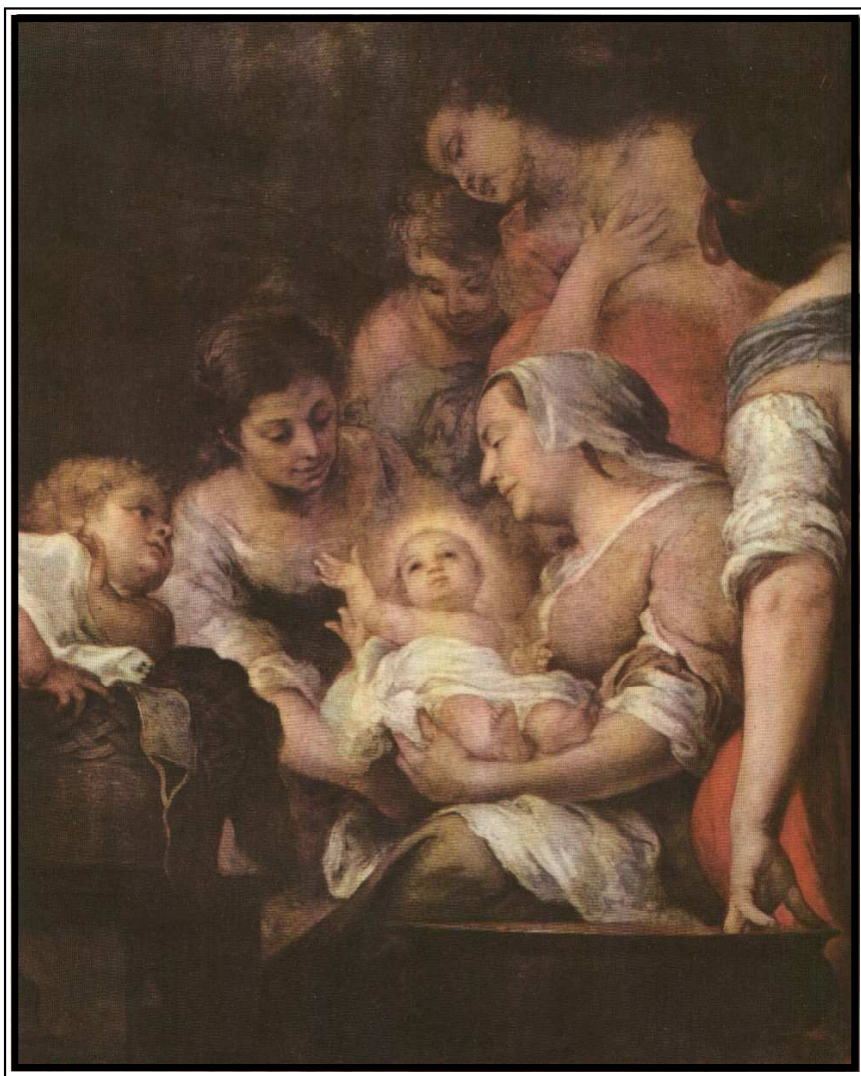


THE SERAPH

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Murillo The Birth of the Virgin

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New Beginnings

September brings to us a new volume of THE SERAPH, as well as a new academic school year. With all things new we are filled with great hope and expectations.

Experience has shown us that there will be difficulties and obstacles in our path, but faith, hope, and charity inspire us to go forward boldly and bravely. It is very easy to become discouraged and disheartened as we see the increasing depravity and moral degradation of mankind all around us. God's laws are not only ignored but boldly denounced, rejected and fought against in open rebellion in every aspect of our world today. In government, education, health care, etcetera we see God, the Church, and all morality and decency cast aside with mocking disdain.

We see total disregard for life as we murder more and more of our own children through abortion and our elderly through euthanasia. We trace this back to the disregard and breakdown of the family. The children and the old are a burden upon our selfish plans and desires. We trace the breakdown of the family to the self-centeredness of our young men and women. We trace this

self-centeredness to the lack of faith. We trace this lack of faith to the Modernist heretical Trojan Horse of Vatican II.

The evils of this world seem obvious enough. And it seems clear that we are in the midst of the Great Apostasy allowed by the permissive will of God. There is no turning back. The foretold history of the world will take place as God has told us. The question then becomes: "What can we do? What will we do?"

What is left for us, is to preserve and increase in our own spheres; faith, hope, and charity in cooperation with God. The Friars through THE SERAPH and in many other ways are working to inspire us in carrying this cross. We are reminded that if we take up our cross willingly for the love of God, He will make the cross light and sweet – a pleasure for our hearts. It is at times very difficult to implement this love and cooperation with God in our own lives, but it is even harder to inspire others in this manner of living. It is however our duty before God to keep trying. As Bishop Louis OFM (RIP) used to tell us: "Our Lord said to preach in season and out of season. He

did not say anyone would listen. We must preach even if no one listens, if for no other reason than for our own souls.” St. Anthony of Padua once turned to the fishes of the sea and preached to them because men would not listen to the word of God. So we preach and print for our fellow men and if they heed and follow all is well and good, but if they do not we are comforted by the thought that we have at least done what was given us to do.

It is also for this reason that we have begun the Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy. With a handful of young ladies we hope to inspire them with a love for God in every aspect of their lives. The love of God is not just for Sundays or just at church. The love of God must permeate and vivify every aspect of our lives. As we develop our academic goals we desire to permeate this learning with true Charity and Catholic mores. It is not the ability to memorize and argue the faith that is the goal. The true goal is to live the faith. To live the faith day to day; moment to moment.

As our young ladies leave us to enter into the world and all its sufferings, struggles, and temptations, we hope that they will have developed the true wisdom and character of

Catholic young ladies. They are entering into a world that sees nothing wrong with immorality. It is a world that allows and often encourages lying, cheating, stealing, fornication, etc. The world looks down upon and often takes advantage of souls who do all they can to avoid ever offending God. It is a cruel world, but if we are ready to suffer everything and even to die rather than ever offend God, we will be able to survive all that the world, the devils, and our own passions can throw at us.

Faith reminds us that there is a reward awaiting all those who carry their crosses and suffer persecution for justice sake. We can find even more than just the strength to carry our cross – we will find pleasure and joy in the cross that is taken up with love. This is part of the hundred fold reward promised us in this life. But, even more importantly we will find eternal life in Heaven.

As we pray for all those entrusted to us in one way or another by the grace of God, we likewise beg you to cooperate with us in the salvation of your own souls. Your success will be our glory. We also beg your prayers for ourselves, THE SERAPH, our academy, and all our apostolates.

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Bishop Bonaventure Strandt, OFM

Every single liturgical year, exactly nine months after the grand feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, Holy Mother Church honors Mary yet again by celebrating her Nativity on September the 8th. When we take the necessary time in meditation to develop mature spiritual thoughts, we begin to understand the powerful impact that this one birth has had upon our existence.

Truthfully stated, Mary is like no other creature. She was created as a human being, but this is where similarities between her and all other creatures cease. This particular human being, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, has been endowed with incomparable amounts of graces and gifts. She has been rewarded with a title of heavenly royalty, one which she did not attain without a lifetime of suffering and diligent obedience to the will of Almighty God.

This one birth, of a child named Mary, to parents named Joachim and Anna, has forever changed the history of human kind. In order to fully comprehend the

complete impact of Mary's birth, we must go back to the place where she was promised to the world as a redemptive gift from the Holy Trinity. I am, of course, referring to the Garden of Eden, when our sinful parents, after losing all perfection of sanctifying grace, were promised not only the Messiah, but also the Great Lady who would crush the head of Lucifer beneath her heel.

The name of the first woman was Eve, because, as the Scriptures explain, she was the mother of all living things. Through the corruption of her own sinful disobedience, she effectively became the mother of all dying things, since sin brings death in its wake. This mother had failed all of her future children, bringing upon them the curse of the Lord, and throwing all of the perfections of nature into utter chaos and turmoil. The words of St. Paul describe completely what took place then, and what still takes place today: "All nature groans and travails, awaiting the appearance of the sons of God."

The sons and daughters of God can only be so if they are the children of Mary, who is known to us as the Second Eve. Yes, she has reclaimed through her deep humility and perfect obedience what Eve had lost by her prideful rebellion. You may be aware of how many spiritual writers even refer to Jesus Christ as the Second Adam, since He has done for creation what Adam was supposed to do: nourish, protect, and beautify all creation. Our Lord and Our Lady have given to us what Adam and Eve could not: the parental guidance necessary for acquiring the lost state of perfection in sanctifying grace.

In commemorating honorably the birth of the Queen of Heaven each September, the Catholic Church is actually paying homage to the rebirth of all creation. From Mary's hands flow all graces, including the powerful sanctifying grace needed to once again become true children of Our Heavenly Father. Precious few souls have ever displayed in their lives what the ideal of Our Creator is in its fullness. After Jesus and Mary, the finest example of this return to Adam's perfected state is to be found most especially in Saint

Francis of Assisi. Just as Adam had the ability to call creatures to himself without them being afraid; so Saint Francis had such command over nature that storms, wild beasts, and peaceful birds alike all obeyed his words. The creatures saw the glimmer of God's own presence in the penitential little frame of the humble Francis. This is why no creatures feared him. We, too, have the same abilities as the great saints who commanded the elements. The only thing that causes fear in our fellow creatures is the actual sin which they perceive in us. This is what it means for St. Paul to say that all creatures are groaning in their suffering state, waiting for holy Catholics to become sanctified, in order to bless all creation in union with the will of God.

The union with the Holy Trinity of which I am writing is only possible if we become the devoted and obedient children of Mary. God truly desires to bless us so richly with every mark of joy and happiness; but never outside of the order that He has established. We too often wish to question God and the ways that He has marked out for our salvation, in the practice of true and disciplined Christianity.

As always, Saint Paul has the practical answer to our inward rebellion of will, when he says that clay has no right to say to the potter: “Why did you make me this way?” In such an easy to understand example, he reminds us that we are simply the creatures of the great Creator. He can, according to His great pleasure, command us to follow any laws whatsoever. In giving us the Blessed Virgin Mary to honor and obey, we have a beautifully sweet yoke, and a light burden that rewards us a hundredfold at every single turn.

Mary has one wish, one true desire: The salvation and eternal happiness of every single human being. We ought to ponder the depth of her love for us, especially when we are tempted to fall into dejection or despair. She was born into this world to bring us nothing but peace and happiness. We should all strive each day to do something, howsoever small it may be, to return thanks to God for the birth of the greatest of all of His creatures: the one that we call Mother Mary.



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Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

FOREWORD

In the following pages, an attempt is made to relate the story of the English Franciscans during the first century of the Protestant Revolution. Among the causes commonly assigned, even by Catholic historians, for the rapid spread of Protestantism in Europe is the inactivity and degeneracy of the so-called old Orders at the time when the conflict began. This serious charge loses much of its significance if we remember that for forty years these old Orders bore the brunt of the attack against the overwhelming forces of the enemy. The fact, too, that more than 150 members of these old Orders played a prominent role in the Council of Trent shows that their laxism and indifference could not have been so great after all. As to the Franciscan Order in particular, it may suffice to call to mind that of the above-mentioned 150 religious 85 were sons of St. Francis, and that, furthermore, between the years 1520 and 1620, more than 500 Franciscans shed their blood for the faith in the various countries of Europe.

To disprove the above charge in the case of the Franciscans in England, and at the same time to afford wholesome reading for all admirers of St. Francis and his Order, the present volume is placed before the public. As history clearly testifies, the popular mind of England in the beginning of the religious upheaval was deeply imbued with the truly Catholic spirit of the great Saint of Assisi. And perhaps nowhere at the time were his followers of the First Order so highly esteemed by all classes of society as in England. They enjoyed the confidence of the king not less than of the masses. Their life and activity were intimately bound up with the affairs of the higher circles and with the needs and aspirations of the lower classes. The former sought their favor and support, while the latter looked to them for guidance and consolation.

The writer has endeavored to recount their labors and sufferings for the Catholic faith in England in a popular way and with due regard to the postulates of modern historical

criticism. Without claiming this to be the first treatment of the subject in English, he would designate as the special feature of his work the fact that it is a critical compilation of practically everything so far written on this matter. From the bibliography the reader can form an idea of the time and labor expended in gathering, sifting, and arranging the available material. The writer shall deem himself amply rewarded for his pains if his work, be it ever so imperfect, will help to make better known one of the many glorious chapters of the history of the Order to which he has the privilege of belonging.

Feast of St. Francis of Assisi,
October 4, 1919.

F. B. S.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Fr. William of England, a disciple of St. Francis — The first Franciscans arrive in England: Fr. Agnellus of Pisa and his eight companions — The first friaries: Canterbury, London, Oxford, Northampton, Cambridge — Marvelous expansion of the province — Character of the English Franciscans — Two remarkable features regarding the development

of the province — Influence with the masses — In the service of State and Church — In the field of letters.

To realize the terrible calamity that befell the English Franciscans during the first century of the Protestant Revolution, the reader must know something of their history prior to the outbreak of the storm. For this reason, we shall devote the first chapter of our narrative to an account of their arrival on English soil and of the subsequent development and activity of the province. Though necessarily brief and incomplete, it will show how, throughout the centuries, the sons of St. Francis, by their sanctity and learning as well as by their zeal for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the realm, enjoyed the confidence of the English nation, so that in the beginning of the upheaval they were the most popular and influential religious in England.

Among the first disciples and companions of St. Francis was Fr. William, an Englishman by birth.¹ He was esteemed by his brethren both for his learning and for his extraordinary piety. His soul

1 The Martyrologium Franciscanum of Fr. Arturus commemorates him on March 7, in these terms: "At Assisi in Umbria, Blessed William, Confessor, a man of extraordinary perfection, who for his sanctity and miracles was widely known in life and after death."

had deeply imbibed the spirit of the Seraphic Father, and it was very likely owing to his burning zeal for immortal souls, that the newly founded Franciscan Order found its way to England. During the second general chapter, which was held at Whitsuntide, in 1219, at Our Lady of the Angels, or Porziuncola, near Assisi, Fr. William petitioned St. Francis to let also England share the blessings of his new foundation. Accordingly, the Saint directed Blessed Agnellus of Pisa, who was then custos of the French Franciscans and guardian of the friary in Paris, to undertake the expedition to England. He vested him with the authority of provincial and drew up an obedience which read :

To Brother Agnellus of Pisa of the Tuscan Province of the Order of Minors, Brother Francis of Assisi, Minister General, though unworthy, salutation. By the merit of wholesome obedience, I command thee to go to England and there to exercise the office of Minister Provincial. Farewell²

² In his *Annales Minorum* (an. 1219, num. 32), Wadding remarks that as a perpetual memorial of the founding of the English Province, the Franciscan friary of Mount La Verna at his time preserved a picture of Blessed Agnellus of Pisa holding his obedience in his hands. The saintly friar died in 1232 (1233); he was

Trusting in Divine Providence and fortified with the blessing of his holy Father, Blessed Agnellus accompanied by eight friars set out for the new mission field. Of his companions, Fr. Richard of Ingworth was a priest, Fr. Richard of Devonshire a cleric in minor orders, and Fr. William of Esseby a youthful but very pious novice; these three were, like their leader, Englishmen by birth. The other five selected for the expedition were lay brothers; viz., FF. Henry of Cervise, Lawrence of Beauvais, William of Florence, Melioratus, and James Ultramontanus.³ After staying a few months with their brethren in France, the little band of nine friars continued their journey to Normandy and received a hearty welcome from the monks of Fescamp. Supplied by these with the necessary means, they embarked for Dover in Kent, where they landed, probably on May 3, 1220.⁴ Thence they

enrolled among the Blessed by Pope Leo XIII. The Franciscan Order celebrates his feast on May 7.

³ Eccleston, *Liber de Adventu Minorum in Angliam in Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. I, p. 218.

⁴ Historians do not agree as to the date of the arrival of the first Franciscans in England. Eccleston, a member of the Order who lived about the year 1340, says that they arrived on September 10, 1224. "In the year of the Lord 1224," he begins his narrative, "in the time of the Lord Pope Honorius, namely in the same

year in which the Rule of St. Francis was approved by him, in the eighth year of the Lord King Henry, son of John, on Tuesday after the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, which that year fell on Sunday, the Friars Minor first arrived in England.” The precision and accuracy with which the statement is made (September 8, the day of the feast, was actually a Sunday in 1224) would settle the question once for all, as it did for Leland, Wood, and most English historians, were it not that other writers of repute and a number of indirect evidences speak against the date. Thus Wadding *Annales Minorum* (an. 1220, num. 58) maintains that the first friars arrived on May 3, 1220, adducing Marianus of Florence (d. 1537) as his authority. Others who assign the year 1220 are Matthew Paris (d. 1259), Marcus of Lisbon (d. 1591), Francis Harold (d. 1685), and Parkinson (d. 1728). Some historians assert that the friars arrived about four years after the coronation of King Henry III. Thereby they by no means settle the question, because the King was crowned twice, in 1216 and in 1220. Matthew Paris, who lived in England at this time as chronologist of the *King*, declares, under the year 1243, that the Franciscans “began to build their first habitations *scarce four and twenty years ago* (See Parkinson, *Antiquities of the English Franciscans*, p. 6). Again, in 1260, St. Bonaventure drew up an official list of the provinces till then founded in the Order, in which, apparently observing the order of their foundation, he places among those on this side of the Alps the one in France first and the one in England second (See *Annales Minorum*, an. 1260, num. 14). This seems to show, as Parkinson points out (ibidem, p. 7), that the Order had a province in England before 1221, since that year others were erected. Furthermore, in Glassberger’s *Chronica (Analecta Franciscan, Vol. II)*, we read on page 28: “At the general chapter which was held that same year (1223) at St. Mary of Porziuncola, Fr. Caesarius

proceeded to Canterbury, about ten miles northwest, and knocked on the portals of the Benedictine priory of the Holy Trinity. The monks had probably been apprised of their coming, since the friars

was relieved of his office as minister (provincial of Germany), which he had held for two years, and Fr. Albert of Pisa, who *had fast returned from England*, was appointed in his stead.” (See also Parkinson, ibidem, pp. 11, 65.) Finally, we find that in two instances Eccleston apparently contradicts his statement as to the arrival of the first friars in England. Regarding Fr. Lawrence of Beauvais, one of the companions of Blessed Agnellus, he relates the following (*Analecta Franciscans*, Vol. I, p. 219) : “He in the beginning (of the province) labored unceasingly according to the Rule; and having later returned to Blessed Francis, he merited frequently to see him and to be consoled by his conversations; finally, the holy Father most freely gave him his tunic, and having delighted him with his sweetest blessing sent him back to England.” Now, St. Francis died on October 3, 1226. Hence, if Fr. Lawrence came to England in 1224, then all that is told of him must *have taken place* within the brief space of two years. Again, Eccleston concludes the second chapter of his narrative with the words: “It is worthy of note that in the second year of the administration of Fr. Peter (of Tewkesbury), the fifth minister of England, namely in *the thirty-second year since the arrival of the brethren in England*, there were in the English province 1,242 friars living in 49 places.” Although the old chroniclers do not give the years of Fr. Peter’s administration, Father Cuthbert (*The Friars and how they came to England*, p. 141) assumes that the year suggested in Eccleston’s note is 1251. If this is correct, then it is clear that the first Franciscans did not arrive in England in 1224.

found no difficulty in identifying themselves and receiving food and lodging.

Leaving his brethren at the priory, Fr. Agnellus went to the king and, as was required at the time, presented the credentials drawn up and signed by the Pope.⁵ Henry III had already heard of St. Francis and of the holy life he and his followers were leading. Hence he received the provincial with every mark of esteem and readily permitted the friars to settle in Canterbury. Thanking the Benedictines for their kindness, the Franciscans

5 The credentials which St. Francis obtained from the Pope read : "Honorius, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to Archbishops, Abbots, Deans, Archdeacons, and other prelates of church — Whereas Our beloved sons, Brother Francis and his companions of the life and institute of Friars Minor, despising the vanities of the world, have made choice of a way of life deservedly approved by the Roman Church, and sowing the seeds of the word of God, are traveling after the example of the Apostles through divers nations: We entreat you all, and exhort you in the Lord and command you, by the Apostolic letters addressed to you, that, whensoever members of said institute bearing these presents shall think fit to come to you, you receive them as Catholics and true believers; and that, for the honor of God and the respect you owe to Us, you show them favor and courtesy. Given at Rome on the third day of the ides of June, in the third year of Our Pontificate." — *Annales Minorum*, Vol. I, an. 1219, num. 28.

took up their temporary abode in the Poor Priests' Hospice, where they remained till the following September.

In that month, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Stephen Langton, who ever after proved a devoted friend and protector of the friars, raised the provincial to the dignity of the priesthood and conferred subdeaconship on Fr. Richard of Devonshire. Soon after these ordinations, Blessed Agnellus commissioned Fr. Richard of Ingworth and Fr. Richard of Devonshire with two lay brothers, FF. Henry and Melioratus, to establish houses in London and Oxford, while he with the four remaining friars remained at Canterbury, in order to begin the erection of the first friary on English soil.⁶ Alexander, the master of the Poor Priests' Hospice, had presented them with a plot of ground and urged the citizens to contribute toward the erection of a house for them. His appeal was not in vain, and soon a neat little friary was ready to receive the sons of St. Francis. From Antony Wood, the Oxford antiquary, we learn that the friars held this place in the name of the Canterbury Corporation, since their Rule forbade them to

6 Our chief sources of information regarding the erection of the first friaries are Eccleston and Parkinson.

possess temporalities. In this house, which was later dedicated to St. Francis, the friars lived for almost fifty years, laboring for the spiritual welfare of their generous benefactors and educating their boys in the adjoining school. In 1270, John Diggs, a civil official of Canterbury, had the friars take up their abode on Bennewith, an island in the double channel of the river Stour. It was this friary which late in the fifteenth century was given to the reformed members of the province, and which they inhabited till the time of its suppression under Henry VIII.

When Fr. Richard with his three companions arrived in London, the people vied with one another in giving them a hearty reception. After spending a fortnight with the Dominicans at Holborn,⁷ the Franciscans went to Cornhill, where John Travers, Sheriff of London, had procured and fitted out a house for their use. So greatly were the citizens edified at the charming simplicity and self-denial of the friars, that they soon had a more spacious and comfortable home to offer them. John Irwin, a prosperous merchant

⁷ It is probable that the Dominicans had come to England in 1219. See Parkinson, p. 16.

of the city and afterwards a lay brother of the Order, presented them with a tract of land in the Shambles of St. Nicholas, a place where the poor and destitute were especially numerous. Here in the space of five years, through the charity of the people and the city officials, a church and a friary were erected.

Leaving the two lay brothers in London, Fr. Richard of Ingworth and Fr. Richard of Devonshire, about the feast of All Saints of the same year, 1220, set out for Oxford, where, at the time, King Henry was holding court. Being strangers in the country, they lost their way. Night was coming on, and they knew not where to turn for lodging. Finally, they came to a manor house that belonged to the Benedictine Abbey of Abbington. They knocked at the neighboring priory, and the porter, though astonished at their strange dress and strange story, was civil enough to admit them. But the prior, from a rather unworthy motive, treated the poor friars harshly and turned them out into the night. They had not gone far, when one of the monks, taking pity on them, had them called back, set refreshments before them, and led them to a hayloft, where they might rest their weary bones. That night,

the good monk had a dreadful dream. He saw how Christ sitting in judgment commanded the inhospitable prior and monks of Abbington to be strangled, and how he himself found rescue in the fond embrace of St. Francis. On awaking, he hastened to the prior and found him struggling with death. Now he related his dream to the assembled brethren. All were filled with fear, especially when they went to the barn and found that the friars had gone. Sometime later, both the prior and the abbot of Abbington joined the ranks of St. Francis.⁸

After spending a week with the Dominicans at Oxford, they answered the summons of Richard Miller, a wealthy citizen, who offered them a little house situated near the parish church of St. Ebbe. During the ensuing Christmas season, Blessed Agnellus visited Oxford and appointed Fr. William of Esseby guardian. In the following summer, the friary was enlarged. It is said that the king himself broke ground for the new building, and that men of high standing in the realm, not only advanced the work by generous alms, but also lent manual assistance, carrying stones and

mortar to the masons. The king also ordered that the friary be built as near as possible to the royal palace, that he might the more easily communicate with the friars. In this convent, which grew in dimensions as years went on, the sons of St. Francis dwelt till 1539, when it was demolished by order of Henry VIII. For three centuries, the clerics of the Order were sent there to study and to attend the famous university of Oxford, so that we may justly term this friary the nursery of Franciscan learning and the most famous convent in the English province.

Thus, before the end of the year 1220, the Franciscans had established themselves at Canterbury, London, and Oxford. Meanwhile, as is very probable, other friars, hearing of the cordial reception accorded Blessed Agnellus and his companions, took heart and set out for England.⁹ Among these were Fr. Albert of Pisa, brother of Blessed Agnellus, Fr. Henry of Pisa and Fr. Peter and Thomas, both of Spanish birth. With their arrival, the provincial was able to found new houses. Accordingly,

⁸ This incident is related by Antony Wood. See Parkinson, p. 14.

⁹ Parkinson, p. 11. The fact, as the author observes, may explain the divergency of opinion among historians regarding the date when the first Franciscans arrived in England.

FF. Richard of Ingworth and Richard of Devonshire went to Northampton and obtained lodging in a hospital in the parish of St. Giles, until a friary was ready to receive them. The first guardian of this foundation was Fr. Peter the Spaniard. Not long after, the Franciscans settled in Cambridge. For a time they lived in an old synagogue that adjoined the city prison. But finding the noisy surroundings an obstacle to the proper discharge of their religious exercises, they purchased with the ten marks sent them by the king a plot of ground nearby, on which the people erected for them a little oratory "as a carpenter may build in a day." Fr. Thomas of Spain became the first guardian of this place.

The next twenty-five years saw Franciscan friaries spring up in all parts of England. From Eccleston we learn that in the second year of the provincialship of Fr. Peter Tewkesbury, probably 1251, they were 49 in number. At the general chapter, in 1260, the English Province was registered as comprising seven custodies.¹⁰ At the end of the next century, Fr. Bartholomew of Pisa, in his celebrated *Liber Conformitatum*,¹¹

enumerated these same seven custodies, adding the names of the friaries which at the time amounted to 60. The names of the custodies with their respective friaries are as follows :

1. *London*, nine friaries; viz., London, Canterbury, Winchelsea, Southampton, Ware, Lewes, Chichester, Salisbury, Winchester;

2. *York*, seven friaries; viz., York, Doncaster, Lincoln, Boston, Beverley, Scarborough, Grimsby ;

3. *Cambridge*, nine friaries; viz., Cambridge, Norwich, Colchester, Bury St. Edmunds, Dunwich, Walsingham, Yarmouth, Ipswich, Lynn ;

4. *Bristol*, nine friaries; viz., Bristol, Gloucester, Bridgewater, Hereford, Exeter, Carmarthen, Bodmin, Dorchester, Cardiff ;

5. *Oxford*, eight friaries; viz., Oxford, Reading, Bedford, Stamford, Nottingham,

¹⁰ 545 seq. In his *Annales Minorum* (Vol. IV, an. 1400, num. 13), Wadding places side by side three lists of English friaries as he found them in three ancient codices. While the three codices have 7 custodies, but two have 60 friaries, the third registering only 58.

¹⁰ *Annaleo Minorum*, Vol. II, an. 1260, num. 14.

¹¹ *Analecta Francisocana*, Vol. IV, pp.

Northampton, Leicester,
Grantham;

6. *Newcastle*, nine friaries;
viz., Newcastle, Dundee,
Dumfries, Haddington,
Carlisle, Hartlepool,
Berwick, Roxburgh,
Richmond;

7. *Worcester*, nine friaries;
viz., Worcester, Preston,
Broughton,¹² Shrewsbury,
Coventry, Chester, Hereford,¹³
Hamely,¹⁴ Stafford.

Maidstone in Kent,
Stoke in Somersetshire,

Newark in Nottinghamshire
Warrington in Lancashire,
Becmachen on the Isle of
Man.¹⁶

16 This last friary is mentioned by Thaddeus, *The Franciscans in England*, p. 16, who adds, on the authority of Tanner and Dugdale, that it was founded in 1373.

(To be continued)

In the following towns, friaries were erected probably in the course of the fifteenth century;¹⁵ at least they are not on the lists drawn up by Bartholomew of Pisa and by Wadding:

Anglesey (Llanfaes near Aylesbury in Buckingham-Beaumaris) in Wales, shire,

Brougham in Westmoreland,
Penrith in Cumberland,

Greenwich in Kent,
Plymouth in Devonshire,

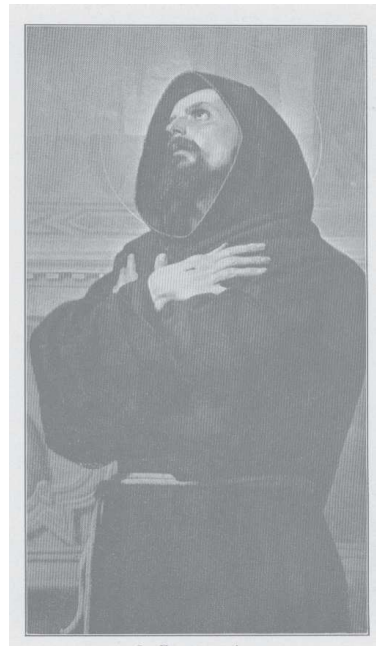
Ludlow in Shropshire,
Pontefract in Yorkshire,

12 Here Parkinson places Bridgenorth.

13 Parkinson says Litchfield.

14 Lancaster, according to Parkinson.

15 See Parkinson, Part II, pp. 87 seq.



Daily Crosses

Bishop Giles O.F.M

“Take up your cross daily and come follow Me.” (Luke 9, 23)

These words of Our Lord imply that He has prepared a daily cross for each of us. Due to our fallen nature it is necessary that we have a daily cross; but it is also due to our fallen nature that we often refuse this very cross.

When man turned his will against God, we see that all the rest of creation that was supposed to serve man, now is in rebellion against him. Man must now earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. This rebellion of the rest of creation against its head is a daily cross for us. This cross is of our own making and it is justly deserved. We have created this situation, so it is only logical that we have no right to complain or reject this cross.

This cross is punishment for our crimes, but it also contains medicinal qualities. In accepting and embracing this cross for the love of God we find in it the healing balm for the wound in our souls created by our disobedience.

This cross is not the same for everyone because some souls

are more sensitive to its effects, and also because some souls have begun to heal the disorder in their souls to one degree or another. There are also situations where God places a bigger cross upon a particular soul so that she might make greater strides in love and virtue. In this case we see that the cross is not a punishment but rather a blessing.

If only we could understand this invitation of Our Lord to turn our backs to the world and take up our daily cross and follow Him! He has promised to make this cross light and sweet. (Matt 11:30) He has promised to reward us a hundred-fold in this life and to give us eternal life in the next. (Matt 19:29)

This cross is a just punishment and a healing remedy, but it is even more as it becomes the key to happiness in this world and in the next. It is the key in which we become like unto God. We follow Jesus Christ (God) in this manner -- we imitate Him. In this way day by day we become like unto Him. We will be successful when we can say with St. Paul: “It is not I, but Christ living within me.” (Gal 2:20)

If we can focus our attention upon eternity, we will be better able to place our daily crosses in their proper light. Our trials and tribulations are truly insignificant when we think of the glory that awaits those who use them well. In our tribulations and pains, if we think of Heaven as their reward they become so much more tolerable and even lovable.

If we focus our attention upon Jesus Christ and The Cross that He bore for our salvation – meditating upon His cruel agony and the patience and love with which He bore it for us – then, we also find that our suffering is not so bad.

For example: if we are confined by illness, or imprisonment, we can find consolation in the thought that Jesus has suffered the same thing for us and much worse. St. Thomas More would have us to understand that we are all prisoners in this earth and we are never truly free until we are in Heaven with God. It makes no difference whether we are restricted in our movements to a couple of square feet; to a cell; a house; a city; country; or even to the entire earth, in every situation we are restricted and are therefore not truly free. Many who have suffered slavery came to realize

that only their bodies could be enslaved, man cannot enslave another's soul. There is great consolation in understanding this in whatever confinement we might find ourselves. Our souls are always free to take flights to Heaven even while they are bound to this body on earth. Slaves can sing with true joy that often their own master will never understand. The only real confinement and slavery of the soul is sin. The moment that we reject sin and approach God in penance our soul is free once more. While there is often nothing we can do about the immediate confinement of our bodies there is always something that we can do for our souls.

We all suffer confinement here on earth. Therefore, we can see that others may suffer a severer confinement than we do yet they can remain calm and content. We can take some comfort that our suffering is not as difficult as some others. And that, if we too cooperate with God's grace, we can like them, be at peace in our current situation.

Besides confinement we often find our labors to be a tribulation to us. We frequently must work to find little or no fruit from our labors. This is most true in those

instances when our labors are exerted only for material things. When our labors are for spiritual gain we always have the hope that Our Lord will accept our efforts and intention. The key therefore, to finding joy and consolation in our labors is to super-naturalize them with a spiritual intention. When we offer our works for the greater honor and glory of God with a good intention they are always profitable even if they do not appear to be so in the material realm. But, even in the material realm we see that eventually these works done with a supernatural intention bear material fruit as well as spiritual. "Seek first the kingdom of Heaven and its justice ... and all this will be given to you besides." (Matt 6:33) We have a loving Heavenly Father who watches over us and takes care of us. If we labor for Him, He will give us all that we need.

We know that there are people who refuse to work and desire only to be supplied with all their needs by government and that this places a greater burden upon those who do work. This Communistic attitude and practice has been condemned by the Church and therefore by God. While there is little that we

can do to change these souls or society directly, we can avoid allowing them to rob us of our merit by filling us with demonic anger, jealousy, envy, etc. Each will have to give an account of their own lives. If we look more intently we see that those who are looking for a free ride are the ones that are the most miserable. These poor souls are seeking a Heaven here on earth and they are being constantly frustrated. They will never have enough to satisfy their wants and needs. Their bodies break down and are ruined in a rebellion against their chosen idleness. Man was made to labor. Even before the fall, God commanded him to labor: Go forth and subdue the earth.

Sadly, in refusing or rejecting the cross of labor that has been laid upon the shoulders of all men, these poor souls only find a heavier and more bitter cross in the depths of their souls. In seeking a material and temporal ease they end up paying a heavy price both now and in eternity. They are miserable now and will be so for all of eternity in Hell.

Please note that we are not condemning a forced idleness that often must be born because of circumstances, but rather laziness that is knowingly and

willingly taken up. The poor we will always have with us (Mark 14:7) and it is an honor and a privilege to give aid to them. “If you give a cup of water to one of these for the love of Me, you have done it to Me.” (Matt 10:42) These poor have a cross, and a beautiful one, in that they have been chosen to follow Our Lord in His Poverty. The lazy man has no merit but rather condemnation in the miserable path that he has chosen.

There is therefore, joy to be found in hard honest labors as well as poverty and want that is borne for the love of God. There are also many who render very hard labors in dishonest work. These pick up for themselves a doubly heavy cross. They do not find the peace and happiness that they promise themselves from their dishonest labors. They, on the contrary, find their miseries in this life compounded and the sufferings in eternity increased.

Our own labors are not to be compared with those of our fellow man, but rather the measure of their worth is to be found in comparison with the works of Our Lord. Everyone receives the just reward of his labors. As we have nothing to envy from our fellow men who

are heaping greater burdens upon themselves, we likewise, have reason to reproach ourselves for not having the purest intentions, or for not doing our best, as Our Lord always did. While on earth Jesus always did the works of His Father. He always conformed to His Will and always did everything with perfection. We are encouraged to constantly strive for this perfection: “Be ye perfect, because your Heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt 5:48)

In our contemplation of the “daily cross” we see that far from being a curse it is truly a blessing because it offers so many graces and rewards both now and in eternity. It seems foolish to desire to be rid of this cross, on the contrary we should ever be eager for more. This is the means given us to atone for our sins and also the means to increase our merits in Heaven; to “lay up treasure where neither rust nor moth consume.” (Matt 6:19) Let us rise each day and make with a good intention the offering of all our works (daily crosses) in reparation for our sins; to aid the souls in Purgatory; for the greater honor and glory of God; and for our greater merit in both time and eternity.

Franciscan Saints

SEPTEMBER 24

ST. PACIFIC OF SAN SEVERINO

Confessor, First Order

Pacific was born of a distinguished family in the Italian city of San Severino. As a child he evinced unusual seriousness, great piety, and love of mortification.

Early in his youthful life this spirit of mortification was put to the test. He was quite young when he became an orphan, and was taken to the home of his uncle, who brought him up very strictly. Two servants in his uncle's home could not bear the boy and provided him with many unpleasant moments. If anything went wrong in the house, even if they were to blame for it, they accused the boy, and his uncle would then punish him severely for it. Pacific accepted the punishment in the spirit of mortification, bore it with remarkable patience, and so advanced in virtue.

Our Lord provided that his virtue should be made manifest. One day a servant knocked the spigot of a wine barrel loose and all the wine ran out into the cellar. She blamed Pacific for it. His uncle took the boy down into the cellar with him to show him what he had done and to give him the

punishment he deserved. The boy went along calmly. When they reached the cellar, they found the floor quite dry and the barrel full of wine. The maid was called, and when she saw the miracle, she admitted her fault and praised the holiness of the innocent boy.

When he was seventeen years old, Pacific entered the Order of Friars Minor. After the year of probation, he made his vows, and thereafter spent his best efforts in observing them perfectly. He was ordained to the priesthood when he was twenty-five years old. He was first assigned to the surrounding villages of the Apennines, where he found the greatest delight in preaching the Gospel to the poor and the uneducated. No road was too rough, no mountain too steep for him. He looked up the poor shepherds in their out-of-the way huts in order to instruct and guide them on the road that leads to God. But he was not long to enjoy the exercise of this apostolic zeal. After a few years in this field of work, he became ill and never completely recovered

his health, so that he was obliged to serve God with an infirm body and in all patience for more than thirty years.

Pacific was completely satisfied with God's designs in his regard. "God wills it," he said in a cheerful way, "and so may His will be done." The painful suffering he had to endure, and the many acts of mortification he performed in addition, he joined to his unceasing prayers and offered them up for the salvation of souls and the conversion of sinners. Even in his sickness he was so conscientious about the laws of propriety that he would never allow anyone else to dress the ugly sores on his legs, but always took care of them himself.

When he was able to say Holy Mass, he did it with the utmost fervor and devotion. In his later years he was often favored with ecstasies after the elevation at Holy Mass. His countenance shone with a radiance like that of the sun. The sick were miraculously cured by him, and he foretold many future events.

When death finally summoned him and he had received Holy Communion for the last time with admirable devotion, he once more expressed his gratitude to God

for all His benefits, and then, with his hands crossed upon his breast, yielded his soul to his Creator. It was on September 24, 1721.

Many miracles occurred at his grave, and two dead persons were restored to life after the holy relics were applied to them. Pope Gregory XVI canonized him in 1839.

1. Consider how St. Pacific arrived at a high degree of sanctity despite the fact that he was quite unfit for work. His conformity with the will of God did it. Already as a child he accustomed himself to accept everything as coming from the hands of God. And so, when his apostolic career was cut short so early in life, he did not find it hard to say: "God wills it, may His holy will be done." The Holy Ghost says: "They that are faithful in love shall rest in Him" (Wis. 3:9). This perfect peace, in which we rest content with all things as happening to us by God's holy will, is a proof that we are devoted to God in faithful love. That is what true piety and perfection consist in, not in great undertakings. — Do you strive to acquire this genuine conformity with the

divine will?

2. Consider that man's real accomplishments here on earth depend on his conformity with the will of God. God has need of no man. The Psalmist says: "Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods" (Ps. 15:2). But almighty God wishes to use human beings as His tools here on earth. People that are entirely conformed with God's holy will are His most useful tools. Is it not possible, then, that Pacific accomplished more in his sufferings than many a missionary in years of toil? You complain, perhaps, that because of your infirmity you are not able to do much work in the house. Be resigned to God's holy will, do what you can, and pray for your fellowmen, then God almighty will recompense you abundantly. In a speeding train, the rusty couplings that bind the coaches together are as important as the puffing locomotive. — Perhaps God has chosen you to act the part of such couplings in life.

3. Consider how happy we can be in trial and suffering if we are resigned to God's holy will. Faith teaches us that God has only our welfare at heart.

He that is entirely resigned to God's holy will is therefore steering straight toward the goal of his own happiness. With this in mind, he bears the sufferings of time as a means to reach his blessed goal, so that even if nature sighs, he preserves interior peace and joy. "To them that love God all things work together unto good" (Rom. 8:28). It was from this knowledge that St. Pacific drew his invincible patience, and that is why he loved to be alone, because in that way he could more readily attain to true union with God and make a complete oblation of himself. If we imitate the resignation of St. Pacific, at the end of our life we shall, like him, render fervent thanks to God for all His benefits to us.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, the Dispenser of all good, who didst clothe St. Pacific, Thy confessor, with the virtue of great patience and of love for seclusion, grant, at his intercession, that we may walk the same way and obtain the same reward. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Cordbearers of St. Francis

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

The formal name of this organization is the Arch-Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis. Its informal or unofficial beginning started with St. Dominic.

St. Francis and St. Dominic were contemporaries in the 13th century. St. Dominic made many attempts to have St. Francis give up his cord so that he might wear it. He had the greatest esteem for Our Holy Father St. Francis and it was his desire that the two orders of Friars Preachers (the Dominicans) and Friars Minor (the Franciscans) should have but one heart and one soul. Consequently, we can easily believe that St. Dominic did this not only to show his devotion to St. Francis, and his confidence that he would obtain many favors from God through the merits of His servant, but also that it might be a mark and a symbol of that brotherly affection which he desired ever to exist between the two Orders.

St. Dominic soon found many who wanted to wear this same cord, and the practice of wearing a cord which had belonged to a member of the Franciscan

Order, or was made in imitation of those which the Friars Minor wear, quickly spread throughout Europe. By wearing this cord, men happily displayed their attachment to the Seraphic Order, and their confidence of obtaining through the merits and prayers of St. Francis, a particular right to the Divine protection and a larger share in God's favors.

It was not, however, until the sixteenth century that the practice of wearing the Franciscan cord received the formal sanction of the Holy See by the erection of the Arch-Confraternity. Pope Sixtus V himself a Franciscan, by his Constitutions "*Ex supernae dispositionis*" of November 19, 1585, and "*Divinae Charitatis*" of August 29, 1587, instituted this Confraternity in honor of Christ's Passion, and enriched it with many spiritual favors and privileges. Nor was it without reason that a Confraternity, which was an offspring of the devotion of St. Francis, should have for its principal object to honor the sufferings of Our Lord. It was the special mission of St. Francis to inflame the hearts of men with the love of Jesus by reproducing

in the most vivid manner in his whole life all that was most painful and humiliating in Our Lord's life: His rejection by men, His poverty, His austerities, His Passion and Crucifixion—all were reflected in St. Francis.

“This Confraternity is, therefore,” as Fr. Pacificus Baker, OFM says, “a pious association in honor of the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ daily to put us in mind of the infinite love of our dear Redeemer to us, and how much we ought to love Him; and as an effect of this love frequently to meditate upon and think of His Passion, with a sincere and devout desire to suffer something for Him; and as an effect of this love frequently to meditate upon and think of His Passion, with a sincere and devout desire to suffer something for Him, by doing penance for our sins, the cause of His bitter sufferings and cruel death. The Passion of Jesus Christ ought always to be the subject of a Christian's thoughts; to forget or neglect this is to show ourselves as unworthy as we are insensible of His love. Frequently to think of our Savior's sufferings and dying on a cross will be the best remedy against the evil of sin, the best preservation against the temptations of the world, the

flesh, and the devil. To meditate devoutly on the Passion of Jesus Christ will inflame our hearts with Divine love, will make us pleasing to Him, and entitle us to share in the sacred merits of His death, to the pardon of our sins, to an increase in grace and virtue in this world, and to our eternal happiness in the next.”

The conditions for enrollment are as follows:

Those who wish to become members of this Confraternity must receive the cord from a Franciscan priest or from a priest who has been given the faculty to enroll such persons.

Those enrolled must wear this blessed cord habitually around the body, either under or over the inner garments, and not to lay it aside without necessity or for a notable time. Should anyone neglect to wear it, he does not cease to belong to the Confraternity, but only forfeits during that time the right to gain the indulgences granted to the members. It suffices that the first cord be blessed; it can be renewed afterwards without any formality or benediction.

Those enrolled must be inscribed in the register of the Confraternity

where it is canonically erected.

All persons who are interested in becoming a Cordbearer should contact Bp. Giles, OFM, Bp. Bonaventure, OFM, Fr. Bernard, OFM or Fr. Joseph, OFM, depending upon who is your local pastor. They will make the judgment concerning the necessary qualifications for enrollment. Your name will then be sent to Fr. Joseph, OFM who will maintain the enrollment for the Province of St. Peter of Alcantara.

There is no age requirement to be enrolled in the Confraternity. Past Popes wished to encourage children to be Cordbearers so they, too, would learn at an early age to demonstrate a willingness to do penance. It must be noted, though, that prudence should be a guide for laity when considering a young candidate for the Confraternity.

It is the custom of the Confraternity for the members to say each day five Our Fathers, five Hail Mary's, and five Glory Be's in honor of the Five Wounds of Our Lord and St. Francis. One Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be are added for the Papacy. These prayers must be said in order to gain

the indulgences granted to the Confraternity. This custom is admirably calculated to maintain and increase in the heart the spirit of the Confraternity, namely, the devotion to the Passion of Our Lord and in imitation of St. Francis. They should also endeavor to honor their holy Father, whose cord they wear; to invoke him frequently, and imitate his virtues.

“The end and design of all pious associations or societies being the spiritual advantage of the members, those who associate together endeavor to increase in grace by the practice of good works here and obtain eternal glory hereafter. These spiritual advantages may be largely obtained by devout Christians in this Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis; for as it is instituted chiefly in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ, the source from whence all spiritual graces flow, it is not to be doubted but that Christians who therein daily honor the Passion of Christ by a daily memorial of His sufferings will receive from Him those graces and favors they humbly ask.”

“The members of this Confraternity do share in and are mutual partakers of each

other's good works. They also share in and are partakers of all the prayers, fasts, and good works of all the religious of the three Orders of St. Francis, that is to say, of the first Order, or Franciscan Friars; of the second Order, which is that of the Poor Clares; and of the religious men and women of the third Order, called the Penitents; because they become members of the same body, of the great Franciscan family, and as such, share in the spiritual treasures of that family, in its good works, merits, and privileges."

Besides the advantages already mentioned, the members of the Arch-Confraternity enjoy the special protection of the Seraphic Father St. Francis, and have the inestimable happiness of being delivered from the pains of Purgatory on the anniversary of his death, the 4th of October.

This privilege was revealed by St. Francis after his death in the following terms: "*When I was praying on Mount Alverna, and was completely absorbed in the meditation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, He appeared to me, and impressed on my body the Sacred Stigmata which I bear, and said: 'I have given you the Stigmata, the marks of My Passion, in order*

that you may be My standard-bearer. And as, on the day of My death, I descended into Limbo, and by virtue of My Five Wounds, released all the souls detained there, and led them in triumph into Heaven; so you also, after you leave the earth, shall have the power to descend into Purgatory every year on the anniversary of your death, and by virtue of your Stigmata deliver the souls of your brethren of the three Orders who may be detained there, and even of all others who have had during life a great devotion towards you, and lead them with you into My Kingdom."

Third Order members of the Province of St. Peter of Alcantara are welcome to be Cordbearers. There is no conflict or prohibition which keeps a person from belonging to both the Third Order and the Confraternity.

We now have a book available titled *Manual of the Arch-Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis* which explains what has been said here and much more. The book is \$5.50 plus postage (\$3.00). Interested persons may request a book at the Cordbearers of St. Francis, 1114 – 30th St., Lubbock, TX 79411.

Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER V

A True Friend

“Let us not love in word; neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth” (Jn. 3:18).1

If the acid test of friendship were its verbal affirmation, how many friends we should have! Affirmations of wholehearted devotion are exchanged on all sides, and everyone takes them for what they are, mere polite conventionalities. The necessities of daily life frequently bring certain men into a closer relationship; they get to know each other better than they know most other men; they exchange their thoughts, discuss their plans and prospects and the pleasant or unpleasant incidents of their daily lives; occasionally they may give each other a bit of good advice and even render each other some service of friendship; in short, they consider each other acquaintances, and may even call each other friends. Yet, strictly speaking, they are not friends at all. Their relationship is merely an intimacy brought about by

circumstances in which deliberate choice had no part, an intimacy which may cease at any moment even as it began.

When men have experienced the help of others in important affairs, how often they call the service rendered the act of a friend, and speak of eternal, grateful friendship. Let us assume that their affirmations are sincere and that, in the given instance, the services rendered are mutual; let us assume, moreover, that such reciprocal assistance develops into a permanent relationship of mutual assistance; then, in a certain restricted sense, the one is a friend of the other; utilitarian considerations unite the two; they are business friends, but not simply friends.

Friendship is a communion of souls based on mutual esteem, and finds its expression in the communication of immaterial treasures. Participation in the outward circumstances of life, the desire for one another's companionship, assistance in trials and difficulties, gifts, expressions of love, all these

are natural expressions of true friendship, but do not constitute its essence. This consists rather in the interior union of one with another, the surrendering of one's whole being to another. Strong emotions are not necessary, much less passionate attachment, which would rather betray that other factors than real friendship are at play. True friendship is not unreasoning sentimentality. It demands calm consideration of the reasons which make our friend worthy of our esteem and devotion.

Infidelity in a friend is so bitter, precisely because by it the soul is wounded in its inmost being and, as it were, torn limb from limb. And yet how frequent such disappointments are in human friendship. One of three reasons accounts for such disappointments. It may be that the faithless friend has attained the eminence of friendship through cunning and clever hypocrisy, or that the friendship was concluded lightly and with but superficial knowledge, or, finally, that the friend degenerated and no longer deserves the esteem and love which was bestowed on him in his better days. Much

experience and knowledge of men, not always at one's command, is necessary to guard oneself from a consummate hypocrite. To be able to forecast the future fidelity or infidelity of a friend is still more difficult. But all can do one thing to spare themselves as much as possible the bitter pang of infidelity in a friend. They can proceed cautiously and allow sufficient time for the growth of friendship.

Friendship is not like a commercial transaction which, after the necessary consideration and calculation, may be concluded at any time. It is rather like a precious flower which grows in the fruitful soil of mutual recognition and esteem, and gradually reaches ultimate maturity under the bright sunshine of reciprocal benevolence. But assurance of its indestructible vitality we may gather only after it has proved itself in the fulfillment of the pleasant and unpleasant duties of friendship, after it has remained constant in fair weather and during storms, in good fortune and evil fortune, in joy and in sorrow. Only after it has matured in this fashion does friendship ripen to that perfect fruit which is one of

the most precious treasures of earth. In the ardor of youth a newly formed friendship may give rise to jubilant enthusiasm impossible in later years. But as regards moral excellence, interior worth and strength, an old and tried friendship surpasses all youthful, enthusiastic friendships. Its ardor is no longer displayed externally, but glows the more warmly within. An old and tried friend is a treasure that cannot easily be valued too highly. He must be to thee as thyself, a medicine for life and immortality (cf. Eccclus. 6:11-16).

Let us consider now whether our divine Saviour, who desires our friendship, is such a true Friend, One whose fidelity it would be criminal to doubt and on whose friendship it would be madness not to build as on a rock.

2. *Jesus is a true friend* who has never under any circumstances deserted a faithful friend. In the year 155 of the Christian era, the aged Bishop Polycarp was summoned at Smyrna before a heathen judge, who demanded that he deny and spurn Christ. Polycarp answered: "I have served Him for sixty-eight years

and He has never yet done me an injury. How can I revile my King who has redeemed me?" In this instance an old friend proved his fidelity to his Friend; and before his death he received a final proof of friendship from that Friend. While the aged Bishop was standing on the pyre and the flames burst forth beneath his feet, they formed a halo round about him like sails bellied by the wind and did not touch him. The saint stood in their midst as though glorified. The people were astonished and moved at this spectacle, which ended only after the executioner had plunged his sword into the bishop's breast. Christ was faithful to His faithful servant even in his last extremity; He glorified him before all the people, granted him the grace of martyrdom, and conducted him as glorious conqueror into heaven.

It is an article of faith that Christ deserts no man who does not first desert Him. What proofs did Christ give of such friendship during His life on earth? We know that He lived and died for us. But let us consider in detail how He dealt with His friends. In the first place, He clearly and without subterfuge told all who wished to be His friends

that they need expect no material advantage from His friendship. Their portion rather would be to carry their cross daily to the end of their lives. He even predicted persecution and a martyr's death for His privileged disciples (cf. Mt. 10: 17 ff.). Consequently, He does not wish to coax anyone into becoming His friend by false representations and by concealment of the facts. No, He declares honestly and openly that friendship with Him implies many things that are hard and distasteful to the natural man.

On the other hand, however, does He offer us the cross and say: "Carry it, I wish to see whether you have courage and perseverance"? By no means. He puts the heaviest cross on His own shoulders and says: "Follow Me, I shall carry the heaviest cross Myself for your salvation, but do you follow in My footsteps, each with his own cross; it is a hard way, but it is the way of life and will bring you unspeakable joy" (cf. Lk. 14:26, 27; Mt. 16:24 ff.). Was Christ faithful to His promise to go before us on this way even to the end? One look at the crucifix gives us the answer to that question. Faithful unto death!

He has given us the assurance that, if we, confiding in His assistance, will but carry our much lighter cross for

love of Him, He will help us with His grace so that our cross will be a sweet yoke and a light burden (cf. Mt. 11:30). This promise, too, our Saviour has kept, indeed the more gloriously in proportion to the fire of love that burned in the hearts of His followers. The saints did not ask to be delivered from suffering, but like St. Francis Xavier prayed: "More, Lord, more suffering." If we read the Epistles of St. Paul, we shall find them peans of joy, glorifications of the happiness of suffering with Christ (cf. Rom. 8:16-39; 2 Cor. 4: 16 ff.; 11:22-31). Christ has always proved His friendship toward His followers by permitting in His providence only such trials to overtake them as were for their salvation, trials which He helped them to bear with His grace. Even during His life on earth, He took the part of His apostles and protected them from their enemies. When His persecutors wished to lay violent hands on them in the Garden of Olives, He said: "I have told you that I am He. If, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way" (Jn. 18:8). He wished to suffer alone the death on the cross for our salvation. For His apostles the time for bloody suffering had not yet come. Furthermore, He not only warded off premature

suffering from them, but He always lovingly supplied all their wants. The day before His death, He asked them: “When I sent you out on your apostolic missions without human means, did you want for anything?” They answered: “Nothing” (cf. Lk. 22:35, 36).

When He was about to be separated from His Apostles, and the shadows of death lay heavily on His Heart, even then He seemed to have no time to think of His own sufferings, but sought only to lessen the grief of separation for them: “Because I have told you that I must depart from you, sorrow has filled your heart. Yet it is expedient for you that I go; for after My departure the Holy Ghost will come and give you unspeakable joy” (cf. Jn. 16:6, 7). “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. ... Do not let your heart be troubled, or be afraid (Jn. 14:27) “Ordinarily it is the dying who are comforted by their friends; on this occasion, however, He who is doomed to death consoles His friends who will survive Him. Truly this is touching fidelity even unto death of the love of the heart of Jesus.

He promises, too, that He will not forget them after His death. “I will not leave you orphans; I will come

to you” (Jn. 14:18). He returns to them after His resurrection to allow them to share in His joy. For forty days He delays His Ascension into heaven, and fills their hearts with a consolation which will endure for the remainder of their lives. Our loving Saviour died for our sins, He rose for our justification (cf. Rom. 4:25), in order that we might begin a new, pure life with the assistance of His grace, a life which is to find its consummation with Him in eternal glory.

Hence He could justly say before His Ascension: “Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Mt. 28:20). I am always with you in thought. Christ lives in Heaven to be mindful of us always, and to make intercession for us (cf. Heb. 7:25), to be our advocate with the Father. He has engraven each one of us in His hands and feet, but more especially in His Heart with the indelible characters of the marks of His wounds which are a ceaseless and mighty plea for mercy for us all. “Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands” (Isa. 49:15, 16). Let us gaze on the marks of these wounds and ask ourselves if our Saviour can forget us. He thinks

of us day and night without ceasing. Moreover, He is in our midst by His grace-giving activity in His Church. Whenever a sacrament is administered, the priest does indeed place an outward act, but the real, active minister is Christ Himself. He accompanies us through life with His sacraments; and beyond the grave He will permit us to drink draughts of joy from His Sacred Heart. Even now a fountain of grace wells up from this Sacred Heart and flows over into all human hearts which are prepared to receive it. Our Saviour is in our midst in countless tabernacles the world over, even to the end of time, to grant us an audience as often as we desire; nor need we first announce our coming or comply with human conventionalities. He is with His Church in her office as teacher to preserve her from all error in matters of faith. He protects His Church so that the most violent persecution on the part of her enemies will not prevail against her. He daily carries out the promise that He made when He said: "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16: 18). A life-giving fountain of grace and love streams forth from His heart, a mystic blood stream which pulsates through all His members; anyone not animated by this stream is spiritually

dead. Thus has our Saviour proved His fidelity for nineteen centuries.

At the close of the last century, the Church honored the fidelity of our Saviour by consecrating herself and the whole human race to the best of all friends, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We are consecrated to this Sacred Heart; hence, we must, on our part, prove our fidelity to His friendship, and, in accordance with His wishes, strive that devotion to this divine heart attain luxurious growth both in ourselves and in others.

3. *The love of our Saviour toward us is proved by the fact that He leads us to Heaven.* He did not descend from Heaven in order to enrich us with temporal goods, but in order to take us to Heaven with Himself. If immunity from all evils and the enjoyment of all pleasures were a necessary complement to service of the Saviour, how very many servants He would have! But would these servants be His friends? No, not friends, but selfish, grasping souls. And even our Saviour would not be our friend if He dealt with us in this fashion, for He Himself has said that we cannot serve God and mammon (cf. Mt. 6:24). Temporal goods must be our servants, means to an end, while we must serve only God. If we demean ourselves and become the slaves of material

things, we lose God and suffer the loss of our souls. “For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (Mt. 16:26.) Christ came into the world to save our souls. “I came that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.” (Jn.10:10) Christ taught us by word and example the way to eternal life, the path of renunciation of the temporal, and the striving after the heavenly, after the eternal possession of God, our final end. It is precisely in this that our Saviour has proved Himself our true Friend, by liberating our thoughts and desires from the dust of earth and directing them to those eternal heights where alone our true happiness may be found.

He has preceded us to these heights and has there taken possession of His kingdom, not for Himself alone but also for His friends. “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and I will take you to Myself; that where I am, there you also may be” (Jn. 14:2,3). “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me” (Jn. 17:24). This is the uninterrupted prayer of the Sacred Heart for His own. Until the day of consummation He will

prove Himself their friend, One who cares for their salvation. Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father intercedes for us. No alien power can destroy the love with which He loves us and which He enkindles in our hearts. Or “who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome because of Him Who has loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35 ff.).

May these words of the Apostle be verified in us. They will be verified if we are determined with the help of His grace to prove our friendship for Jesus even as He has proved His for us. O Jesus, fulfill in us also the promise that Thou hast made to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, namely that Thou wilt not permit a soul to perish which consecrates itself to Thy Sacred Heart and zealously cultivates and propagates devotion toward it.

(To be continued)

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