

THE SERAPH

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The Rosary

October raises our thoughts to the Blessed Mother and the rosary. We cannot cease to encourage the practice of praying the rosary, but October is dedicated especially to the rosary. We therefore, beg our readers to take advantage of this opportunity and unite your prayers with ours so that we may obtain from God through the Blessed Virgin the grace we so desperately need in these days.

There are two main forms of the rosary that we are familiar with: the Dominican and the Franciscan. The Dominican rosary with fifteen mysteries is the most prevalent and has many indulgences attached to its pious recitation.

The Franciscan rosary (Crown) contains seven joyful mysteries for our contemplation. This too has been richly adorned with many indulgences.

There are many other sacramentals and prayers that have wondrous indulgences attached to them, but the rosary seems to be among the quickest ways to gain the sympathy of the Blessed Virgin Mary and therefore make ourselves better able to approach Our Lord.

There is much more to the rosary than the mere recitation of Hail Marys. So very often our prayers degenerate into the mindless repetition of words. It is said that if we do not care enough to pay attention to the words we address to Our Lady, why should she pay any attention to them?

We can spend our rosary time very well if we simply contemplate the words of the prayers that we are saying – if we turn these very words into true prayer. We may also spend the time in contemplation of the mystery associated with each decade. In this manner we have a much wider subject matter to occupy ourselves with. We can vary our meditations on the mysteries from time to time. For example we might consider the first Joyful Mystery (The Annunciation). We may spend our time dwelling on the wonderful gift to mankind as God takes human flesh; or we might dwell upon the honor thus bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin Mary; or we might contemplate the angels and their works in our salvation; or we may contemplate Mary's humility, or her ready and willing obedience to the Will of God; or we may place ourselves there as the proverbial "fly on the wall" and just silently watch and listen with wondrous awe; etc. In another way we may dwell upon our current desires and needs, and humbly present them at the feet of Our Mother with the rosary. There is truly no end to the variations that we may make in our rosary, so there is no need for our prayers to become monotonous or boring.

But, even if we truly cannot pray well and our mind and imagination will not obey us, we still do well if we bring ourselves before her in our best attempt at prayer. Our very struggle and persistence becomes

a worthwhile prayer. We know that God accepts our desire for the deed, so likewise will His holy Mother. If we drag ourselves to our rosary and strive wholeheartedly to please her we will in spite of ourselves be pleasing to her.

We do not intend to suggest that we can be careless and thoughtless as we pray and somehow this will please Mary. On the contrary, if we are not striving to please her we are not pleasing to her. The unwanted distraction or dryness of our devotions are actually for our benefit. It is easy to pray when God bestows upon us consolation and joy, it takes courage and fortitude to persevere even when God holds these graces back.

We hear of many people who say multiple rosaries a day. This is commendable if they are not filled with pride because of it, and if they are well said. If we pray with deliberate distractions, it seems that our prayers are more of an offense or a mockery than they are prayers. Perhaps an example will help to illustrate this point. There is a story about a priest hearing confessions. One man comes in and asks: "Father, is it okay for me to pray when I am smoking a cigarette?" The priest replies that yes, he may. In fact it is good that he would sanctify this otherwise idle time. The next man comes in and asks: "Father, is it okay for me to smoke while I am praying?" The priest answers in the negative!

The logic is often missed by the faithful. The time dedicated to Our Lady's Rosary is sacred and to introduce something profane or a

distraction deliberately becomes offensive. But, when we are principally doing something profane it is always well to try and introduce some prayer or spiritual good.

We should therefore strive to say at least one rosary well, rather than a great many poorly or insultingly. We must not seek to find consolation for ourselves, for then it is no longer an offering to God or Mary but is rather an offering for ourselves. The greater sacrifice and struggle that we offer the greater merit we will gain. Even if we must drag ourselves and struggle constantly with distractions let us not lose heart, but rather take courage and strive even harder.

One last point to make, is that it is better to pray together. The family that prays together stays together. "When two or three are gathered in My Name, I am there with them." We must however not think that we do well to unite our prayers with those of heretics; those who are enemies of the Church are likewise enemies of Mary and God. Uniting prayers with them is joining them in the insult and offense to God. Uniting in prayer with heretics is to join them in their heresy. We may, however, invite those outside the Church to join us in prayer. In this means we are asking them to pray as Catholics, rather than they inviting us to pray as heretics. Our prayers in this instance should be that these poor souls might be led through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin to receive and cooperate with the grace of true faith.

OUR LIFE WITH THE ANGELS

Bishop Bonaventure Strandt, OFM

Intertwined among every one of the great feast days in October is the striking presence of the Holy Angels. While Holy Mother Church emphasizes most especially Our Lord Jesus Christ the King and the devotion to the Holy Rosary; it is imperative that we Catholics never forget the importance of the Angels in the active apostolate of the Church. When we pause to think deeply on the prominent feast days of October, we will see the diligent work of the “Angelus”, or “messenger”, assuring us that God’s presence is made known so clearly through these pure spirits.

There is one day dedicated especially to honoring the Holy Guardian Angels, who have the charge of defending, protecting, guiding, and illuminating every human being. Even the most wicked people, even the most shameless sinners, never lose their Guardian Angel. As one desert father witnessed, however, these angels who try to guide the wicked, are compelled to follow far behind, grieving and lamenting the state of their

entrusted charge’s soul. On the other hand, those of us in the state of sanctifying grace fill our Angels with joy, and their voices are much more clearly heard. Their voices are lifted up in unified thanksgiving at the Elevation of the Sacred Host during Holy Mass, where they fill the sanctuary in great numbers.

Oftentimes, we believe that we are hearing God Himself speak to us when receiving divine inspirations in prayer and at Holy Mass. This is true, but the Holy Trinity ordinarily will not speak to us as if we are Moses, in a flaming fire of direct communication. No, God leaves the task of imparting knowledge and holy remembrances to our Angels. We resemble more closely the young Tobias, who was careful to obey the commands of the Archangel Raphael; thereby receiving the grace of having his father’s sight restored, and the deliverance of his young wife from the clutches of Satan. Catholics are interested to learn that every Bishop is granted an Archangel to guide

him in the ways of justice and difficult decisions.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to our Angels, as many of us would have died, either physically or spiritually, if it was not for their protection. Similarly, we owe them honor because of their exalted position in the Heavenly Court. For example, Our Lord Jesus Christ the King is seated upon His throne, and He will come again, very soon, in all of His Glory, with a massive army of Angels. The Cherubim, the second highest of the nine choirs, have the honor of bearing up the throne of the Great King. And Our Lady, the Great Queen of Heaven, Our Mother, and the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, is also the Queen of the Angels. Their privilege and greatest pleasure is to reverence and obey the gentle commands of the most exalted Mother of God. Angels are most noted for their perfect obedience.

We also celebrate this month the Solemnity of Our Holy Father Saint Francis. Is there anyone who doesn't know what a great role the Angels played in his life? The place where Our Lord granted the greatest of all

Indulgences is called Saint Mary of the Angels. Saint Michael, the most exalted of the Archangels, appeared to Francis to encourage him in the great battle that Francis waged for the good of immortal souls of generations present and future. Angels filled him with light.

In the lives of the Apostles, in the labors of the saints, in the alleviation of the faithful departed – the Angels have a direct role in the sanctification of all things. Just a simple glance at the liturgical calendar in any given month brings this to the forefront of our minds with glowing simplicity. And so, although we honor so many great feasts this month of Our Lord, Our Lady, and many other glorious saints; let us never forget those created and invisible spirits who are only invisible to the eyes of our bodies, but whose good works in this life are plainly visible to all Catholics who have the grace to see them. Queen of the Angels, pray for us.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

If the historian of today finds it difficult to reconcile contradictory statements as to the religious houses that constituted the English Province, he will try in vain to determine the number of friars that belonged to the province. Among the first to join it were, according to Eccleston, FF. Solomon, William of London, Joyce of Cornhill, John, and Philip; then certain Masters of the university as Walter de Burgh, Richard the Norman, Vincent of Coventry, Adam de Marisco; and finally two Benedictines and four knights.¹ How rapidly the province increased in membership, may be judged from the fact that thirty-two years after the arrival of the first Franciscans, it numbered 1,242 friars.² To some extent, the number of friaries existing in 1260 permits us to form an estimate of the number of religious who inhabited them. Professor Little reckons that shortly before the Black Death, the English Province numbered some 2,000 friars.³ But their

ranks were greatly thinned, when the dreadful plague visited the country. This fact is confirmed by Gasquet, when he writes, "Of the Franciscans at Winchester and Southampton, only three clerics could be presented for ordination in 1347 and 1348. And before the death of the Bishop which occurred in 1359, only two more were presented."⁴

It was, no doubt, this marvelous growth of the province that induced Matthew Paris, who died in 1259, to write regarding the friars, "All England was soon filled and replenished with these men, and not only the larger towns and cities, but the very villages and hamlets frequented by them."⁵ Parkinson says that "their exemplary lives and disinterested comportment gained so upon all ranks of people, that their Order increased to an almost incredible number of friars, and their convents were built and enlarged in due proportion."⁶ The same historian brings the names of about 350 English Franciscans who, during the three centuries before the so-called Reformation,

1 Eccleston in *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. I, pp. 221 seq.

2 *Ibidem*.

3 Little, *Studies in English Franciscan History*, p. 71

4 Gasquet, *Black Death*, p. 132.

5 See Parkinson, p. 30.

6 *Ibidem*, p. 17.

distinguished themselves either by their sanctity or by their activity and influence as provincials, preachers, bishops, legates, or as lecturers and doctors at Oxford, Cambridge, and Paris. Casually, he mentions groups of friars; for instance, when he says under the year 1220 that “many Englishmen petitioned to be admitted into the Order,” and again, on the authority of Harpsfield, remarks that “many of the Benedictine monks, of the Augustinian friars, nay and of the very Carthusians petitioned and were admitted into the Order of St. Francis.”⁷ Finally, it is worthy of special notice that, excepting the pioneers of the province, nothing at all is recounted regarding the lay brothers whose secluded life did not bring them before the public and into the annals of the province. From all this it may justly be inferred that the English Franciscans were very numerous, and that Brewer has reason to call the expansion of the province “an instance of religious organization and propagandism unexampled in the annals of the world.”⁸

The early Franciscans in England were men of sterling piety and of untiring zeal for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people. Complete detachment from earthly

comforts combined with a cheerful and winning disposition won for them the esteem and confidence of all classes. In selecting their field of labor, the friars made no distinction between rich and poor, high and low, so that serf and outcast vied with king and noble in welcoming them in their midst and in providing them with the necessaries of life. At the ordination of Fr. Solomon, as Eccleston relates, the archdeacon called upon him with the words, “Brother Solomon, of the Order of the Apostles, may step forth,” thereby unwittingly forecasting the future activity of the province.⁹ For, as history shows, in their private life and in their exterior labors, the sons of St. Francis in England were true apostles sent to instruct and confirm the people in their faith and to imbue them with the true spirit of Christ. By word and example they showed the masses how to love God and their immortal soul above all things, how to submit to lawful authority in Church and State, how to foster love and harmony among themselves, how to forgive injuries, how to sympathize with sufferers, in a word, how to realize in their daily transactions those ideals of Christian perfection that have the promise of eternal life.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 18.

8 *Monumenta Franciscan*, Vol. I, Preface, p. XLI.

9 Eccleston in *Analecta Franciscans*, Vol. I. p. 222.

From the scanty records that escaped the vandalism of the sixteenth century, it is clear that the English Franciscans were ardent adherents of Lady Poverty. Penniless they came to England and penniless they lived and labored there. Their first friaries, erected almost without exception in the poorest and meanest quarters of the cities, were little better than hovels. "In all instances," Brewer maintains, "the poverty of their buildings corresponded with those of the surrounding district: their living and lodging no better than the poorest among whom they settle."¹⁰ But even these humble dwellings the friars refused to possess as their own, declaring that they held them in the name of corporations. Likewise, in the beginning at least, they fairly rejected all lands and revenues, and depended for their subsistence on the liberality of the people whom they served. If it is certain that in after years wealthy benefactors bequeathed landed property and annual incomes to them, it is equally certain that these were not welcomed, must less sought for, by the friars and were received by them only as alms to which they should have no legal claim.

Many interesting and edifying

¹⁰ Monumenta *Franciscans*, Vol. I, Preface, p. XIX.

anecdotes are related, showing how the friars loved and practiced the vow of poverty. In London, for instance, the partitions of their original friary were filled out with dried grass. Before settling in Oxford, Blessed Agnellus gave orders that the walls of the infirmary were not to exceed a man's height; neither did this friary have a guest room until the time of Fr. Albert of Pisa, who was provincial in 1223. At Shrewsbury, Fr. William Nottingham, the fourth provincial, commanded that the stone walls in the dormitory be removed and mud walls put in their stead. The friars at Cambridge did not even have mantles to shield themselves against the cold. At another place, Fr. Solomon was, on one occasion, "so starved with cold that he believed himself nigh unto death; and the brethren having not wherewith to warm him, holy charity suggested to them a remedy; for all the brethren gathered together and huddled about him."¹¹

This extreme poverty and lack of every comfort did not make the friars sullen and inaccessible. On the contrary, as they were poor and unassuming in their habits, so they were jovial and winning in their dealings with others. Their very poverty often proved a source of merriment and geniality.

¹¹ Eccleston in *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. I, passim.

Thus Eccleston tells us how one evening, as was customary on days of fast, the brethren were gathered around the kitchen fire to drink of the beverage which, most probably, had been sent them by some benefactor. But the amount was not sufficient for all, so that "he esteemed himself fortunate who could in a friendly way seize the cup from another." At another time it happened that two brethren came to one of the friaries on a visit. Having no refreshments to place before them, the guardian procured a measure of ale on credit. Now, when the jug was passed around, the members of the community indeed put it to their lips, so as not to embarrass their guests; but they did not drink of its contents, because they feared there was not enough for all. At Oxford, the young friars had to be severely reprimanded for laughing out of season.¹² And Fr. Peter of Tewkesbury once told a Friar Preacher that he thought bodily health depended on three things ; viz., food, sleep, and fun.¹³

A remarkable feature of the development of the province is the fact that so many persons of exalted station in the English realm were instrumental in

¹² Ibidem, passim.

¹³ Cuthbert, *The Friars and how they came to England*, p. 236, from a marginal note in the Cottonian MMS. edition of Eccleston.

erecting the friaries.¹⁴ Henry III proved a constant friend and benefactor of the Franciscans; and it was in great part owing to his long reign that they gained so firm a footing and made such rapid progress on English soil. At least six of the first friaries were founded either entirely or partly by him. In this work he was seconded especially by Cardinal Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Dr. Henry Langton, the Cardinal's brother. The chief founder of the house at Worcester was the Earl of Warwick; while the one at Preston owed its founding to Edward of Lancaster, the brother of Henry III. The Bishop of Litchfield invited the friars to his episcopal city and had a house built for them. Similarly, at Salisbury, it was the bishop who erected the Franciscan friary on the site presented for that purpose by the king. About 1233, the Countess of Leicester set up a convent for them at Ware. Edward I, in the third year of his reign, built a spacious friary at Cambridge, and, in 1288, another at Libourne in Aquitaine, France. Here we may also mention that during the Hundred Years War between England and France, the English Franciscans had several houses both in France and in Scotland.

¹⁴ The following facts are taken principally from Parkinson.

The one at Bordeaux, for instance, was built by Edward III. Queen Margaret, consort of Edward I, caused the old church in London, which had been erected about a century before by the lord mayor, to be torn down and replaced by a new one, she herself contributing 2,000 marks. At York and Lincoln, Henry Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, together with his chaplain was their principal benefactor, while at Scarborough and Colchester it was again the king, Edward II, who gave freely toward their support. His son, Edward III, founded or endowed the four houses at Walsingham, Berwick, Greenwich and Maidstone. About the same time, through the munificence of Edward, the Black Prince, a friary was founded at Coventry.

We have already mentioned that the Franciscans had scarcely settled in England when men from every station in life asked to be admitted into their ranks. It is surprising, indeed, how many in the course of time exchanged their wealth and worldly distinction for the poor and lowly living of the friar.¹⁵ Before their entrance into the Order, Fr. William had been in the service of the Lord Justiciary of England; Fr. Zarmestre, a distinguished knight; Fr. Matthew Gayton, a wealthy

and influential esquire. With Fr. Vincent of Coventry came his brother Henry and later William of York, both eminent doctors of the university. In 1230, Robert of Hendred, abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Abington, gave up his costly raiment for the humble garb of St. Francis. His example attracted John of Reading, abbot of the celebrated monastery of Canons Regular at Osney, near Oxford. In 1239, Ralph of Maidstone followed in the footsteps of these two prelates and, after resigning his episcopal see of Hereford, joined the Order and led a retired life in the friary at Gloucester. Many doctors and professors of Oxford and Cambridge took the habit during the first half of the fourteenth century. Among them Parkinson mentions John Winchelsey, Reginald Lambourne, John Lisle, John Waler, Oliver Stanwey. In 1325, Lord Robert Fitzwater entered the Order; in 1343, Lord Baron Lisle; and in 1347, Sir Robert Nigram, a famous knight. Finally, in 1386, William Scharshille, and in 1426, a certain Clopton, who had both held the office of Lord Chief Justice of England, renounced the honor and preferments of the world and became followers of the Poor Man of Assisi.

The activity and influence of the English Franciscans during the

¹⁵ What follows is likewise based chiefly on Parkinson.

pre-Reformation period fills one of the brightest pages of the history of the Order. About the year 1228, Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, wrote to Pope Gregory IX:

Your Holiness may be sure that inestimable blessings are reaching our people through the said (Franciscan) friars. For they illuminate our whole land with the bright light of their preaching and teaching. Their saintly manner of living strongly incites to contempt of the world and voluntary poverty, to preserving humility even amid dignity and power, to maintaining complete submission toward prelates and toward the Head of the Church, to patience amid tribulation, to self-denial amid riches, and, in a word, to the exercises of every virtue. Oh, if your Holiness could see with what devotion and humility the people run to hear from them the word of life, to confess their sins, to be instructed in the rules of living, and how the clergy and the regulars have improved by imitating them, you would indeed say that the light has risen unto them that sit in the region of the shadow of death! The zeal of your Holiness will therefore provide that, so great a light having been extinguished or darkened, which the true light may avert, the ancient darkness of error and sin, already greatly dispelled by the rays of their light, may not

overshadow and envelope the land which before others is especially dear to you¹⁶

History tells us how during the succeeding centuries the friars merited this enviable eulogy.

When the Franciscans began to live and labor in England, serious and critical problems confronted the State as well as the Church. The crusades had introduced new ideas on society and politics, which gradually undermined the feudal system of the Middle Ages. Especially among the country folk, till then happy and prosperous under the benign influence of the monastic institutions, a spirit of independence and discontent was plainly visible. In the towns whither they fled, their spiritual needs could not be sufficiently provided for by the limited number of secular clergy, while their own inexperience in matters commercial and industrial soon put them at the mercy of the wealthy and selfish merchant class. Add to this the constant clashes between popular rights and royal pretensions, and it is easy to understand how in the towns the lower classes soon fell a prey to poverty, ignorance, and vice, and even began to drift away from the Church.

¹⁶ Felder, *Studien im Franziskanerorden*, p. 271.

Here then the sons of St. Francis found an extensive field for action. From their humble friaries, erected in the poorest and meanest districts of the populous towns, they went forth like angels of peace to proclaim their message of love and penance to all, and thus in time bridged over the gulf that lay between the upper and the lower classes. We are told that, on Sundays and holydays, they would assist the neighboring parish priests in administering the sacraments, preaching the word of God, and catechizing the children. At other times, they would preach on the open street, where crowds eagerly drank in their words, of instruction and consolation. The outcasts of society, who in the suburbs were leading a life of spiritual desolation and bodily squalor, seem to have had a special claim on their loving solicitude. By word and example they showed the neglected poor how to serve God even in poverty and distress, taught the wealthy the proper use of temporal goods, and exhorted all to live in peace and harmony and in loyal submission to rightful authority. "The effect of such men upon the neglected masses of the population may easily be imagined. . . . Lessons of patience and endurance fell with greater persuasion and tenderness from lips of men

who were living and voluntary examples of what they taught."¹⁷ If in later years, especially at the outbreak of the Protestant Revolution the English nation at large was devoted to the Holy See, it must be ascribed in great part to the sons of St. Francis, who were ever the fearless preachers and defenders of papal supremacy.

As a means of popular instruction and edification, the mystery and miracle plays were earnestly fostered by the friars. "In organizing and acting miracle plays," Howlett writes, "the Franciscan friars took a decided lead, and so far was it reckoned in late times one of the recognized callings of the Order that the corporation registers of York tell us that in 1426 William Melton, of the Order of Friars Minor, 'Professor of Holy Pageantry and a most famous preacher of the Word of God,' made arrangements respecting the Corpus Christi play in that city, evidently as manager of the performance."¹⁸ The celebrated Coventry cycle of forty-eight plays is entirely their work. On appointed days, large crowds would gather at Coventry and in the neighboring towns to witness these representations of the Old and New Testament. "These pageants," Dugdale informs us, "were sacred

¹⁷ *Monumenta Franciscana*, Vol. I, Preface, p. XXVIII.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, Vol. II, Preface, p. XXVIII.

representations wherein were exhibited the histories of the Old and New Testaments, the persons therein mentioned being brought upon the stage, and whom the poet, according to his fancy, introduced talking to one another in old English metre, composed by the Friars Minor, and acted by their direction.¹⁹

Although information is very meager regarding their activity during the Black Death, which devastated Europe in the first half of the fourteenth century, we may form an estimate, if we call to mind that their friaries stood in the neglected and unhealthy districts where the plague naturally raged most fiercely. What Howlett asserts regarding the Franciscan Order in general is also true of its members in England. "It is not disputed," he writes, "that in the awful visitations of the Black Death in the fourteenth century, the Franciscan Friars in different parts of Europe perished literally by the thousands through their devoted attentions to the sick and dying."²⁰ That many of the English Province fell victims to their charitable ministrations may be also gathered from the fact that, as we have stated above, so few clerics could be presented for ordinations in the years immediately following the dreadful visitation.

19 See Franciscan Annals (Pantasaph, England). Vol. XL, p. 168.

20 Monumenta Franciscana, Vol. II, Preface, p. XXXIV.

In their zeal for the welfare of the people, the friars knew no distinction of creed or nationality. A striking instance of this we find toward the end of the thirteenth century. Growing complaints against the Jews, made especially by the merchant class, caused Edward I to take severe measures against them. When the persecution was at its height and a general massacre had been decreed, the Franciscans intervened and, by promising to work for the conversion of the Jews, succeeded in obtaining from the king a revocation of the decree. "For," as Parkinson explains, "the Franciscans had generally showed themselves so free from all mercenary regards, that they seemed to have no other interest in this world, besides working out their own salvation and laboring to contribute to that of their neighbor." In later years, Fr. Nicholas de Lyra, himself of Jewish extraction, worked zealously for the conversion of the Jews in England. By his writings and sermons, it is said, that he brought six thousand of his people to the fold of Christ.²¹

This heroic and disinterested zeal for the social uplifting of the lower and middle classes could not escape the notice of the wealthy and powerful. The activity of the English friars in State and Church affairs is perhaps unexampled in the history of the Order. Hardly were they settled

21 Parkinson, pp. 99, 161.

in Canterbury, when Henry III appointed Bl. Agnellus of Pisa to his Privy Council. In 1232, when Richard, the Earl Marshal, was heading a rebellion of the barons against the king, this friar as the king's plenipotentiary treated with the powerful Earl and persuaded him to accept the king's proposals of peace and to put an end to the bloody strife.²² Fr. Adam de Marisco was on intimate terms with Simon of Montfort and with Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln. His letters show what an influence he had on the efforts of these two men for the ecclesiastical and political welfare of the country.²³ It is not improbable that in Franciscan circles those principles of civil liberty first were clearly formulated which had already been laid down in the celebrated Magna Charta, and which in time led to the constitutional monarchy of England.²⁴ The letters show also how their author encouraged and counseled the Bishop of Lincoln in reforming the clergy of his large diocese. In 1241, after a meeting of the English bishops at Oxford, Franciscan and Dominican friars were sent to France, in order to

rouse the people against Emperor Frederic II, and to remonstrate with him for illtreating the Pope.²⁵ "Many other Franciscans," says Parkinson, "were employed in the several expeditions of the English to the holy wars; they being esteemed the most proper persons for that work, both because they were famous preachers and inured to mortifications and hardships, and likewise disengaged from any interest of this world."²⁶ Thus, for instance, Prince Edward, son of Henry III, selected Fr. Robert Turneham to accompany him on a crusade against the Turks and to serve as chaplain of the army he had fitted out for the expedition.²⁷

²⁵ Gasquet, *Henry III and the Church*, p. 200.

²⁶ Parkinson, p. 98.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

(To be continued)

²² *Ibidem*, pp. 9, 34.

²³ Brewer published these letters in *Monumenta Franciscana*. as he found them in the Cottonian MMS. They are of historical interest and importance, since they throw abundant light on the activity and influence of the early English Franciscans.

²⁴ Holzapfel, *Geschichte (Ica Franziskanerordens*, p. 234.



The Cure of Families and Societies

Bishop Giles O.F.M

At the core of all societies is the family. In today's world we see the family is being assaulted from all sides. We find that our current economy demands a two income family. The increase of materialism; the socializing of education; health-care; etc. are all having a profoundly negative impact upon family life. In this sense we conceive also, an indirect attack upon civilization itself.

While fixing the blame or pointing the finger will not solve the problem, it does help to understand who the enemy is. The family and therefore societies were instituted by God and so we must view those who would attack these institutions to be the devils or those who are influenced by them. At the top of our list rises the anti-Christian (anti-Catholic) religions; these principally work together under the auspices of the secret society of Freemasonry.

These sects promote not only the destruction of the Roman Catholic Church, but also the destruction of all legitimate governments. It is simple anarchy that has become their weapon of choice. All authority and right order are under assault.

“You have nothing to lose but your chains” became the inciting call to revolution and rebellion. Revolution is not Catholic. The Catholic faith and example will have us seek

a change not through force or rebellion but through education and an increase of morality. Slavery in the Old World in great part was set aside by the gradual increase of education, faith, and morals of all the parties concerned. The Church would have people follow the admonition of St. Paul where slaves are to be obedient and serve their masters as they would serve God. Likewise, masters are to love and care for their subjects as parents for their children, or as the Church for Her children. Through this method, masters draw the logical conclusion that we all have the same father in Heaven and we are all His children. We must therefore treat each other with love and respect. This naturally leads to the emancipation of the slave. There is also a logical preparation for emancipation so that the freed slave is able to provide for himself and his family.

The wholesale freedom of slaves through force and revolution engender many grave problems which the United States of America is still struggling with today after more than a century. The revolutionary method did not bring with it equality in any aspect. In fact forcefully freed slaves were often in a worse situation than they were when they were enslaved. They were unemployed and did not have the ability or the means to care for

themselves or even to find suitable employment. This sudden and unprepared forced idleness became a breeding ground for a host of other evils. These evils have since been growing and compounding with interest. While there are some who have with the grace of God improved their moral and economic situation, sadly the majority have not. Socialism logically follows this scenario with grand sounding but generally empty solutions that only aggravate the situation.

The teaching and example of Jesus Christ and the Church offer the only logical and safe means of improving the lot of those who suffer any injustice (whether real or merely perceived). More often than not when we follow the worldly axiom to “fight fire with fire” we only end up with a bigger fire. The best solution is to fight fire with water. In the face of evil the best weapon is virtue or goodness – not more evil. Two wrongs do not make a right.

We must remind ourselves that Our Lord promises blessedness to those who patiently suffer wrongs for the sake of justice. Our Holy Mother Church frequently presents Our Savior symbolically as a Lamb. He is the Divine Lamb that went quietly to the slaughter. The great martyrs followed the example of the Lamb. We likewise must imitate Him. Our mode of redress is through God for wrongs that are committed against us. The Church is able to survive in any form of government or society

and does not promote one over the other, but she cannot live in anarchy. Even when the Church is persecuted, She can live with that, and She patiently waits for the improvement of the situation. This, She does and teaches in imitation of Jesus Christ.

We are called upon to see the situation from the eternal perspective. In the grand scheme of things it is much better to patiently and cheerfully suffer here and now, and then be rewarded for all of eternity in Heaven. If we weep now we will rejoice in eternity; if we rejoice now we will weep in eternity. There is therefore, much that suggests that we bear wrongs, trials, tribulations, and sorrows with all patience and love.

All power and all authority come from God. We must therefore learn to see the hand of God when we must suffer some wrong, in much the same manner as Job did in the Old Testament. The reasons and purposes of God in sending or allowing certain things to happen to us are not always within our own purview. Our Faith however teaches us that God sees and knows all and is all powerful. If He has chosen some cross for us, it is in our own best interest to accept it willingly for the love of Him. He is our loving Father and only wishes the best for us. Most often the best thing for us is a cross. It may not be what we want, but it is what we need.

The slave or the impoverished

laborer has a bitter cross to bear. We must however remind ourselves that God has willed or at least permitted this condition for this particular person. In any instance God has the best intention for us; and all things work for the good of those who love God. In resigning ourselves to the place that God has placed us, we put ourselves in the best position of making the most of the cross we have been given.

It is a false assumption that if we have material success that this is proof of God's approval of us. The sun and the rain, fall upon the just and the unjust alike. (Matt 5, 45) More often than not, material success is not a blessing but rather an increased burden for those who love God. The rich man will have a more difficult time getting into heaven than the poor man. And the poor of heart are blessed by Our Lord. (Matt 5, 3)

Evil men often are given many pleasures and successes in this world. Most often it is the demons who grant this to them in exchange for their immortal souls. These poor people have sold their eternity at a very cheap price no matter how much of this world they have accumulated. "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul?" (Mark 8, 36) Another aspect to consider is that God is just. Even the most evil person in this world occasionally does something good. God cannot reward this little good in eternity,

so He justly gives them their reward now. "Amen, amen I say to you, you have already received your reward and have nothing to expect in Heaven." (Matt 6, 2) When considered in this light we see that there is truly nothing enviable in the lives of those who enjoy more of the pleasures of this world than we do. On the contrary, it seems that the fewer material possessions that one has the greater his chances of true everlasting happiness.

The prosperity of nations as well as individuals is not an indicator of God's pleasure or displeasure. It is truly an indifferent matter. If we find that we have material prosperity as a nation, it is by no means an indication of God's pleasure or approval of us. If we become the envy of other nations it is by no means an enviable position to be in.

We find that Protestantism and its sister Freemasonry promote the idea of material success as divine approval. This idea, which is strongly promoted by so many is in direct contradiction to the very scriptures which they so loudly proclaim to be the only source of revelation. We think the above references to the blessings of poverty and the condemnation of riches amply prove this.

It may be that our nation is to be the instrument of God's wrath upon other nations; however this does not mean that we are pleasing to God. The Scriptures have many examples

where God used Pagan peoples to chastise or punish His chosen people. This did not suggest that the Pagan nations were more pleasing to God than His own people. There is much that we must consider if we are to look into our acceptability as a nation before God, but material success is not one of them.

The dignity of man as husband and father has been greatly undermined. We observe a great feminization of men in this country. We do not claim to know precisely what the material causes of this may be. It could be biological. Our bodies are under greater and greater assault from the chemicals that we are being exposed to. Many scientists have shown that these chemicals interfere with our body's hormones. We should also consider the media – especially the entertainment industry. We are constantly bombarded with feminizing attitudes and actions. There is no denying the objective power of bad example.

Though we find the attack on man to be the greatest threat we also see a similar assault upon the dignity of women as wife and mother. There is the constant attack upon the hormones of women with cosmetics, "birth control medications," the chemicals in the water, food, and the very air we breathe. There is likewise the attack of the media. Women are asked to imitate impossible standards of femininity, or to reject their femininity altogether and put on a masculine appearance and

attitude.

If we move beyond the obvious material causes of this undermining of the genders, we must come to the conclusion that God has allowed it or willed it. We read in St. Paul's letter to the Romans that God abandons men and women to their perversities (homosexuality) in punishment for their idolatry.

Though we claim to be a Christian nation, it seems that we are anything but. The indifferentism that we as a nation have adopted toward all "religions" is nothing less than idolatry. The vacuum will always be filled. When we took God out of the public realm we opened ourselves up to idolatry which is nothing short of demonism.

We see that Talmudic Freemasonry holds this degradation of our nation as a success. It may be that as Lucifer's agents they are responsible for this, or it may be that our indifferentism towards God has allowed the Talmudic Masons to prosper and thus gain the upper hand. In either case God has put us in this present situation. Having arrived at this point, we perceive the enemy and what he has done to us as a nation as well as individuals, the question now resolves upon: what are we going to do about it?

We find many who wish to take up arms and fight against the system. It seems to us that it is harder to identify this evil system in individuals. Is it the president of the United States

that embodies the system so that if he were removed the evil would likewise be removed? Or perhaps the entire congress? Maybe it is the military? Or the police? Is it this one or that one? Who among our public servants are conspirators and who are mere dupes? If we are to rise up in arms and take someone's life, it seems imperative that we make sure we are absolutely correct in our judgments. This position of violence seems to militate against all Catholic principles. We have been asked, "Can we defend ourselves?" and the answer is an unequivocal "yes." But, we must always be careful to be defenders rather than aggressors.

In morality we ask that certain conditions be met before war or physical conflict be engaged upon. First, the situation must be truly unbearable. This is a difficult thing to quantify. The human body is capable of bearing with a lot of abuse. Second, there must be a plan in place that would replace the existing situation with something that is better. It is useless to topple one evil society only to replace it with one that is just as evil or even worse. Thirdly, there must be a reasonable hope of success. At least materially speaking evil has the upper hand here. Any rebellion on the part of the good will be easily put down by the evil.

Rebellion and aggression therefore appear as unsuitable solutions.

Some have suggested that the

demolition of the public school system should be attempted. No one seems to think this through very well. If we are already suffering the consequences of juvenile delinquency moving the entire public school population into forced idleness overnight will only worsen the current situation. There must be sufficient methods in place to absorb this population in private schools or in the trades immediately.

Education of only material matters (devoid of morality and ethics) makes of men worse criminals than ignorant ones. We need education and education is a good thing, but it is not truly education if there is no formation of the soul. It is much better to be ignorant and virtuous than it is to be educated and evil.

Faith teaches and forms our consciences and a well formed conscience must be developed and cultivated through education. In the absence of education we still will have criminals but the criminals will be hampered in the evil that they can do by their ignorance. Evil is therefore multiplied when it is in the hands of one who has been educated only in material things.

The overthrow of the public school system will result in anarchy just as much as a revolt in the civil realm will.

Perhaps if we tore down the entertainment industry? Will not evil men immediately rebuild and perhaps rebuild things that are

worse? Or perhaps individuals deprived of their addictive drug of entertainment will in their state of withdrawal engage in worse things and cause even greater scandal and mischief?

The other option that comes to mind is in leading a moral life in obedience to God; mortifying ourselves in penance and prayer. We must accept this burden and cross as a trial or a just punishment from God. If we are found worthy before God, and it is in His divine plan, He will remove this burden when and how He knows best.

It is not passivism that we wish to espouse. We may argue, we may petition, and lobby and remain good Catholics, but we must always refrain from ever using evil means to attain our goals. The end will never justify the means. And, two wrongs will never make a right. As Catholic citizens we must make use of our civic rights and obligations to the best of our ability. When however our efforts prove fruitless in changing the course, we must humbly bow before the punishing hand of God.

If we can see that the evil we must endure is a just punishment from God we will find it much easier to bear. We will find that our cross can be made light and sweet as Jesus has promised. (Matt 11, 30)

Someone may ask that if this is true in the civil realm is it not also

true in the Church? Should not every Catholic humbly bow down in obedience to the “pope” even if he is a bad one and accept it as a punishment from God?

The Franciscans promise obedience to all canonically elected popes. It has been proven many times that these Modernists are not true popes. We do not desire to go and take our Catholic property by force from these Modernist thieves. They will answer to God on judgment day. We turn our back upon the wealth and property that these Modernist have taken from the Church and humbly and willingly embrace the life of poverty taught us by St. Francis and Our Lord Himself.

We seek souls not by coercion, but by prayer, example, and lastly through apologetics.

In the civil as well as in the religious realm we see the attack upon the Church, civil society, the family and individual men. It is a multi-pronged attack. We see the source of the attack to be demonic and that it is implemented by men under demonic influence. We also recognize that attack is being permitted by God. If God has allowed it, it must be for our own good. Let us then make some good come from all this evil, by following Christ and the Church ever more closely, rather than stoop to the level of evil men, rendering evil for evil.

Franciscan Saints

OCTOBER 16

THE SERVANT OF GOD JAMES OF THE ROSARY

Confessor, *First Order*

James entered the Franciscan Order as a cleric in the province which St. Francis himself founded and which bears his name. He was a man of eminent sanctity and a fervent client of our Blessed Mother. His sermons and conversations dripped with the constant praises of Mary.

He took a special delight in reciting in her honor the rosary of the Seven Joys, generally called the Franciscan Crown. He used to exhort the faithful to venerate Mary with this prayer, which is so pleasing to her. That is why he came to be called Father James of the Rosary. The origin of this devotion is ascribed to him, and St. John Capistran extols him for it.

He often experienced the power of this beautiful prayer. Once the convent in which he lived in the domains of the city of Florence, was to be destroyed, to keep the advancing armies of Naples from using it as a vantage point. James influenced the Florentine commanding officer to wait a little longer before proceeding to

destroy it, and then went to pray his rosary to our Blessed Lady that the convent might be spared. It was then revealed to him that the enemy would not appear but would instead soon beat a retreat. So it turned out, and the quiet refuge of the religious was preserved from harm.

James spent the last years of his life in this convent in perfect peace, until God called him to eternal rest in 1420, when he was seventy years old.

ON THE FRANCISCAN CROWN

1. The Blessed Virgin herself pointed out the Franciscan Crown, as well as the usual Dominican rosary, as a devotion pleasing to her. The annals of the order state that a young man — it is generally believed that it was James of the Rosary — entered the order, who had been a fervent client of our Blessed Lady and had decked her statue daily with a wreath of flowers. As it was not permitted him in the novitiate to continue this practice, he thought of leaving

the order. But first he knelt before the statue of Our Lady to tender his respects. There the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and said:

“Remain here, and do not grieve because you can no longer weave a wreath of flowers for me. I will teach you how you can daily weave a crown of roses that will not wither, and will be more pleasing to me and more meritorious for yourself.” And she taught him the rosary of the Seven Joys. — From the incident we can learn not to be selfishly attached to pious practices, and that prayer is of greater value than perishable decorations.

2. Consider the fragrant roses that compose the Franciscan Crown. The seven mysteries are as follows: The Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Finding of Jesus in the Temple, the Resurrection of Our Lord, and the Assumption and Coronation of Our Lady. At each decade you reflect on the sweet joy Our Lady must have experienced over the respective mystery. Said in this way, the rosary will be very pleasing to Mary, and you will learn to love it more and more.

3. Consider how effectual this rosary has proved to be. The servant of God James experienced its good effects even in his lifetime, and throughout the history of the Franciscan Order blessed results have been so often achieved in various necessities that at the request of the superiors of the order the popes have attached rich indulgences to its recitation, and it is urgently recommended that the members of the order recite it at least every Saturday. - Respond to this recommendation. You may then rest assured that you will participate in the joys of our Lady beyond.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(Vespers of *the Little Office of Our Lady*)

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we Thy servants may ever enjoy health of body and soul, and upon the glorious intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary be saved from present evil and have a share in the joys of eternity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

St. Francis of Assisi founded the Seraphic Order in the first half of the 13th century.

He began by gathering a group of twelve men from various backgrounds. These men initially had the single-minded purpose of leading a penitential life in accordance with the Gospels. It was at this time that St. Francis led these men to Rome to seek the Church's formal approval of this community.

After some hesitation on the part of certain Cardinals, Pope Innocent III gave his approval to this new way of life which was nothing more than the Apostolic life. The year was 1209 or 1210. It was not until 1223 that the Rule (the official document which described the way of life for the Friars) of the Order was approved by Pope Honorius.

Now having the approval of the Church, the brothers were allowed to preach the Gospels in church during Mass. It was at this time that St. Clare of Assisi heard St. Francis preach several times. She was inspired to follow him and did so, as she was given the habit on Palm Sunday in 1212.

Within these two years, the first two Orders had been founded. The First Order was composed of the priests and brothers who formed the backbone of the Franciscan Order. The Second Order was known as the Poor Clares, i.e., those women who lived a cloistered religious life of prayer and work in the strictest poverty known to the Church. It was due to the insistence of St. Clare on the point of strict poverty which

caused the Rule for the Poor Clares to be approved only two days before her death on August 11, 1253 by Pope Innocent IV.

I would like to relate the establishment of the Third Order through the eyes and words of Thomas of Celano, disciple and first biographer of St. Francis.

Thomas tells us that *“the Saint expounded the truth so courageously that the most learned men, outstanding in dignity and popular esteem, were deeply impressed by his appearance. Men and women, priests and religious, streamed to the place where he appeared. It seemed to be the ambition of all to see and hear him, who came like a superior being from the other world. During the dark night of the universal tepidity of his times, the blessed Father gleamed as a brilliant star, or as the rising dawn, radiating light in all directions. Touched by divine grace, crowds of his listeners, nobles and commoners, priests and laymen, desired to consecrate themselves to the service of God under his Rule and guidance. He became the great captain who led a threefold army of select souls. To all of them he gave a rule of life and pointed out the way of salvation to men and women of every rank. ‘Such was the enthusiasm to follow him that the Seraphic Father was repeatedly compelled to restrain and dissuade the people from their purpose of leaving the world, as men and women began commonly even to renounce marriage and family ties.’ To aid them in leading a Gospel life in the midst of family and secular*

occupations, he established the Third Order; 'a true order, yet something unexampled up to that time, in so far as it was not bound by vows, while it offered all men and women living in the world a means both of observing the commandments of God and of pursuing Christian perfection.' Often enough the entire citizenry of towns and more populous cities begged in a body to be duly disciplined in his school. This circumstance induced the great Saint to found the organization called the Third Order, which was to be open to every condition of life, to every age, and to both sexes, without breaking family or household ties. He gave the Order a wise constitution consisting not so much of rules of his own as of the passages of the Gospel. As there is no room for doubt that Francis instituted the Third Order as well as the First and Second, so was he beyond doubt the author of its very wise laws. He was greatly assisted in the task, as history tells us, by Cardinal Ugolino, who later as Gregory IX adorned the Apostolic See."

The two important facts, about which there is no reasonable doubt, are that St. Francis instituted the Third Order, or the Order of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, and that with the aid of Cardinal Ugolino, he drew up the Rule. That the Rule appeared in 1221 is also sufficiently established. The year 1221 is consequently regarded as the year of the establishment of the Third Order. Van den Borne places the origin of this Rule in Florence or its vicinity. Pope Honorius III approved it orally the same year. After some additions and modifications, without however changing the essence, Pope Nicholas

IV solemnly approved this Rule by the constitution *Supra Montem*, August 19, 1289. Pope Leo XIII adapted to modern conditions by the constitution *Misericors Dei Filius*, May 30, 1883.

The purpose of the Third Order is the sanctification of the members, or the acquiring of Christian perfection. St. Francis had no other end in view. His only concern was to know and love God and to make Him better known and loved. The people thronged about him in order to learn how to sanctify themselves and save their souls either in the convent or in the midst of the cares and temptations of the world. St. Francis became one of the greatest reformers, not by advocating economic, political or social schemes, but by setting individuals right with God. His reform was a religious reform. The first essential duty of the Tertiaries is the striving after perfection by faithfully observing the Rule.

Again and again do the Supreme Pontiffs stress the spiritual purpose of the Third Order. Pope Leo XIII writes: "*The Order of St. Francis is based entirely on the observance of the precepts of Jesus Christ. The holy Founder had no other object in view than that the Order should be a kind of training ground for a more intensive practice of the Christian rule of life. As a matter of fact, the first two Franciscan Orders, shaped for the practice of superior virtues, pursue a more perfect, a diviner aim. But they are open to few-to those, namely, who by God's favor have the grace of aspiring with a certain rare zeal to the sanctity of the evangelical counsels. The Third Order, however*

is accommodated to the many.” Pope Pius X vindicates the religious purpose of the Third Order in a special document, wherein he asserts that the Third Order “does not differ from the other two (Franciscan Orders) in nature but only in as far as it pursues the same purpose in a way peculiar to itself.” This he proves from the Constitution *Misericors Dei Filius*, and from the title of *Brothers of Penance* with which the Founder distinguished his Third Order, and, finally, from the Rule. His conclusion is: “We believe, therefore, that it is clear from what has been said that the purpose of the Third Order consists in this, that its members put into everyday practice the precepts of Gospel perfection and serve as models of Christian life for the imitation of others.” Pope Benedict XV gives the following admonition: “Our Franciscan Tertiaries shall by purity of faith, by innocence of life, and by cheerful zeal diffuse far and wide the good odor of Christ, and be to the brethren that have gone astray both a reminder and an invitation to come to a sense of their duties. This the Church asks, this she expects of them.”

Pope Pius XI beautifully described the object of the Third Order when he said: “What is the profession and life of a good Franciscan Tertiary? It is not the rigor of the vows, not a life in common, not the religious life according to the letter. It is the religious life according to the spirit. It is the spirit of that life and perfection carried into the family, into everyday life, the ordinary life of the world. Thus, in the life of the Tertiary, to the vow of chastity, that loftier nobility of Christian life which consists in

purity physically aspired to and more faithfully observed, corresponds the spirit of penance through mortification in his entire manner of living. To the vow of obedience corresponds the spirit of obedience which enters all his devoted and generous sacrifices in obeying the commandments of God and the laws of the Church, as well as the manifestations of authority and the exigencies of his daily duty. To the vow of poverty corresponds the detachment of his heart from the goods of the world and his liberal and generous charity toward the unfortunate and suffering. Thus the spirit of the Franciscan Tertiary is the apostolate of Christian life, Christian faith, and Christian peace carried about everywhere, to every hearth, every walk of life, every one of the various social relations.”

It should be noted here that Popes Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII all were Franciscan Tertiaries. It is, indeed, quite understandable why they promoted the Third Order in such beautiful terms. But it must also be understood they were aware of how the Third Order was able to bring about a spiritual reform in society in the past, and it was their hope that the same could be done in our present day.

Some who read this article are Tertiaries, others may be considering the Third Order, while still others have never given it a thought. To those who are not members – why is it that you have never considered it? Is it tepidity, laziness, or perhaps a satisfaction in the lukewarm attitude that engulfs you. Some may have concluded they are not called to this state of life. They may be

correct, but perhaps not.

Who is satisfied with their spiritual state? Does one realize how dangerous that is to salvation? Is not the true, loyal soldier of Christ always willing to do more for Christ? It is indifference to salvation that is destroying the world. This error is not confined to non-Catholics, nor is it the sole property of the Modernists. This writer has observed a dangerous lukewarmness among so many of our own. Too many adults have given poor or bad example to the young. This has caused tragic results among the youth. A self-righteous, proud attitude only produces bad fruit.

I have spoken to many individuals over the years who are looking for answers to the problems within the Church and Society. They want to come up with some “earth-shattering” decision that man has never seen or heard of in the past. This is utter nonsense. The solutions to one’s salvation and those of the Church’s and State’s have always been directly in front of us.

The \$64,000.00 question is, who is brave enough to step forward and be counted as one of the elect? Who is willing to be part of an active spiritual army which has been shown to be an effective means of positive spiritual change and conversion even among Catholics? How was Europe re-converted in the 13th century? How were so many fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, single men and women, scientists, laborers, farmers, teachers and soldiers able to elevate their love of God through prayer and action? It was through the Third Order of St. Francis.

The Third Order over the centuries has had a long list of notable saints. A few of them include St. Louis (IX) of France, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. John Mary Vianney, St. Angela Merici, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Philip Neri, St. Vincent de Paul, St. John Baptist de la Salle, St. Paul of the Cross, St. John Bosco and Pope St. Pius X. This short list of saintly men and women demonstrates they saw the great value of the Third Order. Should not the everyday Catholic in our parishes and missions be inspired to follow in their footsteps?

The youth in particular ought to think seriously about the Third Order. It is of great value in forming a life of prayer and discipline. Both are desperately needed today. Far too many of our youth have wandered away from the Faith and have created life-long problems for themselves. The life of a Tertiary provides a Rule of Life for constant direction each day.

When St. John Vianney was consulted by priests on the spiritual progress of their parishes, he usually said: “Introduce the Third Order in your parish, take good care of it, and you will soon witness a transformation. The Third Order is the means chosen by Providence for the moral and religious uplift of parishes.”

What the Saint has said of the parish applies also to the person, for the sanctity of the parish begins with the individual soul. Eliminate any hesitation and remove all roadblocks—for St. Francis and Our Lord are waiting patiently for you.

Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER VI

An Amiable Friend

“And all . . . marvelled at the words of grace that came from His mouth” (Lk. 4:22).

Amiability is an estimable characteristic of every friend.

We may speak of amiability in a twofold sense. In the first sense, it may signify those moral virtues which make a man worthy of esteem and love. Such amiability is essential to all friendship. In the second sense, it may signify that quality or combination of qualities through which their possessor exercises a magnetic influence over others, because it is pleasant and agreeable to deal with him. It is usually in this latter sense that we speak of an amiable person. Hence, an amiable individual is one possessed of exquisite manners, thoughtful consideration for the requirements of pleasant companionship, considerate yielding to the wishes of others, the gift of conversation; in short, social adaptability without affectation or ignoble flattery. If,

in addition to these qualities, their possessor has an attractive figure, he is the living embodiment of the ideal, amiable person. We presume, of course, that his friendliness is sincere and not merely a veneer, for should he mock interiorly at those before whom he simulates fine manners, he would not be an amiable person but a disgusting hypocrite. True-heartedness and fundamental honesty of soul are prerequisites for all amiability worthy of the name.

It is true that an attractive figure and fine manners are not essential requisites for friendship, for even in an ugly body a morally beautiful soul may dwell, and a rough exterior often conceals a heart of inestimable worth. Social charm has been denied to many by nature, while labor, care, and the hardships of life have made others externally as hard as steel, though they possess faithful, friendly hearts and are esteemed and honored as friends by those who see through the rough exterior to

their moral qualities. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that amiability, when combined with moral excellence, is well suited to increase friendship and surround it with a peculiar charm.

Is our divine Saviour amiable? There is no question of His moral excellence, for in this He immeasurably surpasses all, even the best of men. We may inquire, however, whether our Saviour possesses that attractiveness of manner which by itself is calculated to draw all hearts. If our Saviour were to appear in our midst, even for a short time, and were to deal with us in visible form, we would have the answer to our question. But His amiability is so great that He cannot display it in all its perfection here below if He does not wish to diminish greatly the merit of our devotion toward Him. During His sojourn on earth He was compelled to hide His amiability under a veil in order that men might not be enslaved by His external attractiveness and lose sight of weightier considerations.

Once only during His stay on

earth did He take three of His apostles to Mount Tabor and lift for a moment the veil which hid His glory. Rapt in ecstasy at this vision, Peter cried out: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. Let us build here our dwellings." However, the Evangelist adds that he knew not what he said (cf. Lk. 9:28 ff.). The charming attractiveness of his Master had, for the time, all but bereft him of the use of reason. Here we can see why Christ veiled His amiability. The enjoyment of the contemplation of the glorified humanity of Christ is a gratification that is to form part of the joys of heaven and not of our exile here below. It was necessary even to purify the apostles from a too-natural attachment to the person of Christ, veiled though it was, before they could receive the Holy Ghost. "It is expedient for you that I depart; for if I do not go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (Jn. 16:7).

Even after His resurrection our Saviour did not show Himself in all His glory, but allowed merely a few rays to escape occasionally, which

filled the hearts of His disciples with enthusiasm. Thus, for example, on the day of His ascension. Even after our Saviour had disappeared from view, the disciples could not tear their eyes away, but stood staring up into heaven, anxious to see even the last reflection of the glorious spectacle, until the angels came and admonished them to return to Jerusalem and do as they had been bidden (cf. Acts 1: 11). "And they adoring went back into Jerusalem with great joy" (Lk. 24:52) at the glory of the Lord that they had seen. "We saw," wrote St. John jubilantly, "His glory — glory as of the only-begotten of the Father" (Jn. 1:14).

The magnetism of creatures which appeals to our bodily senses may easily enthrall our hearts in such wise that our love for our Saviour will suffer in consequence. Hence it is of paramount importance never to forget that Christ is the most amiable of men. It is our destiny to enjoy the unsurpassed amiability of Jesus for all eternity, and to draw therefrom unspeakable delights. How senseless it

would be, then, to sacrifice this eternal joy or even to diminish it for the sake of some creature whose charm is doomed soon to return to the dust from which it came. Let us try, then, to form as perfect an image as possible of the amiability of our glorified Saviour, and to impress this image so indelibly in our hearts that the allurements of creatures may not prevail against it. We must learn to enjoy our Saviour.

2. *The amiability of our glorified Saviour.* In the forty-fourth psalm, which, according to the Apostle (cf. Heb. 1: 8, 9), refers to the Messiah, we read of Him in His glory: "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in Thy lips. . . . Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most Mighty. With Thy comeliness and Thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously and reign. Because of truth and meekness and justice. . . . Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. Myrrh and stacte and cassia perfume Thy garments."

The inspired poet seems at a loss for words to depict adequately the amiability of our heavenly King which surpasses all human comprehension.

St. Teresa tells in the twenty-eighth chapter of her *Autobiography* that the risen Saviour once appeared to her in vision. She admits that she is unable to describe Him as He is, but she desires, nevertheless, to clothe her vision in words as best she may. She tells us that if there were no other joy in heaven than the contemplation of the humanity of Christ, this alone would constitute an unutterable delight. I might have striven for years to imagine anything so beautiful and would, nevertheless, have failed. His lucidity and radiance alone surpass our comprehension. The radiance of His glory does not blind the eye, but is a wonderful shimmering whiteness, which thrills the eyes and does not tire them. His lucidity is simply a divine beauty. Even the brightness of the sun is darkness when compared with the light which emanates from Jesus. He who gazes upon this light is filled with a desire not to open his eyes again nor to gaze at anything else. It is as though we gazed into clear water running over crystal in which the sun is reflected. In comparison with it, mundane beauty is a murky

stream swollen by rains which flows over a muddy bed. The beauty of our Saviour is a pure light, an undimmed light, a light that never wanes. It is of the greatest importance to impress this beauty of our Saviour deeply on our memory and intellect to support them in their weakness.

This prerogative of the glorified humanity of Christ of which St. Teresa here speaks is that quality which St. Paul calls “glory” (cf. 1 Cor. 15:43; Phil. 3:21). The Evangelists, speaking of the transfiguration, mention a brightness like that of the sun and a whiteness as that of snow (Mt. 17:2).

There is, however, yet another loveliness of the glorified humanity of Christ, which the Apostle designates as spirituality (1 Cor. 15:44). This is the transcendence of the spirit over matter or rather the perfect permeation and elevation of matter by the spirit. We can form some conception of this if we compare two different kinds of human beauty. There is a rough, almost exclusively bodily beauty which consists in the correct proportion of the features and all the members, combined with a healthy, strong color — an almost soulless

beauty. Then there is another beauty, the elements of which are the impress of benevolence on noble features, a light in the eyes that bespeaks a keen intellect, and a firmness of countenance that betrays a strong will. This latter is, properly speaking, human beauty, a spiritual beauty, which, no doubt, does not cause as much sensible pleasure, but, nevertheless, attracts more powerfully and may enkindle enthusiastic devotion. This beauty, because it is essentially spiritual, can stamp even on an ugly countenance the seal of beauty.

The Body of our Divine Saviour was formed by the Holy Ghost in a wonderful manner (cf. Lk. 1:35). When we build a church in God's honor, we try to make it as beautiful as is possible under the given circumstances. Therefore, is it probable that the Holy Ghost fashioned an imperfect body when He built a temple for the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity? After the final resurrection of the dead, will not the King of Glory immeasurably surpass in the beauty of His body and in the charm of His personality all the inhabitants of heaven? And this perfect body is animated by a noble soul. The fullness of grace and virtue radiates from the countenance of the Saviour. The

saints have received a little of His fullness, He alone possesses it all: a most beautiful body transformed by a glorious soul, and the soul elevated by the divinity. When we shall have the happiness to see our Saviour in heaven as He is, we shall not tire of this vision for all eternity. What folly, then, to give heed here below to any amiability which can tempt us away from his eternally youthful, divine amiability.

So perfectly is the body of Christ spiritualized that no race of earthly grossness remains in it. We contemplate with pleasure and light, charming movements of a supple body. Now the body of our Lord is swift as thought, a perfectly responsive instrument of the will, each nerve and muscle responding in all movements to the exact desire of the soul; while the soul desires only expressions of the most refined propriety, impressive dignity, and enchanting charm. And all this is immortal, imperishable, eternal. Let us, then, love this divinely human beauty as it deserves to be loved. Let us permit it to draw our desires heavenward. When we are in the state of sanctifying grace, a wonderful, heavenly beauty also dwells in us; but externally it is not yet visible. We may console ourselves, however, like St. John

the Apostle with the coming of the Lord. Then “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2).

3. The amiability of our Saviour is especially manifested in His revelation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Human friendships are so inconstant because there are no perfect men. If failings manifest themselves at psychologically the wrong moment and in a disagreeable manner, only the strongest of friendships will survive them. How often, alas, have friendships of long standing been dissolved because of one thoughtless word, a single offense, a slight betrayal of confidence, made perchance in good faith.

How does our Saviour act? When He appeared to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, He complained that men, on whom He had bestowed so many incomprehensibly great benefits, were becoming colder, more careless, more ungrateful and disrespectful toward Him; that they rewarded His love with hatred and blasphemy, and that they combated His works and intentions. As a result of these bitter and long-continued insults to His love, what course of conduct

might we expect our Saviour to pursue? Will He not deprive men of His friendship, cast them from Him, and permit them to fall prey to that doom toward which they are infallibly rushing? “Christ permitted me,” writes St. Margaret, “to perceive the ardent desire which consumes Him to be loved by men, to withdraw them from the path of destruction toward which so many of them are tending. This desire it was which caused Him to manifest His heart with all the treasures of love, mercy, and grace which it contains.” Such is the return of the Saviour for all the great offenses which are offered His love by men. He does not consider the injustice which is done Himself, but rather the evil consequences which the contemptible conduct of men draws down upon themselves. His love is only fanned to a brighter flame by these insults; they compel Him to pour out yet richer treasures of grace so that He may eventually soften men’s hearts and win them for that love which alone constitutes their whole happiness. Can we conceive of greater amiability? He bears patiently all the wrongs inflicted by His friends; instead of becoming angry and disgusted, He shows compassion and invents new proofs

of love; instead of withdrawing His friendship forever, He plans new ways and means to strengthen it and make it more intimate.

How obviously true are the words of our Saviour when He says that the manifestation of the love of His Heart is a final attempt to win the hearts of men. After all the graces that He has bestowed on us what else could He do except manifest His Sacred Heart and offer it to men as a gift? He offers us His Heart, that we may offer Him ours. A heart for a heart. But what manner of exchange is this? He demands our heart, our small, weak, inconstant, sinful heart. Is it perhaps to enrich Himself? He finds in us nothing but poverty,

miserly, and need of assistance. It is precisely on our littleness that He gazes in order to elevate it, on our weakness to strengthen it, on our illness in order to cure it. It is the sick who need a physician (cf. Mk. 2: 17), and as the panacea for these spiritual diseases, our Saviour offers His Heart, a heart full of love and mercy, of strength and life, of happiness and beatitude. The highest expression of love toward another is that a man offer Him his heart. So loving is our Saviour that, despite all our infidelities, He wishes to give us His Heart. Let us accept this gift, let us consider it as our most precious treasure, let us honor it and pay it homage! Let us live in this Heart, and living in it we shall “taste, and see that the Lord is sweet” (Ps. 33:9).

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