. Although, all definitions agree on two tenets, reduced from five: 1) denial of the supernatural and opposition to supernatural religion; and 2) interpretation of man as different in degree but identical in kind with the animals.

Naturalism's purpose in education is concisely explained by Drs. Redden and Ryan: "*Education is regarded as the means to perpetuate the naturalistic philosophy of life. This philosophy holds that 'nature' is the great educator, and that the findings of natural science take precedence over traditional procedures. Therefore, biology, physiology, and experimental psychology, studied by empirical methods, supply the data required to construct an educational theory in conformity with the naturalistic philosophy of life.*"

## SOCIALISM AND EDUCATION

Socialism is a direct offshoot of naturalism, both being based on the naturalistic philosophy of life. Their difference lies in their ultimate ends. Naturalism's ultimate end is man himself, where as socialism makes the society and group life the ultimate end. Consequently, this viewpoint gives society precedence over the individual. Whatever is best for the state is justified, no matter what strain it imposes upon the individual citizen. This is a pragmatic ideology that has no fundamental ideas concerning what is considered "good" or "bad," the only thing that matters is if it is beneficial for society at that moment in time.

To have a better idea of what is contained in socialism, it is necessary to understand the socialistic philosophy of life. Drs. Redden and Ryan wrote: *"A brief summarization of the socialistic philosophy of life is found in the statement, 'Man is not a social being because he is man; rather he is man because he is a social being.' According to socialism, everything that is essentially human in man is in some manner the*

*result of, and dependent upon, group social life. This is a direct denial of the spiritual soul in man. It is man's rational soul, with its three properties: the memory, intellect, and will, which makes him a man. This is clearly a false interpretation of man's nature, for society is an effect of human nature not the cause of human nature. Following this false interpretation of human nature is socialism's false theory of education. The authors observe: "'Work' or 'activity' is the method employed in the socialistic theory of education. In this theory, activity is basic and must lead to further activity. Learning becomes largely a matter of doing, with 'experience' considered the only means of acquiring knowledge. Ideas are neither true nor false but become such only in so far as they guarantee the success or failure of human action through experience. Truth, then, refers only to that experience which is practical and of social value."* Without any fundamental principles men would not be inclined to practice self-sacrifice and self-discipline, two things which

are necessary for man to cooperate with his fellow man in the social order. Personal experience is not the only method of education by which a child may be educated but he may also learn from the experiences and the knowledge of others. Socialism's educational program is simply based upon forming a "community of workers." Therefore their principal focus is mostly on social and industrial trades, e.g., manufacturing, sewing, wood-working, cooking, etc. All of

these are good skills to have but if the intellectual, moral, aesthetical, and religious education is neglected then the child will never reach his full potential as a human being.

*To be continued.*



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# SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

*Bishop Giles, OFM*

---

We come forth from the Hand of God as social beings. We rise and fall together. St. Augustine suggests to us in his “Confessions” that it is our relationships with others that brings out the best or the worst in us. We cannot excel in either direction without the help of others. From our perspective, it seems that the inequalities found in mankind are there by design. It is through these inequalities that we complement and complete one another. The various differences among us allow us to have something to give to others, as well as make us dependent upon them for what is lacking in us.

Rich and poor, old and young, employer and employee, parent and child, husband and wife, etc. complement and complete one another. It is evil to suggest that these differences are not there or that they should not be there. All that God has made is good and holy. It is no shame to be poor or young or an employee, or a child, or a wife ... These

stations are made by God and though the world looks upon them as being less dignified or worthy, we find that Jesus says just the opposite. These least and last are to be the greatest and the first in the Kingdom of Heaven. To make war on any of these inequalities is to rob us of the opportunity for greatness in Heaven.

Societies and cultures have established various social customs to help us recognize these differences and so maintain peace and order. There is a distinctive dress for men and for women. There are distinctive uniforms for managers and workers; students and teachers; etc. We also note that we have various other signs that let others know something about us. A ring on the third finger of the left hand suggests that we are married or otherwise not single or available for other romances or courting.

The world has placed a very high value upon youth, and we find that many go through

great effort to maintain a youthful appearance. There is a type of discrimination against the natural aging process. Many, when they come to the realization that they cannot remain young, paint themselves up with makeup and pretend to be what they are not. They become actors trying to deceive others. The world has labeled the age of sexual reproduction as the “prime of life.” Hence children strive to be or at least to appear as if they have arrived at this stage of their lives. We find boys exercising and imitating the macho sexual images that are presented to them as the ideal “man” in all forms of media. We find even little girls wearing makeup and clothing designed to make them appear to be sexy. Tragically there are many parents, who not only allow this but even promote and encourage it. They are not taught to be happy as children but are taught that they must always strive to be something else than what God made them. When we are taught and we begin to be unsatisfied with who or what we are, we naturally become depressed. It is no surprise that young

people are depressed and are turning to illicit behavior and even suicide. They are given the goal to be what they are not – an impossible situation to try to live in.

One of the first questions we ask children is, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Implied in this question is that their current life is not important or of any value – their true value is only in what they will be when they reach youthful adulthood – sexual or material/financial productivity. Can we not allow children to just be children, to relish the life of childhood that God has given them? There is great worth in this stage of our lives. Jesus said unless we become like little children we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

On the other end of the spectrum, we find men and women striving to return to an age that they have left behind. Past their sexual reproductive prime, they strive to at least appear to be virile and fertile. This relatively short period of most lives seems to be the center of all our attention and efforts. Children are taught to

look forward to it and the elderly look back at it. Dissatisfaction reigns in the hearts of the majority.

The devils have their hand in all of this too. The flames of lust are constantly fanned by them in the hearts of most of mankind. Little girls who are taught to dress and act as sexually mature women learn to seek sexual power and control over men – to set their snares to make the best catch. Success is measured by what they can gain or how far they can advance themselves – and their appearance is all important. The devils likewise use this against the men who now associate sexual attractiveness with younger and younger girls – even those who are prepubescent. In the age of prepubescence there is little physical difference between boys and girls, and so even young boys become objects of the lustful desires of men. Hence, the demonic scourge of pedophilia and homosexuality was set in motion.

Or we find that little girls are taught that they are equal to men in every way and that

they should reject their femininity and embrace a more masculine appearance and attitude. In this, the stage is set for demonic same-sex attraction.

There is a similar demonic attack upon little boys – either they must become strong, macho, and athletic, or they are taught to develop their “gentler side” and become effeminate. In this, the demons set the stage for abusive sexual dominance and control or the perversion of same-sex attractions.

The ideal for us is the age, sex, and stage of development that we find ourselves in at this moment. It is ideal for little girls to be little girls and little boys to be little boys – not waste this time striving and longing to reach a specific stage in life other than the one they are currently in.

On the other end of life, we find men doing everything they can to maintain or regain their bodily sexual functions. As if this were the most important thing in life. We see women dressing and painting themselves up to look like



they are in the “prime” of their sexual reproductive age.

All of this attention on youthful (sexual) maturity has created a world obsessed with sexual lust and perversity. The intention is not in cooperating with God in the creation of life, but with exploiting and abusing the creation of life and the means that God has given us to accomplish this. This promotes the scourges we suffer from: prostitution, artificial obstruction of conception, same-sex attractions, abortions, divorce, frustration, depression, murder, and suicide.

As Catholics, we should be striving to reject these demonic fashions or trends of the world. Let children be children, men be men and women be women. Let the young be young and the old be old. There is beauty and

goodness in all these stages because they all come from God. Let us not focus upon what children may become when they grow up, or what old people were when they were younger, but let us all focus upon what we will be when we leave this world. Will we be with the saints in Heaven or with the damned in Hell? Heaven is truly what everyone should be striving for. This is the goal for all of us. We can best help each other reach this goal by setting aside the demonic worldly suggestions of an “ideal” future or past life here on earth and set our sights higher upon an ideal future life with Jesus in Heaven. We must all seek to change from sinners to saints; other than that, we must find the goodness in whatever station in life God has placed us and find peace where we are.

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# STATUS QUO OR CONTINUED PURSUIT?

*Father Joseph Noonan, OFM*

---

In the spiritual life of the serious Catholic, there is constant awareness to progress forward in a positive manner. This progression, or to state it in a more familiar manner, is the uniting of the soul with Our Lord on a spiritual plane that is above the average Catholic.

It is a sad, unfortunate fact that most Catholics will never rise above a superficial understanding of the Catholic Faith or Its spirituality. There are far too many who believe that once they have learned the basic Catechism this is all that is needed to save one's soul. Yes, salvation is possible knowing only the basic faith, but too often those Catholics are fooled by anti-Catholics of different sects and fall away from the Faith. Those who do remain in the Church are usually nominal Catholics at best.

It is the serious Catholic who knows that constant effort must be made to avoid sin and to practice supernatural virtue in order to have the possibility of getting to Heaven. Yes, it is true that one may have those

periods when temptations seem to overwhelm you, but with the correct response (prayer and avoiding the occasion of sin), it is possible to overcome the otherwise destructive efforts of our own lower passions or those of Satan.

Too often the weak person will claim the temptation was simply so strong he was not able to stand up against it. If he was attempting to do this **WITHOUT** the help of intercessory prayer to Our Lord, the Blessed Mother or one of the many holy angels or saints, then his conclusion would be correct. Man is simply too weak, fickle or frail to stand up against the powers of darkness.

This is precisely the point of this article and the lesson of spiritual perfection. There needs to be a constant effort, and yes, at times a renewed endeavor, to remain on course with an attitude of great zeal and fervor to spiritually unite oneself with Our Lord. Although it is not always explained when one is encouraged to pray, the very

purpose of prayer is to unite oneself with Our Lord. The more often fervent prayer takes place the more closely united one becomes. This unity will lead to a change in thoughts, words, and deeds. The result is a life of sanctity.

The great temptations are just that, temptations. One needs to recognize the signs, pray for the grace to overcome them and remove oneself from the occasion. It seems that in most situations this advice would eliminate the temptations and therefore, the possibility of sin.

Some are under the impression that saints were not tempted to sin. This, of course, is not true. Numerous biographies and autobiographies go into enough detail proving that saints, both men and women were tempted and at times quite severely. Contrary to what some believe and most would like, temptations are a part of the life of fallen man and will be until death.

Catholics have been instructed for a very long time how they must live. If these instructions are followed, the individual will be led to sanctity. Herein lies the problem for fallen man; the willingness to obey Christ and the Church. The failures of

Catholics have caused the Church to regularly remind and encourage the faithful of the necessity of following Its teachings. Reforms have been necessary within religious orders because its members became lax in their observance of their respective Rules.

All of this is a reminder of the necessity of remaining vigilant in our daily lives. Some have the erroneous idea that some grand event will occur which will bring or make it possible for them to save their souls despite the less-than-holy life they have lived. This, of course, is a misguided idea, with perhaps a foundation in presumption.

Nearly all men will pass through this life un-noticed by the world. They will go through a daily life which is quite similar to their neighbors. Far too many will, after this earthly sojourn, go to Hell because of their sins, i.e., no faith, mediocre faith, sins of the Sixth and Ninth Commandments, murder, drugs, alcohol, blasphemy, no respect for Sunday and a host of many other sins. They have been misled by the world, tricked by Satan and shown an unwillingness to overcome their

major faults. After all of the effort of a lifetime, these souls will unnecessarily spend eternity in Hell. For all of those in Hell, what a tragic waste!

The lack of spiritual discipline among the Catholic laity is a sad indictment for those who have been blessed with the True Mass and Sacraments. In a figurative manner, these Catholics have been presented salvation on the “golden platter” but have to various degrees rejected it.

What is easier than taking time each day to pray/converse with your God and Creator? Is it a hardship to attend Holy Mass and receive the Sacraments? Why is our disposition so lacking in fervor and zeal from day to day or week to week? Too many Protestants possess an embarrassing amount of both but they are most certainly misguided souls.

One should keep in mind that Satan will do all he is able to keep you busy so you will find the “excuse” not to spend time in prayer, not to adore God and thank Him for the many blessings that have been received, not to thank Him for being able to attend Holy Mass and receive the Sacraments

even if it is not on a weekly basis.

The serious-minded Catholic who takes the time to pray and meditate will surely conclude he is quite unworthy of salvation. He will, though, make use of the means by which one is able to gain salvation. The mercy of God is evident in these means of the Mass and Sacraments. Why would one not take advantage of His mercy before one becomes subject to His justice?

If you have become lax as a Catholic even if you are attending the True Mass, make use of the grace which God will certainly bestow upon you and work hard to become a fervent and zealous soul. As each year passes, one draws closer to his eternal judgment. Do not waste the time given to you for it will pass quickly.

Fervent souls should continue in their religious practices, perhaps increase them if possible. Pray to become more united each day with Our Lord and Blessed Mother. Make better use of your time than you have in the past. May all have a year filled with God’s many blessings!

# MY SONG OF TO-DAY

Oh! How I love Thee, Jesus! My soul aspires to Thee -  
And yet for one day only my simple prayer I pray!  
Come reign within my heart, smile tenderly on me,  
To-day, dear Lord, to-day!

But if I dare take thought of what the morrow brings,  
It fills my fickle heart with drear, dull dismay;  
I crave, indeed, my God, the Cross and sufferings,  
But only for to-day!

O sweetest Star of Heaven! O Virgin, spotless, blest,  
Shining with Jesus' light, guiding to Him my way!  
Mother! Beneath thy veil let my tired spirit rest,  
For this brief passing day!

Soon shall I fly afar among the holy choirs,  
Then shall be mine the joy that knoweth no decay;  
And then my lips shall sing, to Heaven's angelic lyres,  
The eternal glad to-day!

*St. Therese of Lisieux*



## *Sister Agnes' Favorites*

### ***Refresh your weary soul with spiritual activities***

At this point in the book, you may say — if you have not already said it — that what I have been trying to put before you may be very worthwhile, may be perfectly true, and may be attractive to most people who feel called to serve God with any sort of seriousness, but that, in practice, it happens to be quite impossible.

“What you priests don’t seem to realize,” a woman said to me not ten days ago, “is that the average mother and wife is so exhausted all day that although she may believe all that you tell her, she is quite incapable of letting it soak in and make any real difference. Her mind may be willing enough, but there’s no resilience left.”

Although a woman who is overwhelmed with tiring and irritating jobs all day cannot bring to bear upon spiritual truths the same keenness of intellect that would be possible for one who has time to sit and think, there is surely, a half hour in every woman’s day when she is more or less forced to relax. If her day is as busy as she is, her body — let alone her nerves — will insist on a certain amount of time spent in a chair. Besides, who said that the person with many jobs would be able to take in the doctrine of the spiritual life as clearly and comprehensively as the person with few? The parable of the talents gives us the answer to that one.

“But after I have been bending over a sink, standing in lines, driving here and there, cooking a meal, scrubbing floors, making beds, bathing babies, answering the phone, and paying bills, I don’t feel like picking up the *Summa* of St. Thomas for a nice quiet evening in front of the fire.” Let us examine this.

Admittedly a course of serious study at the end of a heavy day would not be of much use for most people — although it would surely be for some. Spiritual reading, however, is another matter. And prayer is yet another matter. Both these things, if practiced properly, are restful exercises. If people would only get over the first feeling of shrinking from spirituality when they are tired and on edge, they would find that the acts of the interior life could be far more soothing and rewarding than the acts of ordinary recreation. One’s first thought is

of the novel or of the radio. "I'm simply dropping. Give me a sherry, and for Heaven's sake, leave me alone."

The question then arises as to how far, in the life of the person who is really trying to serve God, legitimate escapes may be allowed. It would be impossible to lay down a law that would suit everybody, but in general, it is true to say that souls normally make the mistake of following material outlets far too readily when they might be deriving infinite benefit by looking in the opposite direction for the relief they want.

If the escapes are truly legitimate escapes, and if the will can call a halt at the moment the recreation has been fulfilled, then there need be no very serious heart-searching. It is when the escapes become necessities, preoccupations, and satisfactions that are longed for with earnestness and indulged in at the expense of what is more important that the whole range of outlets is to be reviewed. It is then that one must balance one's cocktails, one's television programs, and one's movie tickets against such things as one's spiritual book list, one's recollectedness at Mass, and one's ability to prolong one's prayer. And it will be found that the comparison never fails to bring shame to the cheek.

A way in which the wrong sort of escape shows up against the right is in the matter of the effect it produces afterward. This is abundantly obvious in the case of the extremes: self-indulgence leaves a sense of disgust, while perfect correspondence with the grace of the moment brings liberty and confidence in God.

But it is not in the extremes that the question, for most of us, has its bearing. Where we want a sign to tell us how to relax and when to amuse ourselves is in those moods that induce listlessness. It is then that we need to know that a quarter of an hour with *The Imitation of Christ* will do us far more good than a stiff whiskey, and that a retreat will leave us with a tingling spirit, whereas a week at the beach will be amusing while it lasts, but will bring us back with a feeling of emptiness.

We would be wrong to choose the more spiritual remedies simply as remedies to physical or mental ills. We should choose them as being more capable of giving glory to God. But this does not preclude the

evidence of their physical and mental effects. I ought not to take up prayer because it quiets my nerves, but *if* it quiets my nerves, it may be a very good sign that it is what my soul needs.

Exhaustion, nerves, depression, and the sense of disillusionment are not peculiar to the present age. These things are probably more acutely felt at the present time than at other times because everything in our highly developed society conduces toward them. If living in the senses and for the senses has produced the civilization in which we exist, it seems peculiarly futile to turn for relief and escape to those very senses that have been at the bottom of all the trouble.

A more sensible course would be to look in precisely the opposite direction and try to bathe the over-materialized spirit and not in the things of matter. Weary bodies, frayed dispositions, broken hopes, dampened enthusiasms, and so on are not likely to get much good out of excitement. That is what they are suffering from — the hollowness of a departed thrill. They will find their fruition in God, not away from Him; not in distraction, but in closer union.

If we were to realize that God is our true rest, we would waste far less time running around looking for somewhere peaceful or pleasurable where we could throw off all our cares and enjoy ourselves.

*“I set the Lord always in my sight, for He is at my right hand that I may not be moved.”* (Ps. 15:8)

PP. 46-49

*Holiness for Housewives (and other working women)*





# THE GIFT OF ONESELF

*From the French of  
THE REVEREND JOSEPH  
SCHRYVERS, C.S.S.R.*

*Translated by a Religious of Carmel,  
Bettendorf, Iowa*

## PART ONE

*The Principles of Self-Surrender*

## CHAPTER TWO

### ARTICLE 7

**IN SOULS SURRENDERED TO  
HIM, THE HOLY SPIRIT  
DIVERSIFIES HIS ACTION AS  
HE WILLS**

God gives Himself to the soul; the soul gives itself to God; herein is perfection. This gift is made through Jesus, our Intermediary. To be born in Jesus, to grow strong in Him, to attain our perfect growth in Him—that is the purpose of our earthly life.

But how is this growth effected? We are born, we grow in Jesus, by means of grace; and it is the Holy Spirit Who pours this grace into our



souls. The mystical Body of Jesus, that is to say, the Church, is like a tree; and the sap which gives life to this tree is sanctifying grace.

Planted upon Calvary, in soil bedewed by the Blood of Jesus, the frail plant developed. During three centuries of persecution, it extended its roots deep into pagan ground; and when the storm-wind ceased to blow, it revealed, to the eyes of the astonished world, mighty branches laden with leaves, flowers and fruits.

Jesus is the trunk of this magnificent tree, whose foliage offers shade to all the

nations of the earth. Each faithful soul is one of its branches.

God has undertaken the task of making it bear fruit. *Pater meus agricola est.* (S. John 15:1.) He watches over its beauty and its fecundity. He prunes it at need, gathers the ripe fruits in season, gives it the sunshine and the rain, sends the winds and the storms which cause it to take deeper root and detach the withered branches.

But the growth itself is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Love, the substantial Love of the Father and the Son. This Divine Charity is the very life of God. It is His nature. *Deus Caritas est.* (S. John 4:8.)

From God, this charity flows into creatures endowed with reason. The Holy Spirit, we may say, has poured it without measure into Christ, Who is the trunk of the tree of the Church; and He will continue to nourish with the same sap all the branches which the tree will put forth until the end of time.

This divine sap, one in itself, is infinitely varied in its effects.

One of its properties is, that it never produces two fruits of the same savor nor of the same perfume. Its action is infinitely differentiated.

The souls sanctified by the Holy Spirit, since the beginning of the world, are all beautiful, each in its own kind. Some are distinguished by their angelic purity, their virginal simplicity: souls such as Agnes, Rose of Lima, Lucy, Aloysius Gonzaga. Others are distinguished by their austerity and their heroic penance: Mary of Egypt, Jerome, Anthony, Pacomius and John of the Cross.

Some have passed their lives in peaceful heart-to-heart intercourse with Jesus: Magdalen de Pazzi, Margaret Mary, Gertrude. Others have traversed land and sea in search of souls: the divinely inspired Paul, Boniface, Francis Xavier.

Some have been consumed with love of the Divine Crucified One: Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Jesus, Gerard Majella; others have been devoured by zeal for the glory of God: Ignatius of Loyola, Alphonsus Ligouri.

*Unus atque idem spiritus dividens singulis prout vult.* (I Cor. 12:11.)

It is the same Spirit of God Who operates these divers wonders of grace. It is the same sap which has flowed in the branches of the Church and has produced here thick foliage, there delightful flowers, elsewhere savory fruits.

The action of this sap is gentle; it makes no noise. It rises, rises incessantly; it circulates silently from the roots to the trunk, from the trunk to the branches, and from the branches to the roots. It pauses only at the obstacles which are placed in its way. At certain epochs of life, its circulation is stronger. This is during the springtime and the summer of the spiritual life. At other times, the sap seems to be drying up. The unction of grace disappears. Beautiful sentiments, feelings of lively enthusiasm, fall away and are scattered. This is the sad autumn and the long winter. This is the time of trial, during which the soul gathers all its vital forces in its very center, the will; there it refines them, increases them tenfold, and

prepares for new expansion into a life more intense, more supernatural.

Happy the docile souls, souls given to God! They understand that their duty is comprised in allowing the Spirit of Love to act within them. His Divine Charity, as they know, will transform them, in Jesus, day by day. When this transformation is effected, they will be conformed to Jesus; and the gift of self will be complete. *Qui praeordinavit nos conformes fieri Imagini Filii sui.* (Rom. 8:29.)

## ARTICLE 8

### UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT, ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE SIMPLE SOUL

O Divine Spirit! Thou takest my hand, to lead me straight to my God. I wish to be docile; I wish to forget myself and to surrender myself to Thy direction. This, for me, is supreme wisdom.

The traveler who does not know the map of the country in which he journeys does not trust his own ideas; he employs a sure guide to

accompany him. And what do I know of the country of sanctity? All is strange to me: the inhabitants, the laws, the customs, the conditions, and even the language. Oh, that I may not go astray!

Moreover, I have enemies who are bent upon deceiving me. They are numerous, ingenious; some have wormed themselves into intimacy with me; they are part of myself. They are in league against me; they will leave me no repose, as they desire to see me hurled into the abyss. How can I escape so many snares? And if the road were wide and straight! But it is only a narrow footpath, now lost to sight in almost inaccessible mountain-heights, and now buried in foul marshes. And I must keep on walking. To draw back would mean certain destruction.

Ah, how I need to distrust myself and to cling to my Guide! This Guide is the Divine Spirit, the Paraclete, the Consoler in sadness and dejection, the Support in the difficulties of the way, the Light in darkness.

He is especially concerned with the sanctification of souls. What does the fate of

empires matter to Him, provided that the souls He guides attain to holiness? His Providence governs the world, bestows crowns, confers power or takes it away, all as it pleases Him, all for the good of souls. Why are there revolutions, wars, epidemics, great social evils? Why are there persecutions? Why are feeble nations oppressed? Why does brutality triumph? Why are there public scourges, family sorrows, hecatombs of human life, the tears of mothers? Ah, how short-sighted is human reason! There are chosen souls, perhaps very many, whom these trials purify and sanctify. There are souls that, without these trials, would never work out their salvation. The entire world is not worth one of these souls. To have one single additional act of love from a little soul hidden in the obscurity of some hamlet, God would permit terrible catastrophes.

O wise and powerful ones of this age! You believe that you are the judges of the world, the dictators of peace or war. God sets little store by your power which endures for one day. You are instruments that serve

Him for an instant; then you disappear. And the divine work goes on; and souls of good will are sanctified.

Not only is my Guide devoted to my soul and determined to sanctify it; He also sets in order all the means to accomplish the work. To Himself He reserves the choice of these means. Under His guidance, all ways become good; all lead to the end. He is pleased to leave the soul in ignorance as to His plans. He conducts it over precipices and makes it climb steep mountains. He leads it into vast, uncultivated forests, exposes it to the inclemencies of the weather and to the teeth of wild beasts. Sometimes He

conceals Himself from its sight.

But the surrendered soul does not lose courage. It has learned to forget self and to trust its Master. Soon the darkness is dispelled, calm returns, the way becomes straight. The Divine Guide is again at hand. He desires to teach the soul to give itself without reserve, to leave to Him the exclusive care of its sanctification.

Divine Spirit, let us go on together. I abandon myself to Thee. No more fear, no more hesitation! I cast myself blindly upon the Bosom of Thy Providence. Lead me; sanctify me. My role is to efface myself, to disappear.

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# FRANCISCAN SAINTS

JANUARY 10TH

**Servant of God Vico Necchi**

*Confessor Third Order*

The vigor of the Franciscan Order is exhaustless. After seven hundred years it has not yet been spent, rather it seems to have taken on additional life in this present age that is so unpropitious to all that savors of the supernatural. On January 10, 1930, Louis (Ludovico, hence Vico) Necchi, professor of biology at the University of Milan, died. His will prescribed that on his headstone be engraved the simple legend, Vico Necchi, Franciscan Tertiary. These significant words tell the story of so extraordinary a life, that all who knew the deceased are putting forth every effort for his beatification.

He was born at Milan on November 19, 1876. While still a young man, he joined the forces of Christ and the Church. The Franciscan spirit became manifest in him in a

special way from the day he was invested with the garb of the Third Order. Later on, because of his position as a physician, he frequently moved in circles where everything that savored of Christianity was rejected or even attacked. These people he met with the enthusiasm of a Paul and the kindness of a Francis, and thus he was instrumental in gaining not a few to enlist under the banner of Christ.

Among his converts was a young radical who later became a Franciscan and the rector of the Catholic University at Milan, Augustine Gemelli. Together they founded the University of the Sacred Heart at Milan. And when Rome called for Catholic Action against socialism, Louis Necchi was found at the head of the ranks.

He considered his medical profession a holy apostolate which he employed for the welfare of the souls of his patients as well as of their bodies. He lavished his services without cost on the care of backward children.

The spirit of prayer, humility, and charming cheerfulness was the mainstay of this model Tertiary, even though adversities demanded a heavy sacrifice from him. Professor Doctor Vico Necchi is a brilliant example of active Christianity for everyone, but particularly for the representatives of modern learning and culture.

## ON CATHOLIC ACTION

1. What is Catholic Action? The union of Catholic forces for the maintenance, administration, accomplishment, and defense of Catholic principles in the life of the individual, of the family, and of society. Just as the servant of God Louis Necchi has exemplified it for us. In order to do our share toward the proper promotion of Catholic sentiment and Catholic principle in public life, it is not sufficient that our names be

entered in the baptismal record, that we approach the Communion railing, and belong to Catholic societies. Catholic in our dealings with others and Catholic in conduct — that is Catholic Action. Active Christianity! "The kingdom of God is not in speech but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20). — Does your life conform to these principles?

2. Catholic Action is necessary. It aims to erect a barrier against the tide of religious indifference, lack of charity, and immorality of our day. The clergy can no longer do the work alone. Hence the call for Catholic Action of the laity. Catholic, energetic laymen, to the front! If the laity refuse their assistance, the already overburdened clergy must succumb, and with them Catholicity. But what lay apostles "can do has been shown us by the servant of God Louis Necchi. — Will you not follow in his footsteps?

3. Remember the patron of Catholic Action. Holy Church has appointed St. Francis of Assisi to this position. St. Francis, who was not a priest, shows the lay apostles the

correct way to approach Catholic Action, namely, by loyalty to the Church, the Pope and the Bishops; by unselfish zeal for Christ and His interests; by personal exemplary conduct. Where the Franciscan spirit reigns, there Catholicity will not fare badly. — Beg our Seraphic Father for the spirit of a Catholic apostle. Offer your services to the clergy.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*Defend us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, from all dangers of body and soul, and mercifully grant us peace and salvation through the intercession of St. Francis, so that after overcoming all adversities and errors, Thy Church may serve Thee in liberty and peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



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# THE SUNDAY SERMON



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# THE GREATEST TREASURE

Reverend L. Chiavarino



## CHAPTER II

### JESUS IS REALLY PRESENT IN THE MASS

*It is certain that Jesus is really present in the Holy Mass*

Ad-Abulet, King of the Moors, had imprisoned a Catholic priest called Genesisus. He asked him, one day, if he could work miracles. "Yes," answered Genesisus, "I have power, by means of a few words, to change bread into the Body of the great Lord of the heavens, and to change wine into His Blood."

The King laughed at these words and then commanded the prisoner to show him the great wonder. Genesisus, inspired by God, accepted the challenge. He ordered an altar prepared, and on the following day he

made ready to celebrate Mass. The King with all his family and many of his subjects followed the service attentively. At the moment of the Consecration the King observed that instead of the bread there was now lying in the hands of the priest a most beautiful child from Whom went forth bright rays of light. This miracle caused the king to believe; he was instructed in the truths of the Catholic faith and, in company with many of his followers, he was baptized shortly afterwards.

Although we do not see the presence of Jesus in flesh and blood, we must believe it. Our faith tells us that it is so, and hundreds of miracles have proved it. We should believe it firmly, without the need of seeing miracles. In this faith we

should imitate St. Louis, King of France.

One day, this Saint was in his apartment when he heard his servants running about and shouting: "A miracle! a miracle!" They rushed in and begged him to come to the Chapel where Jesus had appeared in the guise of a beautiful child in the hands of the Celebrant of the Mass. To their urgent appeals the king replied: "I do not have to see in order to believe. I have no wish to slight my faith." And he did not go.

A German priest, renowned for piety, who for some time had been troubled with doubts regarding the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, undertook a pilgrimage to Rome in the year 1263. When he reached Bolsena he celebrated Mass there in the Church of St. Christina. While elevating the Host over the Chalice, he saw and felt in his hands, in place of the bread, such a large quantity of real flesh and blood that the blood dripped over the entire Corporal upon which the Chalice was set. One may easily realize his amazement. But it was increased by a further and even more

astounding miracle: each drop of blood bore the imprint of a human face.

The priest lacked strength and courage to finish the Sacrifice; he opened the Tabernacle, placed the Chalice and Corporal within it, and, in fear and trembling, withdrew. He hastened to the presence of Pope Urban IV, who was then at Orvieto, and throwing himself at the Pontiff's feet, he begged absolution for his doubts against faith, even though they had been involuntary.

The marks of the miracle may still be seen in the Church of St. Christina. When the priest left the sanctuary, several drops of the Precious Blood had fallen to the floor. The stains are so deeply impressed as to be as visible today as they were in 1263. They are objects of veneration by pilgrims and a wonder to tourists.

Let us not entertain any doubts against our faith. Let us believe firmly in the true and real presence of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Going to Mass as often as possible, let us beg God to grant the light of faith to those who do not believe.

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