

# THE SERAPH

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# The Seraph

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## Contents

The Catholic Masquerade.....	1
Bringing Our Hearts and Minds to Jesus.....	6
The Family: The War Continues.....	11
The Liturgical Year with St. Francis of Assisi.....	15
Special Feature from The Cherub.....	19
St. Therese of Lisieux.....	21
The Gift of Oneself.....	23
Sister Agnes' Favorites.....	27
Franciscan Saints.....	28
The Greatest Treasure.....	31

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*In essentia - Unitas. In dubio - Libertas.  
In omnibus - Caritas.*

THE SERAPH

# THE CATHOLIC MASQUERADE

*Bishop Giles, OFM*

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As Catholics, we are often presented with the opportunity to define ourselves to others. Frequently, when traveling people will approach us to ask about who we are and what we do. Typically, we tell people that we are Franciscans – followers of St. Francis of Assisi. This is followed by the fact that we are Roman Catholic and that we say only the Mass in Latin. Almost, invariably we are told that there are many Latin Masses in various places now. For the persistent inquirer, we bring up the term “sede-vacante” and then we must set about defining this also. Seldom do things progress further than this. Most people will walk away, and only God knows what impression we may have made upon them. We fear that most often we are perceived as mentally unbalanced.

We find solace in the fact that we are not in conformity with this world, even though the isolation is often painful. At least we are not faced with the physical persecution of the early Church. We wonder though if it is not better to be hated than simply ignored. “I would that you were hot or

cold, but because you are lukewarm, I shall vomit you out of My mouth.”

The devils have done a very good job in hiding and discrediting the Truth.

We travel to bring the true Mass and Sacraments to people for the greater honor and glory of God and the salvation of souls. In the eyes of the world, there is no need for us to do this. We are told that the Latin Mass is available in the “extraordinary” rite of the New Church. People can now attend Mass in either language. What people most often fail to understand is that it is much more than the language that is used. We do not belong to the “Latin is Lovely” club. Latin simply was an easy means to delineate ourselves from the heresies of the Modernist Church. The Modernists have now closed that distinction by granting the “extraordinary” form of the Mass in Latin. We must delve deeper and consider what differentiates us and why. The external use of Latin worked when the Modernists would only permit Mass in the New Rite and in

the vernacular. Now they have openly permitted the use of Latin.

When we look at the “extraordinary” rite that is permitted in the Modernist Church we see that what is defined is the “Mass” of 1962 with some other changes added later. The 1962 edition was the one that “Pope John XXIII” modified by inserting the name of St. Joseph in the Canon of the Mass. He also removed the second Confiteor of the people before the distribution of Holy Communion. The unchangeable Canon was changed! Shortly after the changes, there were arguments that this Mass is still valid, but that it was sacrilegious. Outwardly the “extraordinary” form appears very similar to the Mass codified by the Council of Trent and Pope St Pius V. The Protestant Bible also appears very similar to the Catholic Bible. There is enough of a difference for Protestants to refuse to use the Catholic Bible, and there is enough of a difference between the Tridentine Mass and the “extraordinary” rite of 1962 that the Modernists refuse to use or allow the use of the ancient rite used before 1962.

However, we must look deeper still. It is much more

than just the version or rite that is employed. For a Mass to be valid there must also be a valid priest to offer the Sacrifice. The Modernists made sure to alter the rite of ordinations as well. In 1968 the new rite of ordination was universally mandated. Many have studied this new rite of ordination and argued that it is not valid. The new rite ordains a minister rather than a priest to offer sacrifice and forgive sins. Many priests even began to use different language to refer to their “priesthood.” They used names like: “president,” “leader” or “presider” over the community or over the Supper. We have long held that those ordained in the new rite of 1968 are doubtfully priests and practically must be treated as not valid. Otherwise, we risk the grievous sin of idolatry.

The deceptions are increasingly clever. We must insist that the Mass be offered in the language of the Church – Latin. We must insist that the Mass not be in the Modernist rite with adulterations of 1962 and beyond. We must also insist that the priest be a valid priest – ordained with a valid rite prior to the doubtful rite of 1968. Next, we may have to investigate the validity of the

ordaining bishops as well. If they are not true priests then they are not true bishops, and they cannot validly ordain even if they use the correct rite.

The most beautiful ceremonies, even if they use all the correct rites and rubrics, are empty shows if the “priest” is not a true priest. They become worse than empty shows because souls are exposed to idolatry. If these men are not priests, then the “Holy Eucharist” they consecrate is only bread. Those who may still worship Jesus in the Holy Eucharist are then exposed to worshipping bread rather than Jesus.

Ultimately, we must dig even deeper and examine the doctrines (teachings) of the New Church. The “Council of Vatican II” (though purportedly only a “pastoral council”) enacted many doctrinal changes. By changing the form of worship or prayer, it changed the very beliefs and indirectly the doctrines of the Church. For example, by placing a table in the middle of the sanctuary and then turning the priest’s back to the altar, a clear change was made in the manner of worship. It was more than this, it spoke very directly to the fact that the

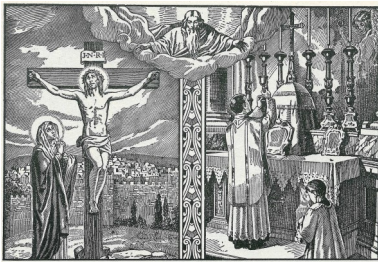
Sacrifice of the Altar was rejected in favor of a memorial meal. The altar, once it was no longer used or needed was eventually removed. The Mass was redefined as a meal rather than a sacrifice. This is a clear change in worship and prayer, but it is also a clear change in doctrine or teaching. The Mass is defined in the New Church as The Last Supper or a memorial meal. This is in direct opposition to the historical teaching that the Mass is the “unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary.” The Mass is one and the same Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, not His Last Supper. A meal is and has been acceptable to the heretical Protestants, but the Sacrifice of the Mass is rejected by them. This one act is a denial of Catholic doctrine and conformity with Protestant doctrine. As we know from our Catechism, to deny one doctrine is to essentially deny them all. A Catholic cannot worship with heretics. This is against the First Commandment. Heretics offer false worship.

The Catholics who are led astray by the Modernist indult Mass or the extraordinary rite of 1962 should consider that the priest (if he really is a priest) who says this “Mass”

in Latin must accept all the false doctrines of the New Church. He most likely celebrates in both the “Indult” and the Modern rites. He is intermixing false worship and therefore teaching false doctrine.

This is a lot to explain in a brief encounter, but we must always be ready to charitably explain these things and direct any potential Catholics to the true Faith and Worship. If our efforts are in vain, we may at least have the hope that maybe at a future time these souls will cooperate with God’s grace and turn to Him in the True Church with true Faith and Worship. We should strive not to hate or curse those who have rejected what we offer. It is not us that they are rejecting but Jesus and His Bride, the Catholic Church. We must be patient and pray that God’s grace may one day touch their hearts and minds. It may be that we are merely the instrument of God’s grace and

the seed that we have sown may not take root today, but it may take root tomorrow, and perhaps, in the end, this soul may be more pleasing to God than our own.



***“I believe that were it not for the Holy Mass, as of this moment the world would be in the abyss.”***

*~ St. Leonard of Port Maurice*

# IS GOD CALLING YOU?

*“Be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.”*

*Romans 12:2*

*Do you love serving God and neighbor?*

*Do you find yourself increasingly unsatisfied by the life of the world?*

*Do you yearn for something more?*

*Not all of us are meant for marriage or a life in the world. Some souls are set aside by God for special tasks. These are the souls that find joy and contentment in the religious life or sacred priesthood.*

*Do not be deterred by what you think you know or by what the world tells you. Find out for yourself. If you feel called, then at least learn more.*

*Any happiness we may have on earth and all the joy we hope for in heaven depend on answering God’s individual call for us. The sooner we do His Will, the happier we will be.*



# BRINGING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS TO JESUS

*Bishop Giles, OFM*

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When we are given the privilege to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we should strive to understand what an honor has been given to us. There are many throughout the world that seldom have this opportunity for grace. At the birth of Jesus, the shepherds were invited by angels. There were many others in the area, but it was only the shepherds that were invited. We too have been invited by God to come to Him in the Holy Mass.

We recall from a Christmas Hymn that it was a “Silent Night, Holy Night.” At Holy Mass, Jesus is born upon the altar. He descends from Heaven and takes on the appearances of bread and wine, transforming them into His Body and Blood. This is called transubstantiation, and it takes place when a true priest speaking in the place of Jesus repeats His very Words – “This is My Body ... This is My Blood ...” This solemn moment is announced by the ringing of a bell. The Body and Blood of Jesus are lifted high by the priest so that everyone may adore and worship Him.

The demons are fighting very intensely at this moment to distract us and to disrupt our thoughts and desires away from Jesus. Now is not the time to be thinking of any of our worldly concerns, now is not the time to go to the bathroom or take a smoke. Now is the time for us to kneel in silent adoration. This is a sacred moment. There will be time for whatever else we have to do later. We need to enter into this moment right now. We must live in this moment. We must resist the snares and temptations that the devils are placing before us.

A battle is not won only on the battlefield. There are a lot of things that happen before the battle that bring forth success. The training, strategies, and preparations are essential to success. If we are to win the battle against the devils in this sacred moment of the Consecration at Mass, we must make our preparations beforehand. Many do not pray well at Mass simply because they are trying to do the least that is required of them. They strive to observe the letter of the law rather than the spirit. They will arrive late for Mass



or only just before Mass begins, they will be tired and often disheveled in their appearance. It is strangely amazing how much effort is put into appearing well before men, but somehow, we think that God is not that important! In so many cases we offer the excuse that the Mass is boring and that we get nothing out of It. God has come down from Heaven to be with us and invites us to come to Him and we are bored?!

Some saints have recorded that they took a week to prepare for Holy Mass. We should, at least, begin our preparations for Mass the night before. We should set aside some time the evening before Mass to make sure that our clothing and everything that we need for Mass is ready. Our prayer-books should be ready, and the places marked that we will need to follow. We may even read over the Mass prayers the night before. We must be prepared if we are to succeed. We should arrive well before Holy Mass begins – perhaps even early enough to pray the Rosary to implore the help of Mary so that we may gain all the benefits of Holy Mass for our souls.

Once we arrive at the church, we should take a few moments

outside or in the vestibule to collect ourselves – fix our dress so that we present ourselves as best as possible to Jesus. Before we enter the church is also the time to use the restroom. We do not want to be getting up and going out at any time during the Mass, but especially during the Consecration. If we have children or infants, we should look to their needs at this time also. If we are going to need to use the cry room during Mass we should try to arrange things so that we can be as quiet and discreet as possible when going to or returning from there.

Toys and food or drink may provide a useful distraction for children during Mass, but why are we trying to distract them? We should strive to teach them as early as possible that this is a holy place, a holy time and we need to do our best to be still and quiet as we talk to Jesus in our hearts. It is useful to train them in being able to be still and quiet, to hold their bladders for a little while. When we are at home or in the car, we can make a game out of seeing how long the children can be quiet and still. They can thus be rewarded and encouraged according to their age and ability. Then when we get to church, we do

not have to start from scratch in teaching them. We will already know how long they can remain quiet and still, so we can time this with the holiest times of Mass and allow ourselves, our children, and others to pray without distractions.

Jesus wants the little children to come to Him. The answer to the difficulties that children present is not to leave them at home or not bring them to Mass. The answer is to help them understand and to know how to act when they are at Holy Mass. The time to teach them is not while Mass is taking place, but rather in the days before. They too are being tempted and distracted by evil spirits. We need to help them prepare, not only physically but especially spiritually. Learning to be calm and peaceful will benefit them and us at Holy Mass, and at many other times as well. Children are eager to grow up and we can help them by teaching them to be quiet and still for longer and longer periods of time. However, there must be something to engage the mind while the body is still and quiet. Being still and quiet is not doing nothing. Their little hearts and minds need to be kept busy but in a positive direction. A

simple prayer that they can repeat in their thoughts will fill the time well. We can put their vivid imaginations to good use in helping them imagine that they are in the stable of Bethlehem. They can quietly look around for images of angels and then think about the real angels that are there, but we cannot see. They can think of Jesus hidden from us under the appearances of bread and wine, and how much He loves us.

With a little help from us, our children can soon learn to pray well and find great joy in coming to Jesus. They have hearts and minds that are easily directed to God, but they need our help. The world and the devils are after their hearts and minds too. In helping them to prepare for spiritual battles we help ourselves and others as well. Let us suffer the little children to come to Him, and from them may we learn how to be little children ourselves and, likewise, come to Him with them.

While the burden of raising saints for God is placed largely upon the parents, we should remember that we all have a role to play in this. Godparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and ultimately every Catholic has

obligations to these little souls. Relatives' and Godparents' roles appear obvious, but we should remind ourselves that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. We are all made members of the Church through our baptisms – the little children as well as ourselves. In helping these little ones, we are helping the entire Body – the Church – and ultimately ourselves too, as we are all part of this Body. Let us all do what we can to bring the little hearts and minds to Jesus. If we can do nothing else, let us at least give them a good example of how to behave and how to pray. They have been called to be with Jesus as much as anyone, perhaps they have an even greater calling than the rest, as Jesus loves them and holds them up as an example to the rest.

May we all strive for the peace and joy of Christ's coming to us in Holy Mass, and let us

especially help the little ones to prepare so that they may pray well and find ever greater calm and joy in their souls rather than the constant ruckus of the world and devils.



***“But Jesus said to them:  
Suffer the little children, and  
forbid them not to come to me:  
for the kingdom of heaven is  
for such.”***

*~Matthew 19:14*



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# THE FAMILY: THE WAR CONTUNUES

*Father Joseph Noonan, OFM*

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## *Part I*

The world has seen many wars and battles within wars. The bloodshed and the lives lost can only be estimated, for the toll is truly beyond simply counting the bodies of the dead.

When one understands these wars correctly, he can only begin with the Fall of Man and the pride of those who have political power. Stated another way, from man's descent from Paradise, the battle of good versus evil has been continuous to the present time.

It is quite difficult to hide bloodshed, whether real or virtual, but some evil people have accomplished it through means that decent people would never consider. In our time, it has become possible through medicine, technology, and the evil motives of men to conquer their enemies without initiating a conventional war. These actions can rightly be thought of as silent deadly wars. The end game (goal) of such wars is the destruction of the family. A war that has been taking place much longer than what is usually con-

sidered.

In the Old Law, divorce was tolerated by God because of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites. How many of these divorces were the result of adulterous thoughts or actions which opened the door to the war? In a time and place unknown to men, when the first abortion took place, the war began. When the first woman either planned or was simply able to wrongly prevent the conception of her child, the war began. When men were first guilty of onanism to prevent the conception of a child, the war began. When the first man and woman lived in sin as though they were married, the war began.

One does not know which of these acts occurred first, but it really does not matter. To use a battlefield analogy, does it matter which occurs first: bombs are dropped, grenades are launched, bullets are fired, or torpedoes are launched? No, it does not matter, for the war has begun.

Relatively speaking, in more recent times the promotion of

divorce by Martin Luther and Henry VIII opened the door to more permanent damage to the married state. What has happened as a result of Luther's "shot across the bow" concerning the marital contract and for the baptized, the Sacrament of Matrimony?

Looking back over the previous five-hundred years or so, one will see a growing degradation and undermining of the married state. All this deterioration eventually takes a toll. All wars over time bring about effects that may not have been foreseen in the initial days of the conflict. Some refer to this as the "principle of unintended consequences." Those with evil intentions are able to foresee the consequences in a much clearer manner than those who have good intentions. Those individuals who are naïve and otherwise well-intentioned were initially appalled by the effects upon the family, but over time become indifferent to its disastrous results.

Perhaps a real-life example will better illustrate the point. In a time in the past when a man sought a divorce from his wife, in what condition did it leave the wife and children? Too often they were left in a

destitute state and struggled to have the basic needs of daily life. In addition, did the woman remain true to her vows or did she end up leaving the Church and civilly marrying outside the Church in order to have an income for herself and the children? Thus, another casualty of the war and too often ignored by society. So, where did it leave this woman and her children with these "unintended consequences?" How many women perished because of the consequences of divorce? Many today will attempt to defend women in these circumstances, but ultimately the issue is indefensible.

Empathy is understandable. Making the right decision for one's salvation is another. As difficult as life may be for the wife and children, the right spiritual decision must always be made. Perhaps this example illustrates better than others the destructiveness of divorce. To again use a war analogy, this was a direct hit that leaves few real survivors.

Without a doubt, divorce increased adultery in society. How often did adultery bring about divorce? How often did the divorced encroach upon the married and find himself guilty of adultery? No doubt

there has been a vicious cycle of infidelity for many years. If those who have accepted divorce believe they are able to easily “escape” an undesirable marriage, they have no reason to be faithful to their spouse.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has brought with it a level of war and destruction upon marriage, unlike anything that has been witnessed at any time in the past.

These assaults began with the development of the birth control pill and later with different “devices” which would prevent conception. The birth control pill was promoted by the likes of Margaret Sanger and her associates whose primary purpose beginning from the 1920’s onward was to eliminate the Black Race and secondarily those of Hispanic descent. It must be noted that still at the present time most Planned Parenthood abortion mills are in the poorer neighborhoods of the inner cities.

To their credit, many blacks have become aware of the plot to destroy their own race and are fighting back. It should be noted here that in recent years the Black population in the

United States comprises about 13% of the total population. The per-centage of abortions among blacks is an astounding 33%!

The recent history of how the federal government has horribly abused its power to destroy the black family in the United States is a topic for another article. It should be noted, though, that until the 1960s when welfare and other federal programs entrapped far too many black families, the vast majority of black families had two-parent homes and were far more stable than at the present time.

*To Be Continued*

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# THE LITURGICAL YEAR WITH ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Father Anthony Lentz, OFM*

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## *The Season of Christmas*

It would be wise to review some of the aspects of the Liturgical Year, so we can better appreciate its division and symbolism. It is separated into parts: the *Christmas Cycle*, the *Easter Cycle* and the *Pentecost Cycle*. We are currently in the *Christmas Cycle*, which began with the *First Sunday of Advent* and will end on the Saturday before *Septuagesima Sunday*. Contained within the *Christmas Cycle* are then: *Advent*, the *Christmas Season*, and the time after the *Epiphany*. Another important aspect of the Liturgical Year to keep in mind is that there are fixed feasts and moveable ones. The *Christmas Season* is the only truly fixed season within the year, for it begins on *Christmas Eve* (Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>) and ends with the *Commemoration of the Baptism of Our Lord* (Jan. 13). Also contained within are other important fixed feasts such as the *Circumcision of Our Lord* (Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>) and the *Epiphany* (Jan 6<sup>th</sup>). While the rest of the seasons of the year depend entirely upon when *Easter* is

celebrated, which is always **the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox.**

Let us now discuss the *Christmas Season* and follow *St. Francis*. The reader will notice that this article does not follow chronologically where the last article left off, and it is not meant to. The purpose of these articles is to learn from *St. Francis* and to do that effectively we cannot be restricted by any chronological order. So don't worry about that and just learn.

## *Christmas*

*“With the coming of the birthday of the Redeemer, she (the Church) would bring us to the cave of Bethlehem and there teach that we must be born again and undergo a complete reformation; that will only happen when we are intimately and vitally united to the Word of God made man and participate in His Divine nature, to which we have been elevated.” (Encyclical Letter - “Mediator Dei”; Pope Pius XII)*

Here the Holy Father gives us what should be the ideal and

goal of every Catholic: *to be united with Christ and participate in His Divine nature.* In order to enjoy union with Christ's *Divinity*, we must first imitate His *Sacred Humanity*. Remember, one does not start climbing a mountain from its peak but from its base. Pope Pius XII reminds us that during this season Holy Mother the Church leads us to the "cave of Bethlehem," which leads us to holy innocence and holy poverty. On account of His perfect innocence, Our Lord was not born in a palace, among servants and vassal lords, for they were all part of a fallen race. How fitting then that He was born among brute animals, who are creatures of pure innocence. Also, He was born in poverty and suffering, so that we can learn that we are called to suffer in this world. We are all called to poverty; for some a material poverty, but for all a spiritual one – "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." We are all called to humility, and if we practice it, we will develop a true and lasting love for God and neighbor. So only by having humility can we say that we have the true "Christmas spirit."

To love Jesus poor, simple,

and despised was the dominant ideal of Our Seraphic Father. Therefore, he called Christmas the "Queen of Feasts!" The best way to express St. Francis' love for Christmas is to relate the story of the first Christmas Crib and the miracles that followed as told by St. Bonaventure:

*"It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the Nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, he determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. The man of God stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; many Masses were said before it, and the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of*

*the poor King; and being unable to utter his Name for the tenderness of his love, he called Him the Babe of Bethlehem. A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend to the holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvelously beautiful sleeping in that manger, Who the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep. This vision of the devout soldier is credible, not only by reason of the sanctity of him that saw it but by reason of the miracles that afterward confirmed its truth. For the example of Francis, if it be considered by the world, is doubtless sufficient to excite all hearts which are negligent in the faith of Christ; and the hay of that manger, being preserved by the people, miraculously cured all diseases of cattle, and many other pestilences; God thus in all things glorifying His servant, and witnessing to the great efficacy of his holy prayers by manifest prodigies and miracles.” – (from the “**Life of St. Francis of Assisi**” by St. Bonaventure)*

How fitting it was that St.

Francis honored the “Babe of Bethlehem” by this special gesture, just before he was honored by bearing the Stigmata.

Our Lord once revealed to St. Margaret of Cortona (the Franciscan Magdalene) that while Christmas Day was a day of joy for mankind, it was for Him a day of great sorrow. For this day was the beginning of the Redemption of mankind, that would come about through His Passion and Death. Christ was born on the wood of the manger and He was to die upon the wood of the Cross. He entered this world suffering and departed suffering more than any person could fathom. We owe so much to our Savior, Who, knowing all of this, still encourages us to rejoice at His coming. St. Francis, like our Lord, still rejoiced on Christmas Day when he erected the manger scene even though he knew that he was not long for this world. We should continue our Christmas joy not only through the season but for the entire year and for the rest of our lives. We can learn from St. Francis how to make it a “perfect joy.” The joy of willingly suffering for Christ’s sake, as He so willingly did for us.

*Dominus vobiscum!*



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*Special Feature from the Cherub!*

**GOD, BRUSSEL SPROUTS, AND “OFFERING IT UP”**

*Brother Charles, TOSF*

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I can remember growing up and, when I would bump my head, stub my toe, or have something not go my way, I was told to offer it up. Of course, if I was suffering from a concussion, I got medical treatment, but that's another story.

Offer it up. What is it? To whom am I offering? And what does it mean to offer? These were the questions shooting around in my grade-school brain. The it was obviously what I was dealing with; the bump on the head or my younger brother painting the walls with my poster paint at three in the morning and catching all the blame for "not stopping him." Again, another story.

The whom we offer to, or in this case the Whom we offer to, is fairly obvious. We offer these things to God. Disappointments and sufferings can gain us merit when we offer them up. We don't yet realize how much. This is a spiritual merit, applied to the amount of satisfaction due for our sins and used as a measurement of our love for God. It's not an exact currency,

but we are taught that it goes for our benefit.

When we offer a hurt or disappointment to God, we are giving up our pride and showing humility. Pride causes us to become angry when things go against us. We like to think they shouldn't go against us because, well, they just shouldn't, as if we are all that important. Humility allows us to accept it when things go wrong. Also, humility is a mirror that shows us the truth. The truth is that we are nothing without God. He decides when we are born, when we die, and when, or if, we will take another breath. Because He is Truth, our only way to Him is to acknowledge and accept this truth. The other part is that He loves us, because He is Love. So He wants us to choose to love Him. We can spend our love on God (humility) or on ourselves (pride). We can end up in Heaven (humility) or hell (pride).

When we sin, we ring up a huge bill. We owe a debt and we need a way to work it off. The God of Love lets us do this either voluntarily or by allowing us to face trials,

troubles and disappointment in life. Any balance remaining would then be made up for in Purgatory.

So, now we know what it means to offer it up and how that is a good thing for us. I'm sure the question on your minds is: "What on earth does this have to do with brussel sprouts?"

In the vegetable world, brussel sprouts have a bad reputation. Most of the time they are boiled until they are soggy or tough; and when you cook them, the kitchen smells like feet. (I recommend roasting them in the oven, it helps.)

People tend to treat penance, or offering it up, like they do brussel sprouts. Some hate brussel sprouts. They won't go near them. If brussel sprouts are

served, they won't eat them. They won't even let this dreaded vegetable touch any other food on their plates. Often, they pass this attitude on to their children, who insist they hate brussel sprouts without ever trying them.

Others will suffer through eating brussel sprouts. They mix them with other foods, cover them in gravy, or sneak a few to the dog. It's not the worst thing in the world to them, but they will avoid brussel sprouts if at all possible.

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# ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

## *An Autobiography*

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### CHAPTER TWO A CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD

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I consider it an important matter that from childhood I was taught to overcome my fears. Occasionally you sent me in the evening to fetch something from a room at the other side of the house, wisely taking no refusal; but for this I should have become nervous, whereas now it is difficult to frighten me. I wonder how you were able to bring me up with so much tenderness, and yet not spoil me. You neither passed over the least fault, nor scolded me without cause, and I knew well that a decision once taken would never be gone back upon.

To you I confided my most intimate thoughts, to you I brought all my childish doubts. One day I expressed surprise that God does not give an equal amount of glory to all the inhabitants of Heaven—I was afraid that they would not all be quite happy. You sent me to fetch Papa's big tumbler, and putting it beside my tiny thimble, filled both with water and asked me which seemed the fuller. I replied that one was as full as the other; it was impossible to pour more water into either of them, for they could not hold it. In this way you

made it clear to me that in Heaven the least of the Blessed does not envy the happiness of the greatest; and by bringing the highest mysteries down to the level of my understanding, you gave my soul the food it required.

Each year I gladly welcomed the prize day. Though I was the only candidate, justice was none the less strictly observed, and I never obtained a reward unless it were well merited. My heart beat fast as I listened to my notes and received the prizes, in presence of the whole family, from the hands of my "King." To me it was a picture of Judgement Day!

Seeing Papa so cheerful, no suspicion of the great trials awaiting him ever crossed my mind, but one day God showed me, in an extraordinary vision, a striking picture of the trouble in store.

Papa was away from home and was not expected back till late. It would be about two or three o'clock in the afternoon; the sun shone brightly, and all Nature seemed at play. I was alone at a window which looked out on the large kitchen garden, my mind full of pleasant thoughts, when I

saw in front of the washhouse opposite, a man dressed exactly like Papa, and of the same height and demeanor, though more bent and aged. I say aged, to convey an idea of his general appearance, because, the head being covered with a thick veil, I did not see his face. Slowly and with measured steps he advanced and passed by my own little garden. Overcome by a feeling of supernatural dread I called out loudly and in frightened tones: "Papa, Papa!" The mysterious person seemed not to hear, and continuing on his way without even turning round, went towards a clump of fir-trees which divided in two the garden walk. I expected to see him reappear beyond the tall firs, but the prophetic vision had vanished.

It was all over in a moment, but it was a moment which impressed itself so deeply upon me that even now, after so many years, the memory of it stands out as distinct as the vision itself.

You and Marie were in an adjoining room, and at my cry of "Papa!" you were both seized with fear. Concealing her emotion, Marie ran to me, saying: "Why do you call Papa like that when he is at Alencon?" I described what I had just seen, and to reassure me I was told that the maid must have covered her head with her apron on purpose to frighten me.

When questioned, however, Victoire declared she had not left the kitchen, and besides, the truth was deeply engraved on my mind: I had seen a man, and that man was exactly like Papa. Together we went to look behind the fir-trees, and finding nothing, you told me to think no more about it. But to banish the thought was impossible. Often and often this mysterious vision rose up before me. Often and often I tried to lift the veil which hid its true meaning, and deep down in my heart lay the conviction that someday it would be fully revealed.

*To Be Continued.....*





# 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*



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### ARTICLE 3

#### THE PRACTICE OF SELF- SURRENDER IN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Pious souls are not content with making Mental Prayer only. They have a number of spiritual exercises to incite fervor, to nourish devotion. These are spiritual repasts. Chief among them are: Holy Mass, Communion, Spiritual Reading, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary, Confession.

We must not underrate the importance of these and other exercises; on the other hand, we must not exaggerate their importance. God guides and perfects souls as He wills. He makes use of varied means, among which pious exercises usually occupy a large place. Sometimes, however, He dispenses with them.

It is the soul's duty to find out

what is the Divine Will in her regard, and when she has recognized it, she should conform to it faithfully. If she lives in a convent, surrounded by an abundance of the exterior means of sanctification, she will use them assiduously. If she lives in the midst of the world and the tumult of business, if she has the care of a family and the burden of securing daily bread, she has neither the opportunity nor the obligation of binding herself with the same rigor or in the same degree.

God, Who is rich in merciful goodness, will dispense to her in other ways the graces attached to spiritual exercises. The way that leads to sanctity is spacious; it gives room to all souls of good will.

Who would imagine that those who enjoy an abundance of spiritual means can find, even in

this very abundance, an obstacle to perfection? Yet this can be true.

Poor human nature! Left to its own notions, it stumbles upon all the rocks in the way. When will it understand that, in order to really tend to perfection, one must not walk alone, but leaning upon the Arm of God?

There are souls that desire to make swift progress to the goal. A noble desire, surely! For this purpose, they multiply their spiritual exercises, their readings, novenas, pious conversations. But all does not go according to their taste. The reading of spiritual books confuses their mind instead of enlightening it; spiritual conversations leave in the depths of the soul a vague sadness, a painful void; multiplied prayers engender boredom and disgust. Where then is the fault? Alas! Self-will has had its part in their zeal. Like an imprudent child who frees himself from his mother's hand and goes forward alone upon a wide road, they wished to anticipate God. What wonder if the child falls and hurts himself?

No spiritual exercise is profitable to the soul if it is made without the guidance of God. The soul's constant care ought to be to surrender herself entirely to God, then to take, one by one, the means which God gives her, under the respective forms He gives them, with the circumstances with which He surrounds them, and during the time He allots to them.

To presume to cling to them when God directs one to go without them, to desire to prolong them, to

multiply them, to intensify them, when God does not so will, is to oppose the Divine operation destined for each soul from eternity and carried on in time.

Therefore, it is necessary to go to one's spiritual exercises with a disengaged heart, to avoid all hurry, all over-eagerness, as well as all cowardice, laziness and routine.

Saint John of the Cross expresses the opinion that many pious souls suffer from a vice which he stigmatizes as spiritual gluttony. Who can gainsay such a great Saint, a master who is so skilled in the direction of souls? Immoderation undermines bodily health; it is a want of self-control, a weakness of the will which does not know how to repress the excessive desires of the senses.

In the spiritual order, the same vice is the ruin of the soul's health; it is an immoderate hunger and thirst; it shows want of self-control and an exaggerated attachment to one's own ideas.

The soul which is a prey to this vice shows clearly that she has not yet understood the consoling doctrine of self-surrender. She desires, certainly, to give herself to God, to abandon herself to His Providence, but in her own way, at the time appointed by herself, with the reservations her own mind determines. She seems to wish to enlighten God as to the means to be taken, to wish to enable Him to hasten the work of her sanctification.

Poor soul! She is giving herself useless trouble. And, worse still, by this immoderate haste she is putting an obstacle in the way of God's work.

#### ARTICLE 4

##### IN HER EXERCISES, THE SURRENDERED SOUL IS ATTACHED TO NOTHING BUT THE ORDER APPOINTED BY GOD

My soul, learn to attend to thy spiritual exercises in all tranquility and peace. Omit nothing of that which duty imposes upon thee, nor of that which God asks of thee; but do not burden thyself with excessive practices.

Thou art a child of God. He understands perfectly the language of the heart. Tell Him and repeat to Him, that thou dost belong to Him irrevocably. This is what He desires of thee. Then perform thy exercises with the punctuality and perfection thou givest to all thy actions. After that, be at peace. God undertook the work of thy perfection from the day thou didst sacrifice all to please Him.

Above all, beware of having spiritual conversations with any but the persons appointed by God and at the times assigned by Him. The search for "spiritual persons" often causes a great void in the soul; for the seeker often desires pleasure and consolation rather than edification.

Do not engage in spiritual reading except with the guidance of God and at the times marked out by Him. Apart from the Will of God, these readings merely engender trouble, bringing obscurity rather

than light, hindering rather than helping, causing timidity rather than confidence.

Oh, how necessary it is to have no self-will, no other motive than that of belonging to God, without wavering, in all circumstances, in success and failure, in consolation and desolation, in darkness and in light, in the abundance of spiritual riches and in their scarcity!

The soul thus made simple is not susceptible to seduction nor to error, because she clings to nothing but the Will of God. She is always contented, always rich. She does not complain of any spiritual privation, because in reality she does not suffer any.

She lives in the plenitude of her God, Who gives her all that she is able to take, at every moment of the day. She has nothing more to desire. She is like a vase which the ocean has filled.

O divine plenitude! How little art thou understood and appreciated! Souls are dying of their multitudinous desires which are opposed to the order established by God; they exhaust themselves in vain efforts and pour out their hearts in bitter plaints.

Some obstinately desire more Communion, more mortifications, more prayers. Others anxiously aspire to solitude, to retreat, to silence. Others groan over the burden of business affairs, complain of their want of time, of the absence of spiritual persons, of the lack of directors of conscience. Almost everyone has desires to formulate, regrets to express,

complaints to utter.

As for me, O Jesus, I wish to be content with Thee alone and with Thy Divine Will. I desire nothing, I refuse nothing, I demand nothing, except that which Thou Thyself hast taught me to desire and to ask: "Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." This is the extent of my aspirations, for I know that to belong to Thee is the one thing to be desired here and in eternity.

Oh, yes, it is true that I aspire to receive Thee in Holy Communion, to possess Thee in my heart, to let myself be loved by Thee and loaded with Thy benefits; but I desire this only if it is Thy good pleasure. And if it were necessary for me to live in the desert as did the hermits of old, without enjoying the happiness of receiving Thee every day, it might be that I should die of languor and of desire; but no complaint, O Jesus, should escape my lips, and no regret should be formed in my heart, for I should know that "Thou hadst done it."

It is also true, O Jesus, that I desire solitude and retreat; it has mysterious attractions for me; it seems to me that there I feel that Thou art nearer to me, more loving, more intimate; there Thy Immensity enfolds me more completely; and I sink into it with transports of love; but if it is Thy Will to keep me in the turmoil of business affairs, harassed by cares, perplexities, vexations of all kinds, I willingly consent, my God, for it is Thy Hand that holds me there.

It is true that I am happy when Thy Providence places upon my path a soul that loves Thee alone, and that guides me toward Thee, teaches me Thy love, and corrects my faults. I thank Thee, Lord, for this favor, for I know that there is no greater treasure than an experienced director, a loving father; but if duty or the requirements of Thy glory take him away from me, or separate me from him forever, I shall not complain; for I know, Lord, that Thou alone art enough for me, that if there were need, Thou couldst raise, from the very stones, men capable of aiding me and teaching me Thy love. It is to Thee, O Jesus, that I cling, to Thee alone—to Thee, by an ardent act of love, by generous self-surrender.

*Sister Agnes' Favorites*

## **The Lamb of God**

*Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O.*

*The Lamb of God—His Christmas gift to you—was to be laid in a manger which stood in a cave that had been hollowed out of one of the chalk hills near Bethlehem. That cave and manger are really the center of your world. Almighty God was the sculptor. Year after year, with wind and rain, He sculptured. Only in the fullness of time did he consider His work finished. It took Him centuries to arch the roof to that span which would allow the bleat of the Lamb to sound down all future centuries so that no one born of woman might ever say he was without a perfect Christmas gift. He worked eons to make the entrance wide enough for all mankind. And during all this time He had you in mind! It is not often you think of wind and rain as instruments in the hands of God who is working for you. But now that you have been reminded how the Cave was fashioned, every storm of wind and every shower of rain will be the Voice of God speaking lovingly to you. And when you find yourself in the midst of spiritual storms, you will know that God is hollowing out a befitting birthplace for His Son, sculpturing a cave where His Christ may be born anew—within you. Never forget that your soul is a capacity for God and nothing else. Since He labored so long and lovingly over the cave in which Jesus was to stay for but a few hours, how, think you, will He labor over that soul of yours which is to hold Jesus all the days of your life? Every day is Christmas Day—for Christ is born a new.*

*Taken from Love Does Such Things, page 11*



# FRANCISCAN SAINTS

JANUARY 29TH

**Blessed Paula Gambarà-Costa**

*Widow, Third Order*

Almighty God destined this holy woman to be a special pattern for Christian wives and widows in bearing the trials and difficulties of their state. Paula was born in Brescia, in northern Italy, of a very noble family. Even in her youth she showed a special love for solitude and a quiet, devout life. Prayer and spiritual reading were her delight, and she would gladly have exchanged her place in the world for life in a convent. But since her parents promised her in marriage to the young count Louis Costa, lord of Benasco, Paula believed she should see the Will of God in the arrangement and complied with the wishes of her parents.

After the wedding the count conveyed his young wife in great pomp to the castle at Benasco in the province of Piedmont. He himself was quite fond of gaily and amusement and would have drawn his inexperienced wife into the whirl of worldly pleasures, for in the beginning she believed it a duty to yield in everything to the tastes of her husband. But Blessed Angelus of

Chivasso, whom Paula had chosen as her confessor, kept her on the path of Christian virtue. He advised her to join the Third Order, and under his direction she learnt more and more to despise the pomp and pleasure of the world. As far as possible she devoted her services to the poor, even stinting herself of food in order to bring it to the sick. One day in winter, meeting a poor woman who was obliged to walk barefoot over ice and snow, she took off her own shoes and gave them to her.

The piety of his wife and her devotion to the poor vexed the count, who had been, meanwhile, pursuing a disorderly and frivolous life. He reproached Paula severely for her conduct, ridiculed her, and treated her in a most unworthy manner even in the presence of the servants. The servants followed the example of their master; they made fun of the virtues of their mistress and hurt her feelings on every occasion.

Paula used the saints' way of revenging herself. Ridicule and

contempt, she opposed with heroic patience and the meekness of an angel. The humiliations and persecutions she had to endure, she offered up for the conversion of her husband, whose disorderly life was her heaviest cross. She also prayed fervently and performed rigorous penances for the same intention. Finally, her prayer was heard.

The grace of God and Paula's persevering virtue led the count to enter into himself. He became sincerely repentant, approved entirely of all Paula's good works, and even consented to let her wear the habit of the Tertiaries in public.

After his death Paula lived for God alone. She was constantly occupied with meditation on the sufferings of Christ. She waited on the poor and the sick as suffering members of Christ her Lord. She strove to resemble our Lord in the fasts and the many austerities she practiced.

After a life full of good works and merit, she fell asleep in the Lord in the year 1505. God manifested her sanctity by performing numerous miracles at her tomb. Pope Gregory XVI approved the devotion uninterruptedly paid to her. Her feast is observed on January thirty-first.

#### **DIFFICULTY IN MARRIED LIFE**

1.) Consider that married life is invariably a cross in one way or another. The Apostle writes: "If thou take a wife, thou hast not

sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned; nevertheless such shall have tribulation of the flesh" (*1 Cor. 7:28*). Where two persons are so intimately associated, even though it be for their mutual support, it must happen that, taking into account differences of temperament and the changeableness of the human mind, there will be much to overcome, much to endure. Add to this the usual family cares. — On the other hand, to be called to the married state and keep aloof from it merely because of these hardships, might be merely courting a much heavier cross. Married people should rely on the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony in accepting the cross of this state of life, and then "bear one another's burdens, so that they may fulfill the law of Christ" (*Gal. 6:29*). — Have you acted thus?

2.) Consider that frequently married people make life hard for themselves, be it through the fault of one of the parties or even of both of them. Most of the sufferings here on earth are caused by human beings themselves. If a husband is remiss in the duties of his state; if he is careless about his work; if, like the husband of our saint, he gives himself up to worldly and sensual pleasures, indulges in drink and in gambling; if he takes no pleasure in being at home with his family, but only vents his ill-humor whenever he is there; surely, that can make life very hard for the wife. Likewise, a man is to be pitied if his wife is

lazy and untidy, or wasteful and fond of dress, or garrulous and quarrelsome. "It is better to dwell in a wilderness than with a quarrelsome woman" (*Prov. 21:19*). If both parties act in that way toward each other, their life may prove to be a veritable time of woe, and what St. Bernard says is only too likely to come true: "From a hell here on earth they go off to another hell in eternity." In how many unhappy marriages is this the case!

3.) Consider that a hard married life has led many people to a high degree of holiness. Blessed Paula is a shining example in point. She shows how one can arrive at holiness under such trying circumstances: by perfect resignation to God, by sincere and profound piety. Sometimes almighty God permits such a cross to afflict His favorite souls in order to detach them from worldly pleasures and to lead them to true piety. By this means they are taught and strengthened to carry their cross with patience and to requite bitterness with meekness. Thus, the cross becomes a ladder to heaven, and

on it one's partner in life is also sometimes saved. It was in that way that St. Monica, like Blessed Paula, obtained the conversion of her husband. The tears which great sorrow causes us to shed during prayer are, as St. Augustine says, like the blood of a heart pierced with pain. Such bloodshed in secret cries aloud to heaven and cannot permanently pass unheeded. And when it is heard, how fervently the person will thank God for the cross, at least on his deathbed.

### ***PRAYER OF THE CHURCH***

Lord Jesus, who didst perfect Blessed Paula in the way of holiness by the imitation of Thy cross, grant us through her merits and example so to bear the trials of this life that at the hour of our death we may be consoled by Thy holy cross. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.



# THE GREATEST TREASURE

*Reverend L. Chiavarino*

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## CHAPTER XII HOLY MASS IS THE GREATEST HELP WE CAN GIVE TO THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

We all know how terrible is the pain of Purgatory. St. Jerome points out that the intensity of the fire of Purgatory is equal to that of hell, and, as it is an instrument of divine justice, it causes unspeakable pain, more severe, indeed, than any torture that can be borne or thought of in this life. However, he goes on to assure us that the strength of the fire is diminished when Mass is celebrated for some poor soul, and that during the time of the Mass the soul for whom it is offered does not suffer. Moreover, he declares that during every Mass many souls are delivered from Purgatory and received into Heaven.

On one occasion, while St. Bernard was celebrating Mass in

a church near the three Fountains of St. Paul in Rome, he saw a ladder stretching from earth to Heaven, and on it angels descending and ascending. They took souls from Purgatory and led them into Paradise.

The renowned French orator, Father Lacordaire, who died in 1861, used to tell of a certain unbelieving Polish prince who had written a book denying the immortality of the soul. One day, while walking in his garden and meditating on the publication of his book, he was approached by a poor woman who cast herself at his feet and sobbed out her sorrow at being unable, because of her poverty, to have Masses said for her husband who had recently died. The prince, although he thought the woman superstitious, did not feel harsh enough to spurn her plea for aid and gave her a gold piece. In great joy the woman took it and, hastening to the church, made the

necessary arrangements to have some Masses celebrated for the repose of her husband's soul.

Five days later, the prince was reading in his study. Raising his eyes, he saw before him a man dressed as a farm laborer. "Prince," said the stranger, "I have come to thank you. It was my wife to whom you gave alms the other day in order that she might have Masses said for my soul. Your charity is pleasing to God, and He has permitted me to come here to thank you."

This said, the man vanished like a shadow. The prince burnt his manuscript instead of sending it to the publisher, and yielding to the grace of God, he believed and led a good Christian life.

A touching story is told of a mother who lost her only son, a boy of ten. Her grief was so great, and she would not be consoled. She mourned him all day, and at night her dreams were of him. In one of these dreams she saw her beloved child in a barren field that was completely scorched by the rays of a strong sun. The little boy was trying vainly to drink from a pool of muddy water. He cried and

begged for help, but, to her anguish, no one paid any attention to him. When she awoke from this horrible dream, she thought that it must be an indication that her son was suffering in Purgatory and in need of prayers. Therefore, she had several Masses said for him. For three consecutive nights, at the same hour, she again dreamt of the field, but it was a field greatly changed, being now verdant and blooming with flowers, the water was clear and limpid, and her son, as beautiful as an angel, was radiant with happiness. She heard him say: "Thank you, Mama, thank you!" After this she was no longer disturbed by the evil dream, and she lived peacefully in the knowledge that her son was surely in Heaven.

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