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*In essentia - Unitas. In dubio - Libertas.
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THE SERAPH

THE GREAT SCHISM: UNITY DIVIDED

Bishop Giles, OFM

We are frequently asked: *how can schismatic sects have valid orders?* If they have valid orders then what is wrong with receiving the sacraments from them?

Perhaps an example will help to explain. A child conceived out of marriage is a valid child. He is a real human being made in the image and likeness of God just as everyone else. He is a valid child, but he is illegitimate. In sacramental terms, we use the word “illicit” (not legal).

Abraham had two sons. The one by a slave girl (valid but illicit) and the other by a free woman, Abraham’s wife, (valid and licit). The child of the slave girl was not permitted to inherit or to remain with the child of the freewoman. There is the fear that the illicit child will be a bad influence upon the licit child. The slave girl and her child were sent away. This was the will of Abraham’s wife and was confirmed by God. As much as Abraham loved his son of the slave girl, he still had to send him away. The two sons could not share

the same home or inheritance.

Holy Orders (Sacraments) that are obtained outside of the Church (The Bride of Christ) can be valid, but are nonetheless, illegitimate/illicit/ or illegal. Roman Catholics are not permitted to receive these sacraments. The only exception to this rule is when there is danger of death.

Many Traditionalist clergymen have gone to churches that are in schism (illegitimate) to receive the sacred orders of the priesthood. Their priesthood is, therefore, illicit and true Catholics can only receive sacraments from them when in danger of death.

Some have argued that because of the times in which we live (the Great Apostasy) we are in danger of death and therefore, it is permitted to receive sacraments from these sources regularly (monthly, weekly or even daily). Such a broad interpretation seems to undermine and negate the very foundation, meaning, and purpose of the law.

Can such illicit sacraments be

made licit?

An illegitimate child may be legitimized by the marriage of his parents if this is possible, or through adoption. If Abraham's wife were to die, Abraham could then have married the slave girl and legitimized the child. The child of the slave girl could have been adopted by Abraham's wife, but this presupposes that the slave girl dies or would relinquish her station as the mother of the child, or the child would have to repudiate her.

What if the legitimate True Catholic Church has died, and Jesus Christ has espoused the schismatic illegitimate churches? This contradicts the Word of God. Jesus has promised that The Church will remain until the end of time. The life of the Church is the very life of Christ. The life of Jesus Christ cannot be extinguished but continues forever.

The children of the schismatic churches can repudiate their mother and be adopted back into the true Church. The Church has a formula for this in the abjuration of heresies/profession of faith. This abjuration and profession must be received by legitimate

authority in the Church. It is not enough for the illegitimate child to simply declare himself legitimate or renounce his illegitimacy. There must be someone to receive him, and this someone must be someone who is legitimate and has authority in the true Church (a truly valid and licit bishop – a successor of the Apostles).

A legitimate child may be stolen away from his mother and kept to be raised by an illegitimate mother. This does not destroy his legitimacy or his rite to inheritance unless he formally repudiates his legitimate mother. Many have found themselves in a similar spiritual scenario. The Modernists entered the physical structures of the Catholic Church, overturned Her rites and sacraments, and presented themselves as the legitimate mother (Church). This usurpation was gradual but systematic and complete. The illegitimate children, pretended to be legitimate children to enter in and rise in power and “authority” only to tear down all that illegitimate children hate and envy. These forced (either physically or spiritually) the legitimate children to abandon their physical inheritance. True Catholics were forced to leave

the churches, schools, etc that were built and maintained by true Catholics. They were driven from the physical structures, but in their physical poverty, they were rich in faith because they were the true and legitimate children of the true Bride of Jesus Christ – the Catholic Church.

Bishop Ngo Dinh Thuc recognized this infiltration and takeover and renounced it boldly and publicly. He declared clearly that the See of Peter is vacant. Yes, a slave girl is physically sitting there, but she is not a true and legitimate mother. She is a thief and an impostor and has none of the rights, privileges, or authority of the true mother. Bishop Ngo Dinh Thuc is a true successor of the Apostles and was given the authority of the Apostles to teach, govern, and sanctify in union with true successors to St. Peter. As a partner and co-worker in the Church with the successors of St. Peter, Bishop Ngo Dinh Thuc was in a unique position to recognize and denounce the impostors. With the grace of God, this is what he did.

In defiance of the false church and the false claimant to the Chair of St. Peter, he set out to preserve the true Church in Her exile, by consecrating true

Catholic bishops. His first attempt in this preservation was in Spain (Pamar DeTroya). These men soon abandoned the traditions of the Church and created another false church. These were repudiated by Bishop Ngo Dinh Thuc. He repented for his mistake in putting his trust in these men that were so easily led astray. He did not give up. He consecrated others. One of these new bishops attempted to reconcile himself with the false claimant to the Chair of St. Peter – his theory was that this “pope” was a material pope, but not formally a pope. In this theory, he could be acceptable to the illegitimate mother but refuse to obey her.

We are indeed bound to obey our parents in all that is not sinful or against our conscience. If our mother commands us to blaspheme or commit idolatry, we must disobey. But, this should be a clue to us that she is not the true Bride of Jesus Christ, but is an impostor. This impostor bride is an impostor mother and has at her head an impostor pope. Rather than try to maintain a tenuous relationship with her, our duty and obligation to Our Father (God) demands that we denounce the false bride and

false mother – even if we are driven into spiritual exile.

The children of the slave girl are many, and the children of the freewoman are few. The Modernist Novus Ordo has many children – many stolen from their true mother and raised with lies or deception. Several groups want to be united with this impostor and thief but pretend to legitimacy themselves. We denounce them, likewise, as betrayers of Jesus Christ. This leaves an ever-smaller number of valid and licit children. The Church (the Bride of Christ) is not dead. She lives on without a pope, but with true successors to the Apostles in Her true bishops (successors to the Apostles). We must remind ourselves, from time to time, that the Church is Apostolic and must always have true successors to the Apostles. She can exist without a pope. It is not convenient, but it is possible. Papal is not one of the four essential marks of the Church, but Apostolic is. We must denounce the New Church and her hierarchy as an impostor bride and mother, as well as all those in union with her, even those who are only “materially and not formally” cooperating in the deception. We must renounce the fifth-column created and

inserted among the remnant to bring them into the false church of the slave-girl impersonating the free woman. The Freemasons’ hatred of Jesus Christ and His Bride the Church are well known and established. The demonically inspired Freemasons, have entered in and established the false church (bride and mother). They have created false rites, orders, ceremonies, and even false clerics. They have placed one of their false clerics as head of a traditional sect. And this sect, long after the death of its alleged founder, continues in pursuit of union with and legitimizing the false church. These have doubtfully valid orders because their orders come from a source that is a declared enemy of the true Church. Their fruits to this day bear this out. They want union with the impostor Church. They seek union with the harlot Church (and her “popes” and “bishops”).

The false church is a harlot church because she has and maintains relationships with all other “faiths” (Christian and non-Christian alike). This harlot, false church is supported and loved by all the illegitimate children in the world. They are united in seeking peace and harmony in

this world. We only ask, at what price? Is peace with the world worth the cost of being in enmity with God and His Church? The false church has called together all faiths to pray for world peace. Who are they praying to? If they are not recognizing and worshipping Jesus Christ, they are not praying to God. They must be praying to the alleged prince of this world – the Masonic god, Lucifer, leader of the damned.

The true Bride of Christ (The Catholic Church) with Her clergy and faithful children have been driven out of their home and into exile. The demons have gained the upper hand and have inverted right order. Instead of the illegitimate children being cast out, it is the legitimate children that are exiled.

We can have no home with non-Christians who hate Jesus Christ, Our Husband, and God Our Father. We can have no home with the Protestants who have rebelled (protested) against our Mother and therefore, against Christ. We can have nothing to do with schismatics who have stolen valid sacraments from the Church and refuse unity with Her. These are illicit and have illicit sacraments. We want

nothing to do with those who pretend to have valid orders but seek schism with our True Mother as they work for unity with the harlot mother. We can not be in union with those who want to recognize but rebel against the harlot church. These further insult the True Mother and the True Bride of Jesus Christ, and therefore they insult Jesus Christ Himself in His Mystical Body.

We say these things not with malice, but for the love of the truth and the salvation of souls. We seek to have all those who will be good and faithful children of the Church to leave the slavery of Egypt as the Israelites did. It is not an easy thing to do, but it is the best and necessary thing that we must do. Return to the true Mother who is both valid and licit.



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GRACE AND VIRTUE

Bishop Giles, OFM

Watch and pray. In many of the parables that Jesus has given us, He speaks of the master or lord going away for a time and the servants are supposed to wait and watch for his return. All of these are indicative of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. We must always be ready because we do not know the time when we will be called upon to give an account of our lives.

In the parable of the ten virgins, we see that something more than watching and waiting is required. All ten of the virgins were watching and were awake when the bridegroom returned, but only the five wise virgins were permitted to enter into the house. These five were deemed wise because they had prepared extra oil for their lamps. The other five were foolish because they did not bring any extra fuel for their lamps. They were watching and waiting, but they had failed in something very essential. The Fathers of the Church in commenting upon this parable tell us that the oil represents the virtue of charity. Though they had fulfilled one part of their duty they were still

wanting because a virtue was lacking. Charity or love is the mother of all virtues. In the spiritual life, God gives us a grace. (Grace translates as a gift. It is an unmerited or unearned gift from God.) We must receive this grace and employ it for the purpose for which it was given. From grace, virtues grow, as the seed produces the plant. St. Augustine compares it to the forging of a chain. God gives the grace (the first link) we cooperate or correspond with that grace and thus join the second link in the chain. Next, God gives the second grace (the third link), to which if we correspond we forge the next link and merit the gift of the next grace. As we continue in this manner we forge a chain, link by link, that will connect us to heaven. There is a saying that a chain is as strong as its weakest link. In this analogy, we see that every link given by God is good and strong. The weak links are the ones that we forge by our half-hearted or otherwise defective cooperation with His grace.

Since charity is the mother of all virtues, we can say that all virtues are contained in or are

represented by charity. If we look into the lives of the various saints we often see that they excelled in one particular virtue or another. They all had true charity, otherwise, they would not have become saints. Nonetheless, God has chosen them to display a particular aspect of charity through a specific virtue. In the history of St. Anthony of Padua, we see that he was an Augustinian before he became a Franciscan. It is said that when he saw the procession of the remains of the first Franciscan martyrs being carried home, he was filled with a desire to follow after them. He petitioned and was granted permission to transfer to the Franciscan Order. However, his desire of being sent to convert the Saracens or for martyrdom was never fulfilled. In all humility, he allowed himself to be set aside and hidden in the performance of lowly duties and obligations. On the occasion of priestly ordinations, he was commanded under holy obedience to preach. It was then, that his true talent was seen and appreciated. He was selected to preach and to teach theology to the Franciscan clerics preparing for the priesthood. His desire was left unfulfilled, but God had greater plans for this humble soul. His glory is

not that of a martyr, but that of a great preacher and theologian. He is known as the “hammerer of heretics” as well as being gentle and compassionate towards sinners.

We see in St. Anthony a reserve of fuel for his spiritual life. He did not thrust himself forward with his desires and thus burn up all the fuel in his lamp, but in all humility, he kept a reserve so that he would not be found lacking after a long wait. When the time came, he was able to call upon this reserve and shine forth brightly.

Quite often, we tend to display the graces that God has given us as if these were virtues that we have developed. When we do this, we have our lamps in hand, but we are lacking the oil in reserve. It is only later that we will realize the folly we have committed. God gives grace, but we must cooperate or build up this grace – and thus have sufficient oil for our lamps. The oil in reserve is often unnoticed or unseen by the world. God’s grace is usually very visible, but the virtues that are the cooperation with this grace are hidden and unnoticed by the world. We must not parade the graces of God as if they are our works. This is deceitful and is

offensive to Him. It is through virtue (cooperation with the grace) that we fuel and keep the flame of grace burning in our lives. Virtue is the oil in reserve that is necessary for us.

Just because few ever see the oil in reserve (our virtues) many are tempted to forego them. Our pride suggests that the hidden virtues are of no value unless we can display them. Pride tends to take the words of Christ and twist them. For example, Jesus says that we are to be a light to the world or a city on a mountain. He is not suggesting that we flaunt ourselves before the world, but rather that we keep alive the grace God has given us and show the world God's work and His glory. It is God that must shine forth in us. The virtues we practice and develop are not for display to the world but are to keep alive the flame of God's grace for the world to see. We forget that these virtues are necessary to keep the flame of grace burning in our souls. Without the cooperating virtues, the life of grace soon dies or burns out, and we are found lacking and barred from the Kingdom of Heaven.

If we look at each of the saints we will find that the grace of God shown forth very brightly

in their lives. This grace was kept alive through the hidden virtues that they humbly practiced. This reserve oil appears humble and insignificant, but it is essential. Without it, we will be found lacking on the day of judgment. Our works or virtues should remain hidden from men – lest we seek the recognition of men rather than the blessing of God. If we do our works before the eyes of men, Jesus tells us that we have already received our reward, and have none to expect from Him.

What we have to shine before the world is the grace of God burning in our souls. This is not our work, and it is nothing that we can boast of or glory in. As St. Paul would say, "it is not I, but the grace of God within me." Any good that is visible outside of ourselves is grace (a gift from God) and is not our work and it is not something for us to boast or glory in. Grace is the light in the lamp. Virtue is the hidden fuel that keeps the graces coming or the light burning. If we fail to cooperate with the grace, then the fire burns out – the forging of the chain is halted. When we correspond to the grace, we practice virtue, feeding the fire of grace, or forging the next link in the

chain; calling forth more or even greater graces from God.

This humble or hidden practice of virtue is seen in the lives of all the saints if we take the time to look for it. It is essential to sanctity – it is essential for us. The Little Way of the St. Therese shows this very clearly. She worked to be faithful in all the little things that God asked of her. She saw her faithfulness and obedience to others as truly faithfulness and obedience to God. “What you do to the least of My brethren, you do to Me.” The flowers she gathered were graces merited by humbly practicing virtue.

We should strive to remember that, whether we plant, or water, it is God that gives the increase. All the honor and glory belong to Him. We should also remember, it is not in the number of our works that God is interested but, rather in the quality. The world looks to the quantity and is easily impressed by size and numbers. God looks into the heart for honesty, integrity, and solid humble virtue. The quality of our oil in reserve is much more important than the

quantity. A little bit of quality oil will burn brighter, cleaner, and longer than a lot of defective or adulterated fuel.

We must have the hidden practice of virtue to fall back upon in the times of temptation. It is then that we need virtue the most. If we have not the habit of practicing virtue we will fail in the time of temptation.





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THE ROAD TO SANCTITY

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

Catholics from an early age are taught the purpose of this life is to hopefully one day be in Heaven with the Blessed Trinity and the angels and saints.

The journey down this road began for most Catholics when they were baptized as newborn infants. It is here that the child is the recipient for the first time of sacramental grace. A grace, which although he is not aware of it at the time, allows him the opportunity to one day enjoy the Beatific Vision.

If the parents of this child are truly concerned with his salvation, the education will begin before he reaches the age of reason. Simple prayers should be taught to give him an early knowledge of God and prayer. The importance of these early lessons cannot be overstated. It is the foundation of the faith of this young Catholic. There is a message which is conveyed to the child, i.e., "these prayers and ideas which I am being taught are more important than anything else which my parents are teaching me now."

The early catechism lessons will continue to strengthen the spiritual foundation if they are conveyed with sincere devotion. Too many parents fail to spend the time with their child and reinforce the ideas he is taught in his religion class.

It is vital to the child that the parents pray with him each day. This holy example will pay great spiritual dividends in the years to follow. Prayer ought to come easy for the Catholic. It is perhaps the primary example of zeal and fervor within the soul. If parents display indifference to prayer, the child will also be indifferent. If the child is generally indifferent to prayer, he will be indifferent to the Catholic Faith. Overcoming this indifference is possible, but how often does it occur?

If parents are serious about raising their child to be a saint, they must establish a Catholic environment in the home even if it means making some big changes. The problem one has today is, the parents do not know what they

do not know. Yes, they are ignorant to the point of not knowing how wrong they may be and the changes which need to be made. The other possibility is they simply choose not to do those things which they should. This, of course, displays a higher degree of culpability.

It is commonly agreed that the education of the child is greatly determined by the age of twelve. The most important classes which form the academic foundation are taught in elementary school. Why should it be any different with the catechetical and religion courses? Too often parents place greater importance on academic education rather than faith and morals. One has witnessed children spending many hours learning math, science, English, etc., but spend a minimum amount of time on their catechism. Understand the message which is being given to the child.

Academics have their place in education, but the religious education of the child should not be a second-tier consideration. The education and nurturing of the soul should always be the top priority. Instilling the love of the Faith in the child is more important than having a

perfect knowledge of it. Love will make it possible to save one's soul rather than the intellect, and yes, the intellect is important, also.

Alongside the love and knowledge of the Faith is the desire to practice supernatural virtue. The child generally begins to do this when he is good. When this goodness becomes a habit a virtue has been established. Elevating this natural virtue to one which is supernatural, and therefore, meritorious, makes it possible to become holy in such a manner so as to truly become a saint.

Teaching a child to be good for the love of God, and therefore, establishing a solid foundation for goodness is supernaturally priceless. It makes it possible for the child to grow into an adult who understands the need to be virtuous and on the road to sanctity. The road to sanctity and being able to persevere brings with it a multitude of struggles and crosses.

The temptations of the world and the devils are always going to be present. One must understand in some manner what is taking place at the time these temptations occur. Far too many are oblivious to

the spiritual battles which take place and fall into ongoing spiritual traps. This is why it is so important to always avoid the occasion of sin, especially regarding mortal sin. Another downfall for so many is choosing a job or lifestyle which probably will lead to ongoing serious occasions of sin. Excessive wealth, fame, power or influence of the corruptive nature would be the most common examples.

How often will you find anyone, especially Catholics who will purposely choose a job or lifestyle for the specific purpose of avoiding serious occasions of sins? How often will you find someone who has their salvation in mind when making these types of decisions? Who is willing to live a “quiet life” instead of a worldly public life?

Yes, some are indeed called to live a public life. There have been saints in these positions, such as St. Thomas More and St. Joan of Arc. These saints were blessed with the graces to remain faithful. Not all should assume they will be blessed similarly. It is probably safe to say that most people should assume they are not called to live a public life.

The purpose of this life is to get to Heaven. One should do all within his power to accomplish this eternal goal.

The Hidden Life of the Holy Family is the best and first example for the average Catholic. Display a willingness to live a quiet, holy life unknown to the world. Parents ought to be focused on living a Catholic life, raising their children to be saintly Catholics and striving to always be a good example for their children.

Children should attend Mass and receive the Sacraments regularly, be obedient and respectful to parents and approved guardians, learn the catechism well and have a true desire to be good. One should also be conscientious about schoolwork and chores, as well as any other responsibilities that are given.

Being serious about sanctity requires effort, often heroic effort. Our Lord does make this possible - contrary to the opinions of many. One simply needs to be attentive to the graces which are given and have the desire to make use of them.

If parents first learn the

necessity of living life according to the Holy Will of God and then teach this to their children, they will have formed a proper and good foundation for themselves and their children. This is how good Catholic parents are able to put themselves and their children on the road to sanctity.



“With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity. Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Ephesians 4:2-3

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THE THREE LIGHTS

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

Part III

My humblest gratitude must be given to St. John Marie Vianney, that wonderful Franciscan Tertiary and priest, whose sermon about St. Mary Magdalene helped to inspire my approach in this article.

“A good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. By their fruits you will know them!” (Gospel of St. Matthew 7: 17-20)

This is as true of a statement as they come. Not merely because Our Lord said it, but because it is also an observation of daily life. What a person does is a clear indication of not only what he believes, but also of his moral character. It is rather easy for one to pass judgment upon another person, based on what is observed about them. The only problem with that is that we, as people, tend to judge others actions rashly and often times harshly. Now passing judgment on ourselves becomes a different matter because here we tend to be more lenient. It takes a lot of humility and honesty for someone to examine his own soul, to see whether or not he is a good tree

or a bad tree. Our humility tells us that all the good in us comes from God, and our honesty tells us that the evil comes from primarily our own fallen nature. Our Holy Father St. Francis explained this truth when he was asked by one of the brothers why it seems that the whole world is “running after” him: *“You want to know why it should be me the world is running after? This is granted me because the eyes of the Most High God, which look upon the good and the evil in every place, could not find among sinners anyone more vile, worthless, and sinful than me, or any baser creature on earth for the marvelous work He intends to perform. So He has chosen men to confound the nobility, the greatness, the power, the beauty, and the wisdom of the world. He has done this so that men may understand that all virtue and all good proceeds from Him alone, and not from any creature.” (The Little Flowers of St. Francis)*

This should give every practicing Catholic immense comfort; but for the converted sinner this could be a stumbling block (or should I say an “apparent” stumbling block).

Their shame could be so great that they begin to despair, thinking with Cain and Judas, "My sin is too great..." The words of Our Lord echo in his ears, "*A bad tree cannot bear good fruit...*" and he exclaims, "I am just a bad tree and I will never be able to bear any good fruit." This individual has the remorse of conscience, which is good, but he still lacks a sincere trust in God. He actually still has an attachment to his sin, for it has become, what St. Augustine says, "a necessity." The prospect for a full conversion towards God seems very doubtful to him. This statement does apply to any vice, to any sin, but I would wager that it is felt most severely by those who have succumbed to sins against chastity. The soul who desires purity realizes that he must overcome the sins of the flesh, and mortify himself – his eyes, his body. The difficulty cannot be overstated and when faced with this prospect, the soul exclaims, "I am just a bad tree...a bad tree." I ask such a poor soul one question, only one – do you believe that the grace of God is sufficient for you? No. Really? Well, it was sufficient for St. Margaret of Cortona.

As I said, St. John Marie Vianney's sermon helped to inspire this article. The similarities between the lives of

St. Mary Magdalene and St. Margaret of Cortona are remarkable - from their life of sin to their conversion! It should be no surprise then that St. Margaret is known as the "Franciscan Magdalene".

Margaret was born at Laviano in Tuscany in the year 1247. From her earliest youth, her mother taught her the truths of our holy religion and instilled in young Margaret's heart pious devotion. This holy atmosphere would be short lived, because her mother died when she was only seven years old, and her father neglected to continue her education. Margaret's father did eventually remarry, and her stepmother was particularly harsh toward her. This made Margaret's early years rather difficult. As the years passed Margaret grew to young womanhood and was blessed with both beauty and charm. Now let me, dear reader, ask a question: what happens to a beautiful flower in a flower bed that is not protected by a strong fence? The answer is that it is left vulnerable to being picked. This is what happened to Margaret. Since she felt no love at home and did not have that necessary protection, she succumbed to the seductions of a wealthy young nobleman. She lived in sin with this man at his mansion in Montepuciano for nearly nine years, and during that time having a child with

him.

Margaret became the scandal of the region, very much like Mary Magdalene became in the city of Jerusalem. She added to the scandal by purposefully parading around the city riding a horse while wearing expensive clothing and precious jewels, gifts from her "lover." See how this little tree, who was cared for by her mother, was now bringing forth bad fruit, and was an occasion of sin to wandering eyes!

God works in mysterious ways though, very mysterious indeed! Especially when it comes to conversions. Sometimes what a soul needs to go through is a sort of "supernatural shock therapy." There are a few things that can shock a soul out of this kind of sin, but probably there is nothing more effective than death mingled with the fear of hell fire. This is what happened to Margaret. One night her lover was out on a hunt and did not return. She waited and waited, until finally his hunting dog did return, but he did not. The dog led her to a back road, and it was there that she found the decapitated corpse of her former lover. The horror of the scene caused her to faint, when she woke up her heart was filled with such horror that she lamented her sinful life. She resolved to leave Montepuciano and return to her

father. Her father welcomed his prodigal daughter with open arms, but this too was short lived because her stepmother did not want her to stay. Margaret was then cast out into the streets. This was a hard trial, but it was precisely in this way that she was led to Cortona and into the care of the Franciscan Friars.

There is no need to go into any more exact detail about how she came to be under the Friars care, but only that Our Lord commanded her to do so. After a trial period of three years Margaret became a Third Order Franciscan and spent the rest of her life in penance, fasting, works of charity, and many long nights in prayer. She sought to make up for the sins of her past and wished to be closer to her Divine Lord! She became a great mystic and was blessed with heavenly visions, primarily of Our Lord. He granted to her many favors during her life, but one in particular relates to the virtue of chastity.

"On the Feast of St. Catherine, Virgin and Martyr, Margaret heard Our Lord say to her: 'My daughter, one day I will place you among the Seraphs, among the virgins whose hearts are flaming with love for God.' 'How can that be, Lord, after I have soiled myself with so many sins?' 'My daughter, your many penances have purified your

soul from all the effects of sin to such a degree that your contrition and your sufferings will reintegrate you into the purity of a virgin!' In another vision the Savior said to her: 'My daughter, you are a rose among flowers. You are pure. And for your love of chastity, I have placed you among the virgins. This divine act of kindness enkindled seraphic flames in Margaret's soul, and she was heard to exclaim: 'O Lord, You are the Life of my life! You are a treasure to me, without which all wealth seems utter poverty ... With joy, dear Lord, I spontaneously offer myself up to all sorts of suffering, for love of You. You know that I seek and want nothing but You, Who are infinitely sweet and without Whom I would feel as though in Hell.' (taken from the "Revelations of Margaret of Cortona" by Most Rev. Ange-Marie Hiral. O.F.M., Chapter 13)"

Our Lord's promise that He will place her "among the Seraphs, among the virgins" is tantamount in saying that it is only through His grace that a soul can be converted, and the intensity of grace depends solely upon His Divine Will.

Now read Margaret's response, "How can that be, Lord, after I have soiled myself with so many sins?" Here she teaches

us the first and most important lesson: full accountability. If you desire to put away all sins of impurity, you must recognize that it is because of your concupiscence of the eyes, your wandering curiosity and your uncontrolled emotions that you have fallen.

The knowledge that Christ placed her "among the virgins" should be encouraging. We see the marvelous workings of God and to know that if we follow His Will we, too, can purify our souls. We, too, can recapture that lost innocence! We must be filled with such a love of the virtue of chastity. We must desire it and strive to become less involved in the world, and more involved with God.

Finally, is there any difference today in how Franciscan's practice holy chastity, as compared to the time of St. Margaret? Just like with holy obedience I will answer *nihil mutavit*, nothing has changed, and nothing will change. We have to still avoid the occasions of sin and control the stirrings of our body – by fasting and prayer. The religious in general and the Franciscan in particular lives an unnatural life; it is natural for us to desire companionship with a member of the opposite sex. This unnaturalness is nothing sinful, it is rather a blessing. The religious man or woman has

given up their God-given rights of marital union and to have children. They do this in order to embrace something higher, something supernatural – God. When a soul desires God it does not want to be dragged down by bodily passions, even if lawful (that is in marriage). It realizes more clearly that the hierarchy in man must be maintained – the body must be subject to the soul (or intellect) and the soul must be subject to God.

If anyone still doubts the mercy of God and the chance of true conversion, then let me give you the inspirational ending to St. John Mary Vianney's sermon about Mary Magdalene: *"Since your soul is as precious in God's eyes as that of Mary Magdalene's (or Margaret of Cortona's), you can be quite sure, my dear brethren, that grace will never be wanting to you to convert you and to help you to persevere."*



O, St. Margaret, help me to turn away from the vanities and the evil suggestions of this sinful world. Show me how I may also reform myself by a life of prayer and penance! Help me to use God's graces so that before I pass from this world I may be restored to my Baptismal innocence and then ascend with you upwards towards the Seraphs in heaven! Amen.

ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

An Autobiography

CHAPTER TWO A CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD

I remember one day when we were out, how angry clouds darkened the lovely blue sky, and a storm, accompanied by vivid lightning, burst overhead. I looked round on every side so as to lose nothing of the splendid scene. A thunderbolt fell in a field close by, and far from being the least bit frightened, I was overjoyed — God seemed so near. Papa, however, less pleased than his Queen, soon put an end to my rapture, for several meadows separated us from the road, and already the grass and the great tall daisies, taller than I, were sparkling with liquid jewels. Though hampered with his fishing tackle, he carried me in his arms, while I looked down with admiration on the beautiful diamonds below.

I have not, I think, mentioned that in our daily walks at Lisieux, as at Alençon, I often gave alms to the beggars we met by the way. Once we came upon a poor old man, who with great difficulty was dragging himself along on crutches. I went up to him with my penny, but he looked at me long and sadly, then smiling sorrowfully he refused my alms. I cannot express what I felt; I had wished to bring help and comfort and instead I had

perhaps only caused pain. He must have guessed my thoughts, for when we were some distance off, I saw him turn round and smile at me.

Just at that moment Papa bought me a cake and I longed to run after the old man, thinking that though he did not want money he would be certain to like a cake. Fear held me back, however, and I felt so sorry that it was with difficulty I could repress my tears. Finally, I remembered having heard that Our Lord grants all the favors we ask on our First Communion Day. The thought instantly dispelled my grief, and though I was then only six, I resolved to pray for my poor old man when that day should come. Five years later I faithfully kept my resolution, and I have always believed that my childish prayer for “this suffering member of Christ has had its blessing and reward.

As I grew older, my love of God grew more and more, and I frequently offered Him my heart, using the words Mamma had taught me. I tried very hard to please Him in all my actions and was most careful never to offend Him. Yet one day I committed a fault which it would be well to mention here; it affords me a

good opportunity of humbling myself and I think my contrition for it has been perfect.

It was the month of May 1878. You considered me too young to attend the May devotions every evening, so I stayed at home with Victoire, the maid. We said our prayers together before my little altar, which I had arranged in my own way. Candlesticks, vases, flowers — everything was small. Two wax vestas were quite sufficient to light it up, but on rare occasions, and as a surprise, Victoire would treat me to some bits of real candle.

One evening, as we were going to begin our prayers, I asked her to recite the *Memorare* while I lighted up. She tried to begin, then glancing at me she burst out laughing. At the sight of my precious vestas burning away, I again begged her to say the *Memorare* quickly. Again, there was silence, broken only by laughter, and with that all my good temper deserted me. I sprang to my feet and stamping furiously, cried out: "Victoire, you naughty thing!" The poor girl ceased laughing at once and stared at me in blank amazement. Then from under her apron, but all too late, she produced the surprise she had in store—two candle-ends. My tears of anger were soon changed into tears of repentance, and full of shame at having shown such temper I firmly resolved it should never occur again.

Shortly after this I made my first

confession.¹ What a consoling memory! You had told me, dear Mother, that it was not to a man but to God Himself that I was going to tell my sins, and this truth so impressed me, that I asked you seriously if I should tell Father Ducellier² I loved him "with my whole heart," since it was God I was going to speak to in his person. Well instructed as to what I should do, I entered the confessional and knelt down. When the priest opened the slide, he saw no one, for I was so small that my head came beneath the elbow-rest. He then bade me stand up, turning towards him in order to see him better, I made my confession and received absolution in a spirit of the most lively faith, for you had assured me that at that solemn moment the tears of the Holy Child would purify my soul. I remember he exhorted me to be devout to Our Lady, and how I determined to

¹*Our Saint first received the Sacrament of Penance in the beautiful Gothic church of St. Pierre. This was formerly the cathedral of Lisieux, until Napoleon united Bayeux and Lisieux. Bishop Cauchon, the enemy of St. Joan of Arc, built the exquisite Lady Chapel, as an act of reparation according to some authorities. The parish church of St. Thérèse was the church of St. Jacques, close by, but M. Guèrin belonged to St. Pierre, and M. Martin accompanied him.*

(Rev. Thomas N. Taylor, Editor)

²*Fr. Ducellier died in 1917, Arch-priest of St. Pierre of Lisieux. [CARMEL.]*

redouble my love for her who already filled so large a place in my heart.

Finally, I passed him my Rosary to bless, and came out of the confessional feeling more lighthearted and happy than ever before. It was evening, and as soon as I reached a streetlamp I paused, took the newly blessed Rosary from my pocket, and examined it carefully, turning it over and over. “What are you looking at, Thérèse dear?” you asked. “I am looking to see what a blessed Rosary is like,” I answered, and the artless reply afforded you much merriment. The influence of the grace I had received remained for a long time with me, and I went afterwards to confession for all the great feasts. These confessions, I may add, filled my young heart with transports of joy.

The Feasts! What precious memories those simple words recall. I loved them; and you knew so well how to explain the mysteries hidden in each one. They were indeed a foretaste of Heaven. Above all, I loved the processions of the Blessed Sacrament. What a joy it was to strew flowers in God's path! But before letting them fall under His feet, I threw them high up in the air, and never was I more happy than when I saw my rose-petals touch the sacred Monstrance.

True, the great feasts came but seldom. Each week, however, brought one very dear to my heart — Sunday.¹

¹*In the French, dimanche, from (dies) dominica, meaning “The Lord's Day” — i.e., the day commemorative of His triumphant Resurrection. Pius X restored it to its former important position in the ecclesiastical calendar, from which it had long been displaced by the feasts of the Saints.*

(Rev. Thomas N. Taylor, Editor)

To Be Continued.....



Sister Agnes' Favorites

A

Thirst for

Love

In wondrous love didst Thou come down from Heaven
To immolate Thyself, O Christ, for me!
So, in turn, my love to Thee is given,
I wish to suffer and to die for Thee.
To be like Thee is my desire,
Thy voice finds echo in my soul.
Sufferings I crave. Thy words of fire
Lift me above earth's mire
And sin's control.

Ah, Christ! Thy great example teaches me
Myself to humble, honors to despise,
Little and low like Thee I choose to be,
Forgetting self, so I may charm Thine eyes.

My peace I find in solitude,
Nor ask I more, dear Lord, than this:
Be Thou my sole beatitude —
Ever in Thee renewed
My joy, my bliss

For love of Thee I thirst, fulfill, my hope,
Augment in me Thy own celestial flame;
For love of Thee I thirst — too scant earth's scope —

The glorious Vision of Thy Face I claim!
My long, slow martyrdom of fire
Still more and more consumeth me,
Thou art my joy, my one desire,
Jesus, may I expire

Of love for Thee!



Words of The Little Flower of Jesus

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 TWO

The Practice of Abandonment

CHAPTER TWO

*The Practice of Self-Abandonment in
Various Occupations*



ARTICLE 1

THE PRACTICE OF SELF- SURRENDER DURING PRAYER

Now, my soul, follow Jesus amid the details of the principal actions of the day. He will teach thee to perform these actions holily. Follow Him into the mysterious cellar of prayer; there shalt thou drink long draughts of love.

O God of majesty! How can a miserable creature approach Thee, converse with Thee — alone with the One, mouth to Mouth, heart to Heart, while Thine Eyes look into her eyes? Art Thou not the great God before Whom the Angels bow with faces veiled, before Whom the Saints in Heaven kneel in awe, repeating: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts?”

How can I, who am but dust and ashes, speak to my Lord and my
NOVEMBER 2019

God? In the desert, the Jews did not dare raise their eyes to Jehovah. They appointed Moses to intercede in their place; and they waited at the foot of Sinai, trembling, dying of terror.

And I? Dare I penetrate into Thy sanctuary, present myself at the foot of Thy throne, and converse familiarly with Thee? Hast Thou modified the glory of Thy majesty or relaxed the rigor of Thy sovereign rights?

No. Thou art always Jehovah, the Eternal God, King of Kings, Lord of the heavenly hosts. Prostrate in the dust, all creation must adore Thee.

My soul, when presenting thyself before God, forget not this duty of respect and humility. But know, too, that God is immeasurably good, and — dare I say it? — He has made thee His

queen.

Esther, presenting herself before Assuerus as he was seated on his throne in all the splendor of his royal majesty, began to tremble and was about to faint. But the King, subjugated by her beauty, held out his golden scepter, and kindly bade her approach. Lovingly, he said: "The law which is made for all others is not made for thee."

Touching privilege of the simple soul! She penetrates into the apartments of the King, her Spouse, with very great respect, certainly, but with a most childlike daring. She knows her privilege. She may approach Him, speak to Him with intimacy, sit at His Feet, and love Him.

But how can she converse with such lofty majesty? The simple soul knows only one thing; she has only one act—the gift of herself. How can she satisfy all the requirements of prayer? How can she observe the methods prescribed by the masters, recognize the degrees of prayer, discern its various aspects, avoid the pitfalls, set in order the reflections, affections, and resolutions? Fear nothing, my soul! Where others pause in embarrassment, thou mayest pass on, thanks to thy simplicity.

In prayer, there is one element which may belong to all souls; it is accessible to all capacities, adapted to all tastes. This element is the very essence of

prayer. It is nothing else than the union of the will with God. This union is brought about by the act of love which yields the entire man to God.

Thus, my soul, thou art praying without knowing it, and that throughout the whole day. By the gift of thyself to God, made with perseverance and attention, thou becomest acclimated, as it were, in the region of prayer. Prayer is thy breath; it is thy life. Must one learn to breathe and to live?

What is, then, the secret of prayer? What is its method? For thee, the secret of prayer is to make over to God the gift of thyself by an act of love; it is to abandon thy soul and thy body to the Divine Will and to all It commands thee. Thy method of prayer is to renew this act unceasingly, to make it more sincere, more intense, and more practical, and to make it enter into all the actions of thy life, into all thy sufferings, all thy joys. When that is done, thy first and essential duty is accomplished.

Thus understood, prayer is simple and profound. It is simple, like the God Whom thou lovest; it is profound, like the ocean of infinite love into which it plunges thee; it is wide, opening before thee limitless horizons. For God is waiting to build upon this simple foundation.

Thy principal task is finished; God begins His. Thou askest for a method; God will show it to

thee. No man teaches souls their method of prayer, for each follows his own method under the inspiration and guidance of God and under the guidance of the one who holds His place.

The masters of the spiritual life may set some stakes, pronounce some rules, draw up some formula. Certainly this is a very useful work. But they cannot set boundaries nor limitations. This belongs to God. It is He Who instructs the soul amidst the silence of the heart; and, given up to His action, the soul hears His Voice.

Oh, how important it is to be pliable in the Hands of God, and to come to prayer freed from all attachment to one's own ideas!



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FRANCISCAN SAINTS

NOVEMBER 21ST

Servant of God Walter Lopez
Confessor, Third Order

From 1645 to 1648, there were gathered at Muenster in Westphalia, representatives of most of the European powers. They were trying to draw up terms of peace and put an end to the unfortunate Thirty Years' War.

In this assembly we find the envoy of King Philip IV of Spain. That was Knight of Santiago Count Walter Lopez de Zabata, a man of wide experience, statecraft, and great learning. Among other things, he spoke the Greek language as fluently as his mother tongue. But he was still better versed in Holy Scripture and in the science of salvation. He had been a member of the Third Order of St. Francis for years, and publicly wore the habit of the Order, as was frequently the case in those days. He did this without embarrassment even during the negotiations at Muenster, where he found himself in the company of distinguished Protestants and the delegates of Protestant

princes. He never drank wine or other alcoholic drinks, and his daily fare was very plain.

Because of his affection for the Franciscan Order, he found quarters in the neighborhood of the Franciscan convent, and often visited the friars for the sake of devotion. His friendly and affable demeanor won the affection, and his piety, humility, simplicity, and mortification gained the esteem of all with whom he came in contact. His home and hand were always open to help the poor and the oppressed; no one left him without being comforted.

The peace plans were far advanced but not yet concluded, when Our Lord put an end to the earthly sojourn of His servant. On May 30, 1648, Walter was suddenly seized with an illness and fell into a coma. The guardian of the nearby Franciscan convent administered to him the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

When his confessor, a Franciscan who had come with him from Spain, pronounced the Holy Name of Jesus, the dying man regained sufficient consciousness to strike his breast and to raise his eyes to heaven, as if to express that he placed all his hope and his confidence in the mercy of God. That same night at twelve o'clock he gave up the ghost.

While he was being carried to the cemetery, a white dove was seen hovering over the casket. In the plain sight of all, it accompanied the funeral procession up to the place of burial. Then it disappeared.

ON HUMAN RESPECT

1.) Consider how courageous was the piety of Count Walter. He did not hesitate to wear the Tertiary garb among the envoys of the European princes. In not being ashamed of a thing that was near and dear to him, he proved to all the world that he was a true nobleman, a knight of Jesus Christ; and the result was that he won the esteem of everyone. If, without flaunting or making a show of their piety, people generally were to disregard human respect in their sentiments and practice of religion, they would enjoy more respect than they gain with their timid consideration. And then how glorious it would be for them to appear before the Eternal Judge, who has said:

“Everyone that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven” (*Matt. 10:32*). — Do you deserve to be recognized by Him there?

2.) Consider how foolish and base a thing human respect is. We should like to go to church and attend Mass oftener than we do. We should like to go to the sacraments more frequently, knowing that unless we do, we shall never overcome certain faults. We should like to join some pious organization like the Third Order. But we are afraid people may talk about us, and so we neglect these things. That is on a level with the silly fear of a child that flees when it hears a goose cackle. But there are temporal disadvantages to fear if you profess your Catholic Faith. Nevertheless, you are obliged to profess it when the honor of God, the good of your neighbor, or the salvation of your soul requires it. What did the holy martyrs do? They recalled the words of Our Lord, which are likewise addressed to you: “Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell.” (*Matt. 20:28*) — What is more important to you — respect for men or respect for God?

3.) Consider how sinful and

harmful human respect is. Not only do we neglect good deeds in our vain fear of talk and ridicule, but it also leads us to take part in what is evil. Uncharitable remarks about our neighbor are being made; we know they are unjust, but for fear of our associates we remain silent, or even join in the conversations and agree with the remarks made. Piety is ridiculed and the clergy criticized, and we join in and add our own criticisms. Unbecoming conversation and indecent jokes are indulged in and we laugh along — that is the extent to which human respect can lead us. For fear of men we remain silent and cower while irreligion makes bolder advances, and immorality grows more shameless. Never could corruption have struck out on so wide a path if cowardly human respect had not shrunk from opposing it. What will be the end of such

fearful souls? “He that shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation,” says Our Lord, “the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). — Do your part and pray to God for fortitude for yourself and those who are still devoted to the cause of God.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

We beseech Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wouldst not suffer to be exposed to human dangers those whom Thou givest to rejoice in the participation of these divine mysteries. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE GREATEST TREASURE

Reverend L. Chiavarino



CHAPTER X

HOLY MASS OBTAINS FOR US THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH

Though your life may be destined to be a long one, dear reader, you may rest assured that at its end you must die. On your death, whether it be good or bad, will depend eternity — you face an eternity of happiness or one of unhappiness. You face either an eternal Heaven or the torments of Hell without end. Do you believe that an unhappy death can be the lot of one who during life assisted at Mass as often as possible? No. Our Lord Himself promised this to St. Matilda. He appeared to this saint and, consoling her in the midst of her spiritual trials, said: “Rest assured, Matilda, that one who has been in the habit of assisting at Mass will be consoled in death by the presence of the Angels and Saints, his advocates, and they will shield him from the

wiles of the devil. He shall breathe forth his soul in peace.”

Oh! how beautiful will be the death of those who during their lifetime assisted at Mass as often as possible! Of itself the celebration of Holy Mass has great efficacy to procure for us the grace of a happy death. St. Leonard of Port Maurice tells of a certain woman of Rome who lived continually in sin and who led others to sin. Her one redeeming point was that she very frequently made offerings to have Masses said. After some years had gone by, she was suddenly struck by so great a degree of sorrow for her sins that she made a general confession and amended her life. When she died, her passing was in such manner as to give evident signs of eternal salvation.

At present, we are all behaving as good Christians should; but it is not impossible that the devil may enslave us and lead us on the path

of perdition. Let us therefore remember that devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a most powerful means of conquering the devil, of converting us from the ways of sin, and of procuring for us the happiness of dying in the state of grace. St. Augustine has assured us that he who hears Mass frequently and with devotion will not suffer a sudden and unprovided death. In this connection I am happy to recall another beautiful example given by St. Leonard.

A poor vine-dresser, who supported his small family by the sweat of his brow, was in the habit of hearing Mass every day before going to work. One morning, having arrived at the church rather earlier than usual, he remained to hear two Masses instead of his usual one. The result was that he was late in getting to the market-place and found that all the desired labor had been hired. He set out for home with a heavy heart, and on the way met a man who asked him the reason for his sadness.

“How can you expect me to feel?” queried the vinedresser. “This morning I remained in church a while longer than usual, and the result is that I am unable to obtain work.”

“Do not be grieved,” said the gentleman. “If you will return to the church and hear Mass for me, I shall be glad to pay you a day's wage.”

The vine-dresser went happily to church and heard not only one Mass but all the Masses that were celebrated successively in that church on that day for the intention of his benefactor. That evening he was able to congratulate himself on receiving a full day's wage.

During the night Our Lord appeared to the gentleman and told him that had it not been for the graces which the prayers of the laborer had obtained for him, he would that same night have been cast into Hell in punishment for his evil life. Because of the Masses which were heard for his welfare, he would receive time for penance. And so, Our Lord Himself gives us reason to know that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is most efficacious in warding off the danger of a sudden and unprovided death. When to our attendance at Mass we unite reception of Holy Communion, the sure pledge of heavenly glory, we may feel an even greater assurance of attaining that desirable end.

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