

# THE SERAPH

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## Friars' Activities

Spring has arrived and the friars are busy with their many labors for the love of God. It is one of our joyful rewards to be able to put our hands to work in the wondrous gardens He has blessed us with. In the spirit of St. Francis we see the reflection of God in all His creation. We are constantly at work in the spiritual fields of cultivating and nurturing souls for the Kingdom of God. While we seldom see the fruits of these labors and will only know the true extent of them in eternity, the flora and fauna here and now inspire and encourage us in our spiritual labors. The spring flowers have sprung up offering hope of new life as the death of winter fades away. We see the forsythia, the daffodil the tulip, the hyacinth, the fruit trees: peach, pear, cherry, and soon the apple, the magnificent magnolia is budding forth, and the buds of the wisteria show great beauty waiting to burst forth. The koi are awake from the long winter rest and eagerly come up and eat. The wild birds are singing every morning; they are visiting our feeders and baths; the honey bees are awake and working (No chance to look inside the hives

yet, but plenty of activity on the outside.) All in all it is a beautiful reflection of life and a shining example of God's goodness and love for us. It causes us to wonder: If this great creation is so good, what glory and beauty await in eternity those who love Him?

In the friary at St. Anthony's in Waterloo NY, the friars are busy with spring cleaning and gardening. As the readers of the Seraph are aware, we have also begun preparation for a small boarding school for young ladies (Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy) in the autumn, in the house in Rochester NY. We are busy within patching the old plaster walls and ceilings, painting, repairing, etc. The second floor is almost finished and will serve as a dormitory. A generous benefactor is preparing to have new siding put on the house. All of these things encourage us and give us a revitalized hope in the future. The faith that Jesus entrusted to the Apostles and the Holy Ghost protects within the true Church is alive. It may not be as big as it once was, but it is setting forth buds hinting at future beauty. It

encourages us with the hope that we may be able to answer in the affirmative Our Lord's question of finding faith when He returns.

Our spiritual works continue and increase as we seek to make the best use of technology that we can. We broadcast the Mass live from Lubbock TX and Waubeka WI each week on the internet. Sunday sermons are available on a blog and youtube.com. We have a radio program every week in Lubbock TX which is also broadcast live and archived on the internet. Our websites are still up (A bit dated, but still very informative. We hope with God's help to update them in the near future). We have started online religious discussions on Thursday evenings. We have our nursing home in Radisson WI. And the priest friars attend many missions and out-posts throughout the US.

We are not financially well off but God has not been stingy with us either. While vocations seem to be scarce at the moment we trust that God will give us all that we need. We pray that our young people may not delay or waste a true calling from God and may join us in the joy of serving Him. We do not wish to coerce anyone into the religious or clerical

life, as that would be one of the greatest mistakes for the Church, the religious community and for the soul involved. It is likewise one of the greatest evils to turn away from or deny a true calling from God into His service. If any of our young souls feel such a calling to God we encourage you to contact one of our priest friars for guidance and help in the discerning of a vocation. Of course we are eager to help in the discerning of any other vocation also. We are always eager to help in any way we can.

For those who have already determined and established themselves in their vocations we remind you that the Church and the Religious rely upon your prayers and generous contributions. None of our works would be possible without the financial support of the faithful. Sadly we see that it is usually only a dedicated few that can be relied upon on a regular basis. We daily thank God for these in our prayers, and beg God's special graces for them.

We remind everyone that among the Six Laws (Precepts) of the Church we find the command to contribute to the support of the Church. This is not an option, but is a requirement of God. One

deceased generous benefactor (May he rest in peace.) used to remark that the law is that we give 10% or the “first fruits” of our labor. This 10% is not a gift, only that which is above and beyond the requirements of the law is actually a gift. Putting forth our 10% or less is not yet giving, it is only carrying our own weight or less in the Mystical Body. If we have only done this much we must say as Our Lord commanded us: “We are unprofitable servants. We have only done that which we ought to have done.”

We do not like to remind the faithful of this obligation for fear of appearing worldly, and this is why we so infrequently do. But, charity for your souls and the burden of fulfilling our obligations to instruct and help you reach the goal of sanctification coerces us to recall this from time to time.

The friars are mendicants (beggars) and are dependent upon the charity of others. The Church is supported by your obligations of 10%. We represent both to you and are always grateful for your financial aid. All our benefactors are remembered in our daily prayers.

All Catholics are bound by this law even if they are unable to assist at Mass or attend one of our Chapels. We encourage you not to forget God, and unite with us in offering Him the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass – if not daily, at least on Sundays – and express your love for Him by sending us the support the law demands of you as well as any gift that you may be inspired to send. God loves a generous soul, and will reward him many times over both in this life and in eternity.

We need your support for all our works, but are especially begging your financial help and prayers for this latest of projects: The Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy. If you can do nothing more please pray that Our Lady will keep her mantle over us and guide us in the formation of good young Catholic women, for God and the Church, for families, and for society.

May God bless you.

+Bishop Giles OFM

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# In Defense of Our Lady, the Mediatrix of All Graces

Bishop Bonaventure Strandt, OFM

score.

There are vast numbers of God's enemies who sharply criticize the Catholic Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The more times we see her rights and privileges refused or rejected, the easier it becomes to see exactly where the true children of God reside. All that needs to be done is to take a good long look at the Church's illustrious history of invoking the Mother of God at all times. She will remain, for all eternity, a singular precious vessel of devotion in the eyes of God. If we wish to please Him, it is necessary to love all whom He loves, and in the degree that He loves them.

One attack in particular has become a significant source of trouble to those who love the Church. It is the denial of the intermediary role of the Blessed Virgin. The assertion is that our only mediator with God is Jesus Christ, and that nowhere in Scripture can we prove otherwise. Some may not know exactly how to defend the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church, and there are many points to address on this

The first thing to keep in our minds always is that the Church is guided perpetually by the Holy Spirit, Who directs and illuminates the Church's ministers and faithful by His gifts. When it comes to defining dogmas, the Church is infallible in its unanimous decisions. In the declarations of the legitimate popes of ages past, we have been handed an inheritance of rich definitions, and sacred truths that are carefully marked out for our safe guidance.

To simply speak evil against someone or something is easy. To show forth facts and logical statements is something else entirely. Our world's false philosophies remind me very much of that statement made at the very beginning of the famous film "The Song of Bernadette." Before telling the wonderful account of the apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes, the producers displayed a profound message: "For those who believe, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation will ever be

sufficient.”

Therefore, rather than focusing upon apologetics and argumentation, Catholics really ought to stir up their ingrained supernatural faith, and cling to sacred Tradition. We often engage ourselves entirely too much in that condemnable fault called human respect. God alone is to be pleased; He alone is our Judge. “Let them say all that there is to say”, says the Cure of Ars concerning false tongues; “and when they have said all that there is to say, they will be quiet and say no more.” This is admirable advice for accepting the harsh judgments of the enemies of God, who come in so many different forms now.

Now, to address the subject at hand, we turn to the Blessed Mother of God, who is called by the Church the Mediatrix of All Graces. It is not only lawful and useful, but even demanded of us that we invoke the intercession of the saints. Every single Holy Mass invokes the intercessory prayers of the Apostles, martyrs, virgins, Popes, and other holy souls. The focus of the intercession of the saints with God during these prayers is

upon the Virgin Mary, the Queen of All Saints. During the Canon of the Mass, at the prayer known as the *Communicantes*, we offer our prayers by “venerating the memory, first of all, of the glorious and ever-virgin Mary.”

The fact that the intercession of the saints is both fruitful and pleasing to God is an Apostolic teaching. In writing to the Thessalonians, St. Paul recommends himself to the prayers of his disciples: **“Brethren, pray for us.”** St. James exhorts us about the necessity of this intercession of the saints when he says: **“Pray for one another, that you may be saved.”** Then there is the example of St. Peter, who promised his disciples that he would pray for them after his martyrdom. To sum up more succinctly what I wish to say, I will invoke, actually, the intercession of a great Doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus de Ligouri. This devoted son of Mary writes: **“No one denies that Jesus Christ is our only Mediator of justice, and that He by His merits has obtained our reconciliation with God. But, on the other hand, it is impious to assert that God is**

**not pleased to grant graces at the intercession of His saints and more especially of Mary His Mother, whom Jesus desires so much to see loved and honored by all.”**

Throughout the course of our lifelong Catholic education, we learn new things constantly. It is always refreshing to inform someone why the Church has used the Old Testament figures Esther and Judith to explain the Blessed Virgin’s role in our salvation. She is like Esther, because even if the Great King should be angry with us and ready to destroy our lives, her incomparable beauty and gracious intercession breaks His wrath, and appeases His justified anger. Her proximity to the King is unrivaled, just as no one could touch the heart of King Assuerus quite like Queen Esther. Mary is also compared to the valiant Judith, who went forth alone to destroy the destroyer, having prepared herself with prayers and fasting. The people proclaimed with intense joy: **“Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people.”** And so it is with the Virgin Mary. She is honored

with every grace, and is given the free charge to distribute them as she sees fit. Esther petitioned the king’s clemency in freeing her people from destruction; Mary constantly intercedes with the King of Kings in granting us more time for repentance and cleansing.

The unceasing devotion of the Church for the Queen of Heaven is evidenced by the multiplicity of prayers invoking her aid, found throughout the words of many Masses, Offices, Canticles, Hymns, Litanies, medals, paintings, statues, and the writings of so many saints.

Our own Franciscans come to the forefront in Marian devotion; and in this instance the most pertinent teaching comes from the Seraphic Doctor Saint Bonaventure. In reflecting upon her as the “Stella Maris”, the “star of the sea”, he describes the blackness and terrifying turbulence of this journey through life, and how Mary illuminates the way, and at the same time calms the sea, with the power granted her through the Lord. Then he gives us a renewed understanding of her role when he calls her “Jacob’s ladder.” If we wish to climb to

Heaven, we must use the ladder of our Lady's intercession. We maintain these holy truths with much simplicity, by saying: "No one comes to the Father, except through the Son; and no one comes to the Son, except through the Mother."



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# Pentecost

One of the most notable claims of the Novus Ordo is that of being inspired and/or led by the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost at one time was spoken of as the “forgotten God.” We spent a lot of time focusing our attention upon God the Father and God the Son, with little being said of the Holy Ghost. In Theology we learn that the Holy Ghost is the Love of the Father and the Son. The Son is *begotten* of the Father and the Holy Ghost *proceeds* from the Father and the Son by way of spiration.

The Modernists appeal to the uneducated masses, insisting that all the “changes” are the inspiration and work of the Holy Ghost. They charm with the suggestion that the “Church” is now motivated by love and is now lead by the God of Love.

This is a clever deception. Yes, the Holy Ghost is the God of Love, but He is one with the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost has been with the True Church from the beginning. God does not change, the Holy Ghost is God and so it should be obvious that the Holy Ghost

does not change.

The Holy Ghost lives within the Church and guides Her in all that She says and does. It is the Holy Ghost that inspired: the precise definitions of the Sacraments; the Mass; each and every doctrine; the confirmation of religious orders; the canonization of saints; etc. What the Holy Ghost inspired the Church to be before the Modernist “Vatican II” council, cannot change after the council. If God cannot change then the teachings of God cannot change. Certain non-doctrinal practices can change and adapt to the place and time, but the eternal truths can never bend.

Every Catholic learns that to deny only one doctrine is to deny them all. They all come from the same God. For example to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation is to deny all that Christ has said and taught. If God lied to us in one thing, then He cannot be trusted in anything, or if we consider it from the other side then we must conclude that He is not God. In either case one ceases to be a Catholic the very moment he denies the least doctrine.

The Modernists have denied not only one but many doctrines, if not in word then especially in actions. By removing the tabernacles from the focal point in the churches we see an attack upon the central focus of the churches – the Sacrifice of the Mass. By substituting a definition of meal in preference to Unbloody Sacrifice of Calvary, the very Mass is denied, transubstantiation is denied, Christ's real presence is denied. Thus we see the logical progression of now standing to receive "Communion", receiving "Communion" in the hand, lay ministers of "Communion", etc.

We look at the other sacraments and we see the same evolution in the changing of doctrine and discipline of the Church. In Baptism the doctrine of Original Sin has faded away in the emphasis upon initiation. In Confirmation the doctrine of receiving the Holy Ghost to become a soldier of Christ has given way to the idea of a false love of man; In the sacrament of Penance we see the doctrine of the need for contrition, confession, and amendment giving way to reconciliation without any contrition or amendment. "Reconciliation"

has become nothing more than the "religious" sequel to the secular psychologist – "learning to forgive yourself and accept yourself as you are," rather than seeing sin and striving to change. Matrimony has faded from the "until death do you part" and "what God has joined together," to "as long as our love shall last," or divorce under the guise of "annulment." The sacrament of Holy Orders has now given way in the Modernist Church to a "priesthood of the faithful" rather than an ordained priesthood dedicated to God. Extreme Unction with its serious preparation for death has given way to a general "blessing" for the sick.

What was once true with God, cannot now be not true. God must be without change or He is not God. Either the Church of before "Vatican II" is true and the Modernists after "Vatican II" are false; or the Church before "Vatican II" was false and the Modernists after "Vatican II" are true. We have obviously chosen the Church prior to "Vatican II" as the true Church and we have and are doing what we can with the grace of God to preserve and promulgate what God has given us. We realize that God's truth

and His true Church are now in a minority, but Jesus has foretold this. The Great Apostasy is upon us as was predicted.

To attribute the Modernists changes and denial of clearly established truths and doctrines to the Holy Ghost is the greatest of blasphemies – the sin against the Holy Ghost – which cannot be forgiven either in this life or in the next. It cannot be forgiven because, the poor souls given into this deception will never admit their error nor repent of it. They have been handed over to a reprobate sense as St Paul warns against in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans. The Modernist cult of Man in place of the worship of God is nothing less than idolatry and the breaking of the first Commandment: “Thou shall not have strange gods before Me.”

In the Profession of Faith that every convert, cleric and religious used to make, we are clearly taught that there are three sacraments that bring the Holy Ghost to us and imprint an indelible mark upon our souls – Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. These three sacraments can never be repeated. Of course, if there is a doubt concerning the validity of any of these, they

must be conditionally repeated. If they are clearly invalid then they are given unconditionally. To repeat these sacraments even conditionally when there is no doubt about their validity is to deny the indelible mark of the Holy Ghost. This is in effect a denial of the Holy Ghost Himself.

Strangely enough this practice is not so much the sin of the Modernists – for they sin on the opposite side in showing no concern for the sacraments and invalidate them almost at every turn – but rather this sin of denying the Holy Ghost and the indelible marks of these three sacraments is one of the chief sins of the “Traditionalists.”

In a claim to preserve and build up the Church and the God inspired doctrines and practices the “Traditionalists” sin against the Holy Ghost by indiscriminately denying indelible marks of the Holy Ghost in these three sacraments.

We present two of many occurrences of this deadly sin. First the “The Congregation of Mary Queen of The Universe” (Schukardt – Pivarunis) sect of Spokane Washington. This group went to a schismatic sect

to receive valid orders. They knew they had valid orders. They, and Bishop Musey, clearly stated that there was no doubt concerning the validity of their orders, yet they nonetheless proceeded to repeat these same orders. In like manner we find a Bishop Taylor doing the same thing only not with ordination to the priesthood but with the highest of the Sacred Orders – consecration to the episcopacy. In order to be able to declare himself to be of the “Thuc” line of bishops he sacrilegiously repeated known and accepted orders. This repetition of the “ordination” was no ordination at all because they were already ordained. What this turns out to be is mockery and denial of the indelible mark and of the Holy Ghost Himself.

We also see in so many “Traditionalists” an attempt to presume upon the Holy Ghost by establishing their own “religious” societies, orders, confraternities, etc. The True Church has never approved of a “Society of St. Pius X”, “Society of St. Pius V”, a “religious” group “The Congregation of Mary Queen of The Universe” (from Spokane WA), various self-startup “Benedictine” groups such as

“Most Holy Family Monastery”, or self-startup groups of alleged “Franciscans”, etc. If the Church has not approved of these then it should be obvious to every real Catholic that neither has the Holy Ghost. Such sects are obviously guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost called “presumption.”

Only religious who can trace a physical and clear connection to the original founders of their orders through true (valid and licit) representatives of the order, by following the necessity of Canonical novitiates of training and formation along with the making of proper vows to God through the true representatives of the order, can lay claim to the title as religious of that order. Being a religious is much more than finding a copy of the rule, modifying it to suit one’s self, and putting on a habit. One must be accepted and trained by true members of the order and must pass through various tests, stages and progressions, and vows. This is the only guarantee of being led by the Holy Ghost. Outside of this, or of being recognized and authorized by a valid pope, there is no guidance by the Holy Ghost. Rather, we must conclude that such are guided by an un-holy spirit.

It is not the Holy Ghost that inspires: the denial of His own teachings and inspirations; the denial of the indelible marks of the three sacraments; the establishment of unauthorized or spurious “religious” orders, societies, groups or sects; etc. We must conclude that all these are inspired by the un-holy spirit, and are in effect denials of the Holy Ghost and great sins against the same Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven in this life or the next – simply because such souls refuse to see the error of their ways or to seek forgiveness or amendment.

We therefore warn all who are or desire to be true Catholics to have nothing to do with these groups and sects, both Modernist and “Traditionalist”. As St. Paul warns us to not yoke ourselves with evil (2 Cor. 6, 14).

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# Franciscan Saints

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MAY 4

THE SERVANTS OF GOD PAULA AND GABRIELA MEZZAVACCHI

## *Virgins, Second Order*

The mother of these saintly sisters had from her youth entertained the desire to consecrate her life to God in a convent. Constrained by the wishes of her father to give her hand in marriage to the noble John Baptist Mezzavacchi, a professor of law at the University of Bologna, she went to the church as a bride, cast herself on her knees before the altar and said: "O Lord, since I have not been found worthy to serve Thee in the convent, I now already consecrate to Thee all the children that Thou wilt present to me."

God almighty graciously accepted her sacrifice. She gave birth to two sons and two daughters. The first son entered the Benedictine Order and became an abbot. The second became a Franciscan, was provincial at Bologna, and died as guardian of Mount Sion convent in Jerusalem; his brother saw how the holy angels bore his soul to heaven.

The two daughters, our saintly virgins, entered the convent of the Poor Clares at Ferrara, in which St. Catharine of Bologna was the novice mistress.

When Catharine transferred to Bologna in order to establish a new convent, she took with her Paula, the older of the sisters, whom she appointed mistress of novices because of her outstanding virtue. In this capacity Paula directed the novices with zeal, prudence, and great charity. In a special way she devoted herself to her sick, tempted, and worried fellow sisters. To all she was a model of humility, meekness, and mortification. God adorned her with the gift of prophecy and revealed to her the secrets of hearts. She died in the odor of sanctity in 1492.

For a period of nine years after Paula's entrance into the convent, her sister Gabriela continued to be the object of love and tenderness in their paternal home. Yet, she felt

interiorly impelled to follow the example of her sister. Generously she overcame the difficulties in the way, left all, and at Ferrara asked for the poor garb of the daughters of St. Clare. Her progress in perfection corresponded to the heroic beginning she had made until, rich in merits, she slept blessedly in the Lord in the year 1493.

### ON THE POWER OF A MOTHER'S PRAYER

1. Consider what the pious prayer of a mother can do for her children. Obviously it was the result of the sacrifice and prayers of the mother of our saintly virgins that her children became such faithful servants of God. The mother of St. Bernard, who consecrated her six sons and one daughter to God immediately after their birth and begged that they might remain faithful in His service, experienced a similar effect of prayer. Three of the children are honored as saints, all died most edifying deaths. If Christ our Lord says: "All things whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, that I will do" (John 14:13), must not then above all the prayer

of a mother for her children's salvation be heard? Christ Himself before His departure directed this prayer to His heavenly Father for all those who are His: "Sanctify them in truth" (John 17:17).

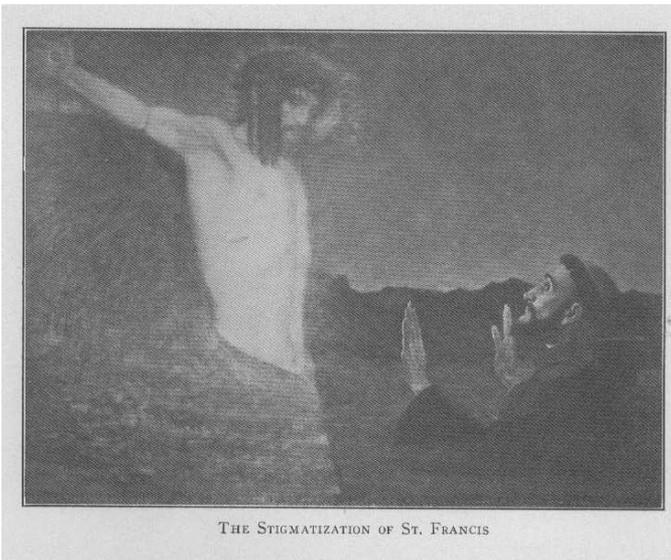
2. Consider that the prayer of a mother has great power even when children have already begun to tread life's byways. Augustine had delivered himself up to pride and sensuality till his thirty-second year: even St. Ambrose could think of no means to convert him. But when he saw the tears of St. Monica, the mother of Augustine, and heard her pleading prayers, he said: "The child of so many tears and prayers cannot be lost." Augustine served God for forty-four years in great sanctity. Andrew Corsini was also a wayward young man. When he beheld his mother kneeling before an image of the Mother of God and saw how she wept and pleaded, grace touched his heart; he burst into tears, was converted, and became a saint. Does God almighty not give the assurance (Is. 49:15) that He will be more merciful even than a mother to the son of her womb?

3. Consider that if it is to be effectual, the prayer of a mother for her children must be supported by faithful fulfillment of her duty. From their youth she must rear her children for God and for what is good, must be on the alert to root evil germs out of their hearts, and guard them against the contagion of a bad world; above all she must always give them a good example. — Have you, Christian mother, been wanting in these points? Then you yourself have prepared the cross which you carry because of your children. But, bear it with patience, repent of your faults, do what you can to correct them even now, and beg St. Monica,

whose feast the universal Church celebrates today, for her intercession. Then you may expect that God will still grant your prayer and save your children for eternity.

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH (Feast of St. Monica)

O God, the comforter of the sorrowful and the salvation of those who put their trust in Thee, who, in bringing about the conversion of her son Augustine didst have merciful regard to the loving tears of Blessed Monica, grant through their united intercession that we may grieve over our sins and win grace and pardon from Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



# Reflections on a Courageous Soul

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

## Part IV

Once the decision was made to part ways with those whom he knew, Fr. Louis began saying the Mass once again which he had been taught in the mid-1950's. How strange that must have been. The only Mass he knew from his childhood and into his seminary years was now forbidden-or so we were told. Catholics who were old enough to remember (and were taught correctly) understood the Holy Sacrifice was not to be changed, and yet it was.

Now (1977), those who dared to stand fast against the Modernists were to be retired early, threatened with having their pensions taken away, had their faculties removed, were "expelled" from their religious orders, and/or threatened with excommunication from the (Modernist) "Catholic" Church. How quickly things changed. In a matter of a few short years (count them however you wish – in the big picture they are a blip on a screen), a priest goes from being commended for being a faithful member of the clergy to a

calumniated, disobedient rebel! This was, indeed, the world in which Fr. Louis lived in 1977.

In a side note, here is yet another date (1977) which parallels my own experiences. It was also in the same year that I, at the young age of 19, left the Modernist Church. I did not leave with anyone or because of anyone else, but of my own volition. I remember thinking at the time, having attended one other parish from the one in which I was raised, "There is nothing here." I simply meant there was a spiritual void, of which I could no longer tolerate.

One does not always realize the magnitude of the decision. Only with time and prayer does one begin to understand "the bigger picture" which would have been, perhaps, quite overwhelming if it had been understood fully at the time.

It is important to understand the mindset at the time. I believe Fr. Louis was of the same mind in 1977. One simply wanted to remain Roman Catholic. There was no desire to be disobedient or rebellious; nor was I a mem-

ber of the “Latin is lovely” club; nor was I attached to the nostalgia of the “Latin Mass.” Some have accused us of being stubborn or obstinate – refusing to do as you’re told - and what of our consciences?

In 1977, there were numerous priests scattered throughout the United States who were celebrating the Latin Mass. The older priests generally used the Missal of 1958 or older, some going back to 1945! Others used the Missal of 1962. There were very few sedevacantists. The process of understanding that which had taken place had not progressed to this point. Many of those clergy who said the True Mass were attached to a diocese. Some of the religious were still members of their respective communities. The distinctions which have been made for some years, (between those who remained a part of the Novus Ordo and who made a clear break from them) did not exist in the late seventies. The clergy was generally still trying to decide what they must do. The priests of those years had known but one world, and with the advent of the Modernist Revolution this world had been shattered. They were still trying to “get their bearings.”

From 1977 to 1979, Fr. Louis said Mass for many Catholics in different cities. He did not join any group or organization. He simply wanted to celebrate the Latin Mass for the faithful and learn about that which was taking place among those who were celebrating or attending a Latin Mass. He learned about the ORCM (Orthodox Roman Catholic Movement); the followers of Marcel Lefebvre, a.k.a., SSPX; numerous secular and religious priests; and the ever-present John Birch Society.

One may wonder what the Birch Society has to do with those who attended the True Mass. The fact is, though, they were truly the human leeches of the “Traditionalist Movement.” They were present in almost every congregation. Moreover, they “ran” many priests who were willing to sell their chalices. In a short period of time, they became quite powerful. There weren’t too many priests or laity willing to stand up against them.

Fr. Louis was not familiar with the Birchers when he began celebrating the Latin Mass in 1977. Within the next several years, though, he received quite an education. He didn’t like that which

he was seeing and hearing-and there was plenty of both! Perhaps the most significant situation he experienced was in Buffalo, NY. I don't remember exactly when he began to say Mass in Buffalo, but I believe it was in 1980 or 1981. Mass was being said in a once-parish church in the Buffalo diocese; Sacred Heart Church in a run-down, poor section of the inner-city. It was the same church where Bp. Louis was consecrated on August 24, 1982.

When Fr. Louis began to say Mass, there were about *two-hundred* people who attended. It was during this same period when he was given a Birch "bible" – the Blue Book. The famous Blue Book of the Birchers was nothing more than a compilation of Masonic principles and ideas used to promote "patriotism." Once Fr. Louis discovered these findings, he began to speak against this pseudo-patriotic movement. It was NOT well received.

On *the* Sunday in Buffalo, he openly preached against the Birchers, not being fully aware of their influence among these people. The following Sunday there were about *fifty* people.

The group continued to dwindle over several years. In the late 80's, Mass was discontinued because there were only about eight or ten people attending.

The Birch influence was also felt in Rochester, NY, Florence, KY, Lafayette, LA, Milwaukee, WI, and yes, Lubbock, Texas. If there were other locations, I am not readily aware of them. It was several years before our congregations were cleansed of these misguided Catholics who were more concerned with the politics of the nation rather than maintaining the True Faith.

One priest who was a particular thorn in our side, was the late Fr. James Wathen. This priest was from the diocese of Owensboro, KY, but lived for many years in Louisville. He was so influenced by the Birchers that he thought it was more important for a person to be a Bircher than a Catholic!

In some ways he was so typical of many of the "traditionalist clergyman." After having left the Owensboro diocese and the Novus Ordo for many years, he, at one time claimed this Modernist to be his bishop and at another time made the remarkable statement that he received

his faculties from a layman-the head of the “Knights of Malta.” Unlike the European organization which was founded many years ago, the U. S. version was seen to be fraudulent, and quite misguided.

The more important point in describing most all of these clergymen, was that they spent more time and effort working to avoid proper Church authority when they could have easily submitted themselves to it. But then, hasn’t obedience been a problem since the Garden of Eden?

The most well-know organization during those years (1977-81) was the misnamed and pompous “Society of St. Pius X.” I don’t wish to go into their history, but to briefly mention the prevailing attitude, particularly of those who now lead another fraudulent group, the “Society of St. Pius V.” These men, whose ordinations we do not recognize because of the Lefebvre-Lienart connection, openly thought the salvation of all men must go through them and Marcel Lefebvre!! Apparently their arrogance blinded them to such an extent, they thought the only way for a man to be validly ordained would be to go through

them!

Prior to Bp. Louis’ consecration, it was not known who would ordain the Franciscan seminarians. At the time, Fr. Louis openly stated he would rely upon Divine Providence for this answer. It did not take long for this prayer to be answered.

Standing up against the John Birch Society and the followers of Marcel Lefebvre were not popular decisions during those years (or since), but they have been shown to have been the correct ones. They, indeed, would set the stage for the years which followed, especially 1982-1984.

### **To be Continued**

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**CONFERENCES ON THE  
BLESSED TRINITY.**

**BY  
THE REV. DR. J. J:  
O'CONNELL, O.S.B.,  
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE,  
GASTON CO., N. C.**

CONFERENCE VIII.

*ON THE BLESSED  
EUCHARIST, THE GREATEST  
GIFT OF THE BLESSED  
'TRINITY.*

Every prudent speaker and writer will express himself in the plainest manner, so as to be easily understood, and to avoid the use of any odious terms or harsh expressions calculated to raise unfavorable prejudices in the minds of his hearers or readers against his doctrine. If Jesus Christ did not teach transubstantiation He not only erred against this axiom of common sense, but He led the Jews astray and buried the world in idolatry; for the Christian world generally adores the Blessed Eucharist as the ever-living God, as Christ. He insists on the necessity of *drinking His Blood*.

The drinking of the blood of even clean animals was prohibited by the first law given to Noe after the flood; and it was repeated down even to the birth of Christianity. But, though grievous, it was light in comparison with the eating of human flesh and the drinking of human blood.

*Instead of a fountain of running waters thou givest human, blood to the unjust to drink (Prov. ix.)* With these impressions on the part of the Jews, it is preposterous to suppose that our divine Redeemer, whose mission it was to conciliate the Jews and convert the world, should have clothed His most amiable doctrines and merciful institutions in the most abominable language and an imagery never used but to express the most heinous violation of the divine law and signal curse of God. We must conclude that He use this language because he inculcated the doctrine which it conveys, and He was necessitated to use it because He could not have adequately stated it in any other terms.

There are rare facilities of interpretation in this instance. We have the declaration of the meaning attached by His hearers to our Lord's words and His assurance of the correctness thereof. No sooner did He say, *The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world*, than they strove among themselves, saying, *How can this man give us His flesh, to eat?* This objection proves that they were convinced He was inculcating an impossibility, an absurdity. This could be understood only of the literal sense. But it is conceded that the Capharnaumites understood our Lord in a gross, natural manner; Catholics are reproached for taking His words in the same sense. The question is simply this: Were the

Capharnaumites right? If they were, then we are right; if they were wrong, then we are wrong also. There is one criterion by which we can decide the question, and it is very simple in its application.

Every speaker and writer has a peculiar manner of conveying his thoughts, and we can admit no interpretation at variance with his familiar custom. Whenever an objection was raised against our Lord's doctrines in consequence of His words being misunderstood, He invariably corrected the error. I give but one specimen from many: *Unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.* To be born again meant proselytism; but it does not occur to Nicodemus, and he objects to the doctrine as impracticable. *How can a man be born when he is old?* He is answered that it is a spiritual birth by baptism that is meant. *Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John iii)* He does not permit Nicodemus nor any one else to depart laboring under a misconception of anything that He had said.

Whenever His hearers correctly understood Him and objected to His doctrine He always repeats the offensive expression and insists on being believed, even when the objection was only mental. Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, *Thy sins are forgiven thee (Matt. ix.)*

They *said within themselves that He blasphemed by arrogating a divine power.* He repeated the obnoxious expression and proved its truth by the performance of a miracle.

The Jews understood our Lord literally and made an objection. If they were mistaken He was bound in honor and justice to correct them — nothing easier, if He were speaking only of faith and in a figurative sense. Instead of this He confirms their interpretation more forcibly than He had ever done before on any other occasion. He repeats the expressions that had given offence *five times* over. The manner in which He makes the repetition still more forcibly confirms the literal sense. It is embodied in the form of a precept, which has a threat of punishment affixed. A command must be given in the plainest words. Eternal life is to be attained by the observance or neglect of the precept. Again it was delivered in a positive and a negative manner, and salvation attached to its observance; a refusal, and the frightful penalty of eternal death attached. It is in this manner that He inculcates the necessity of baptism. Both cases are parallel, and, being precepts, must, be taken literally.

He confirms this meaning by the strongest asseveration in Holy Writ. It is God's oath, *Amen, amen*, which was never used except when words were intended to be taken in their most obvious signification. There; is also a determinating phrase which

absolutely excludes the idea of a figure: *My flesh is meat INDEED and my blood is drink INDEED* — truly, verily, actually. He comprises both expressions in the most forcible manner possible. *He that eateth me, the same shall also live by me.* He never would have used so extraordinary an expression if He had any choice and. if it was not the plainest manner of teaching the doctrine.

We now come to a turning-point in the life of our Lord. The disciples debated among themselves and exclaimed: *This saying is hard, and who can bear it? — which means, it is impossible for us to associate ourselves any longer with a man who teaches so revolting a doctrine. They left Him; they walked no more with Him.* Has He no explanation to make? If He is speaking only of faith or a bare commemoration, and in figure, will the Good Shepherd suffer them to be lost for ever for refusing to believe imaginary doctrines which He never meant to teach?

The admiring multitude had listened for three days to the words of wisdom that fell from His divine lips, and were miraculously fed with five loaves and two fishes. The blind, the lame, the sick, many whom He had miraculously cured, must have been there. They offered Him a crown, and were ready to die in order to seat their Messiah on the throne of David, His father. Hearing

His extraordinary doctrine, they ask for an explanation, and He only reasserts it. They dispute and debate among themselves, and are agitated with angry strife, like summer trees swayed by sudden storm. "*How can? how can?*" is on every lip. They receive no modification, no softening down of the *hard saying.* They hurry away, will have no more to do with Him, and forsake Him once for all. There is an end now to the dream of an earthly kingdom; He bends His steps towards Jerusalem and the cross, forsaken by the admiring multitudes. The Catholic doctrine was just as unpopular that day as it is now, and the identical objection is made: *How can this man give us His flesh to eat? They walked no more with Him.* Whether the objection was made on the mountain or in the synagogue, the result was the same. He is standing alone now with the chosen twelve to whom it was given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God. If there is a misunderstanding He surely will explain to them; but there is no further encouragement for them than for the wavering disciples.

Turning to them, He said: *Will you also go away?* They do not understand Him any more than the rest; they are evidently perplexed and amazed. But they resist the impulses of natural feelings and abandon themselves to His authority. He accepts the sacrifice and formally acknowledges them for His disciples. Peter answered

for the rest: *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life... Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* He saw the sincerity of their conviction, except in the solitary case of Judas Iscariot, who, according to St. John Chrysostom, apostatized in his soul at this very time and denied his Master “how can” poisoned his heart and ruined him. Our Lord was inculcating a mystery, like creation or the Blessed Trinity, which no explanation could bring within the scope of man’s understanding. It required only the surrender of human reason to the authority of God. Had He made an explanation we could not understand it.

The objections against this interpretation are silly. Have not many perished who received this sacrament? Unfortunately, too true; because our Lord’s promises are conditional, as in baptism. How can He be in so many different places at the same time and within no small a compass? As easily as He multiplied the loaves and fishes, causing them to be in thousands of places at the same time, and as He brought His body through closed doors.

Does He not tell us that His words must be taken spiritually? *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life . . . If then, you See the Son of man ascend up where He was before?* St. Augustine says this was an explanation for the

Capharnaumites, who imagined that our Lord’s flesh must be eaten in morsels, like that of animals. In the New Testament flesh and blood always mean the natural man as opposed to the spiritual, or human nature left to its own impulses and unaided by the grace of God. *Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God (1 Cor. xv. 50).*

## II

It is objected that the doctrine is contrary to reason and the testimony of our senses. No Christian has a right to consider the apparent impossibility of a doctrine, but simply whether it has been taught in the Scriptures or the Church. From the Protestant standpoint it must stand or fall by the Bible. His word is essentially true, and His doctrines can contradict no principle of reason nor a law of nature.

Who can define the perplexed question of possibility to God or understand his omnipotence? If a man concedes that our Lord changed water into wine and fed thousands abundantly with a few loaves of bread, to be consistent he must confess that the same power is adequate to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood and make the sacrament co-extensive with the human race.

We have evidence that our Lord frequently performed what seemed impossible: He walked on the waters, transmuted one body into

another, multiplied bodies almost indefinitely, raised the dead to life. He impressed on the people that nothing was impossible to Him, and reproached them sharply whenever they doubted His power. Because the centurion believed His presence was not necessary to raise the dead to life — a splendid confession of His divinity — he eulogized Him in public. *Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel.* Now, could the apostles or can any Christian decide the meaning of God's word by assuming that its execution was impossible?

He made this doctrine the test of His true and false disciples. The former sacrificed their understanding to the divine authority, persevered, and were saved. The latter rejected the doctrine as impossible, just us at this day, and walked *no more with Him*.

If we admit only what, we can understand, and assume as a principle of interpretation the difficulty or contradiction of a thing to the law of nature, we destroy all Christian faith. What do we know of nature — we who cannot explain the production from its seed of a blade of grass nor understand how a thought is formed within us? Until we are acquainted with all the laws of nature in their mystic plan and the resources of Omnipotence we must not presume to reject the truths taught by God because they are at variance with our limited notions of things.

Creation, the Blessed Trinity, and other mysteries are as incomprehensible as the Real Presence. It is an article of faith that these mysteries do not contradict, but simply are beyond the reach of, reason. We believe all because they are taught by God Himself. Whatever is urged against this adorable mystery is conceded to the infidel. The many vain and profane objections ventilated from the non-Catholic press and pulpit could be advanced against the divinity of our blessed Lord during all the indignities of His Passion. It is contrary to the testimony of the senses — this can be advanced against the divinity of our Lord and the descent of the Holy Ghost under the form of a dove and cloven tongues of fire. The senses are not the criterion of revealed truth; their testimony is reliable within the range of nature, but no further. The infidel can make this objection against the resurrection, the miracles of our Lord, and all divine institutions.

To be continued

# Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

## CHAPTER III

### A Sympathetic Friend

*“He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb. 2:11).*

1. Why did God become man? The humanity of Christ is not our final aim and end. That is God alone. Hence St. Paul, speaking of the consummation of the world, says that all things are subjected to the Son of God. The Son of God, however, according to His humanity, shall Himself be subjected unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be all in all (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28). As mediator, the Son of God leads the whole human race back to God, and, as supreme head of the Church, offers Himself and His kingdom, an eternal praise offering, to His heavenly Father.

The humanity of Christ is the way that leads to this end. “I,” says Jesus, “am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6). “Who walks on this way walks not in darkness, but will have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12); for whoever walks in truth, comes into possession of the fullness of truth, even into the possession of

God. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness” (1 Jn. 1:5). If God, then, is the light of the spiritual world, is He not able to illumine our souls with light and to warm our hearts? He is not only able to do so, but He actually does this. Every best gift comes from the Father of lights (cf. Jas. 1:17). He is with us, about us, within us with His wisdom, His power, His being; “for in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28), and this applies above all to the life of our soul. And yet it was expedient and, to a certain extent, even necessary that the eternal Light of God come into the world and assume human form. For the divinity is too intense a light for our weak human vision, and becomes darkness because of its infinite intensity. “No man has at any time seen God” (Jn. 1:18), for He is invisible (cf. Col. 1:15) “and dwells in light inaccessible” (1 Tim. 6:16).

It is true that the invisible God can, to a certain extent, be known from a contemplation of creation, in which His eternal power and divinity shine forth (cf. Rom.

1:20). By process of reasoning we can rise from the creature to the existence of the Creator and to a knowledge of some of His attributes. This process, however, is at best impersonal. Material objects present themselves for our contemplation and, because they are effects produced by God, lead us back to their first cause. The learned of the world have elaborated this reasoning process often very profoundly and ingeniously. But in all truth we must say that this chain of argumentation leaves us cold and unmoved. At most our intellect is satisfied, but our heart remains empty. Our heart desires personal communion with God — if possible, confidential, friendly communion with Him.

O God, although Thou art so near to us, Thou art still infinitely exalted above us; although our Creator, Thou art a Majesty before whom the angels tremble and hide their countenance. How dare we think of friendship with Thee? For friendship presupposes a certain equality, and between Thee and us there is nothing but inequality; an unbridgeable abyss separates Thee, the Most High, from us, poor worms of earth. Can a worm enter into friendship with man? And yet

the worm is not so far below us as we are below God. Must, then, the yearning of our hearts for rest in God, remain unsatisfied here below? Listen to the invitation of our Saviour: “Come to Me all ye who are heavily laden, come to Me with the hunger and thirst of your souls, come to Me all ye who seek God. No man has seen the Father, but I, and I will show Him to you, and lead you to Him. He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also” (cf. Jn. 14:8 ff.). After the first Pentecost the Apostles understood all this perfectly, and St. John exclaimed with joy: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory — glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father” (Jn. 1:14). Yes, we have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands the Word of Life (cf. 1 Jn. 1:1), the personal, eternal, consubstantial Word of the Father.

In the person of Jesus, God comes among us personally in a manner which no created reason could have imagined. As true man He came to us men without in any way compromising His divinity. When Jesus speaks to us, God speaks to us; when Jesus loves us, God loves us; when we rest on the heart of Jesus, we are resting on the heart of God.

Between God and ourselves, impersonal creatures need no longer mediate as the objects of our thought. The true mediator now is the “one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). The heart of Jesus is a real human heart and, at the same time, the heart of the Second Person of the blessed Trinity; in it dwells the fullness of the Godhead corporeally (cf. Col. 2:9). Therefore the heart of Jesus is as worthy of adoration as God Himself; we can safely give it all our love without derogating from the love we owe God. Nevertheless, it remains a truly human heart with all the sentiments, emotions, tendencies, of which a spotless and noble heart is capable. In it the infinite majesty of God need not frighten us, for this majesty dwells there in goodness and kindness (cf. Tit. 3:4). The attractiveness and loving kindness of our Saviour manifest themselves precisely in this that He not only performed human acts, but always manifested such a truly human heart; in Him we do not find the terrifying God of infinite majesty, but the God-man, whose delight it is to be with the children of men and to bestow benefits upon them.

2. Jesus possesses a sympathetic, human heart. It was not really necessary that God should become man to redeem the human race by means of perfect satisfaction for sin. By assuming the angelic nature the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity could, by one act of obedience, have rendered complete satisfaction to His heavenly Father for the disobedience of man. But the Son of God preferred to become man, because that was the easiest and most natural way to win the love of men.

He did not assume an angelic nature, says St. Paul, but a human nature, in order that He might be like unto us in all things, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest. The Apostle depicts our Lord as jubilant because of the numerous members of the family of men which the Father has given Him. “I will declare Thy name to My brethren; in the midst of the church will I praise Thee. . . . Behold I and My children, whom God hath given Me” (Heb. 2:12, 13). We are all the children of our Saviour, because the supernatural life is communicated to us through His sacred humanity; we are His brothers, because He has assumed flesh and blood from

our race and has implanted in us once again the grace through which we become adopted children of God just as He is the natural Son of God. Love for us as His blood relatives, love for us as His spiritual children flames in the heart of Jesus.

He might miraculously have appeared in our midst as a grown man, the founder of the new race of God, like Adam, the parent of our race. But He preferred to be born of a human mother, "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). God became a babe in the crib for love of us. Prompted by His great love, He at once sent His angels to summon men that they might see under what a loving guise their Saviour had come into their midst. "You shall find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." Little wonder that their hearts were filled with joy. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen" (Lk. 2:12, 20).

The Infant in the manger was not bereft of the use of reason and incapable of love as other children are. The eternal wisdom of God that dwelt within Him illumined His intellect, with the rays of its brightness and

enkindled His heart with love. The Infant in the manger saw all men and loved all men not only collectively but individually. What was His first prayer at the inception of His life? An offering of Himself to His heavenly Father for the salvation of men. ". . . in coming into the world, He says: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me" which I shall offer to Thee in satisfaction for the sins of My brethren. "Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10: 5, 7). Then began that hard, rough, sacrificial way that He etched from the crib to the cross, an uninterrupted series of acts of self-sacrificing love for the salvation of His brethren.

For more than ten years the Saviour labored in obscurity: An ordinary carpenter in the carpenter shop at Nazareth, and thus sanctified the burden of labor that rests upon mankind. He thus encouraged His hard-working brethren at all times not to consider unbearable a burden that He bore for love of them, nor as derogatory, what the King of Glory did not consider beneath His dignity. This monotonous succession of years, until Jesus reached the age of thirty, was

not time lost to the actual work of saving souls; for while Jesus worked with His hands and earned His bread in the sweat of His brow, His heart, ever busied with our needs, was offering His labors to His heavenly Father that in view of them, God might graciously accept the heavy yoke of labor which rests upon so many millions of men, and reward a thousand-fold each effort, each drop of sweat. Since the laborer has God as his compeer, since the heart of a God knows from experience what it means to work, and is filled with sympathy for the lot of His toiling fellow man, every laborer may be proud of his work and may unite his labors to those of his divine Brother, and so offer them to the heavenly Father and accept from Him compensation for the possible insufficiency of his wages here below.

When Christ began His public life, He found Himself in the midst of a subjugated and deeply humiliated race. The Evangelist enumerates the rulers who exercised authority over Palestine in the name of the Roman Empire (cf. Lk. 3:1). In helpless fury the Jews cursed the loss of their political autonomy. They expected a Messiah who,

as a mighty prince and savior, would free them from the Roman yoke. When Jesus declared that He was the Messiah sent of God, they were scandalized and said: "What, he the Messiah? Why, that is the well-known carpenter of Nazareth. His mother and relatives are here with us" (cf. Mk. 6:3). This blindness was the saddest sin of that age and race. The people had been led astray by their appointed leaders so that they placed all their hope in a glorious temporal future and hence despised the poor, humble Saviour who wished to restore to them the kingdom of heaven. Did Jesus become angry at their lack of understanding? No, this great misery of His people elicited the more the compassion of His divine heart. "But seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were bewildered and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt. 9:36). He had the heart of a shepherd who has no other desire than to help a deserted flock. Nor was this longing limited to the Jews of Palestine, but embraced all those who in future centuries should need His help. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. . . . And other sheep I have that

are not of this fold. Them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd, and for all of them I lay down My life” (Jn. 10:11, 16, 17).

He sought to win the confidence of the people through the favors He bestowed on them. He cured their sick, He fed them when they were hungry, He did not become impatient when they besieged Him so persistently that He and His disciples often could not so much as eat bread (cf. Mk. 3:20). Once He withdrew to a lonely spot in order to rest with His disciples. But the people noticed His departure and preceded Him so that in place of the rest He sought, He found new labors, which were concluded with the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (cf. Mk. 6:31-44). On another occasion, at the close of an arduous day, mothers brought their little ones to the weary Christ that He might bless them. The indignant apostles would have sent these inconsiderate women away had not Jesus rebuked them and said: “Let little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for of such is the kingdom of God”; and He pressed them to His heart and blessed them (Mk. 10:13, 14). Is

not this love of little children a touching proof of the affability of His divine heart? Has He not given expression to His love for men when He said: “How often would I have gathered thy children together, as the hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not” (Mt. 23:37). Because of the hardness of heart of the Jews, Jesus shed tears of sympathy in the sorrow of His heart. “If thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes” (Lk. 19:42). Finally, when in their blind rage they had crucified Him, He only prayed for them in their iniquity: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34). Has our Saviour proved sufficiently that He possesses a sympathetic, human heart?

3. *Should we not reward the love of our Saviour with a return of sympathetic, human love?* Love and kindness, especially when they come from a superior, usually elicit from a noble heart sentiments of gratitude and love. Active sympathy with our miseries usually draws from us the resolve: I will never forget this. Will only the greatest love that ever burned in a human heart go unrequited? Will only the

most self-sacrificing sympathy with our woe be relegated to forgetfulness? Will only our best Friend meet everywhere ice-incrusted hearts? Shall we compel only our Saviour to make the bitter complaint: "What is there that I ought to have done, that I have not done?" (Cf. Isa. 5:4.) "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13), their heart has become as a stone (cf. Ezek. 11:19), the life-giving warmth of love has grown cold in them.

Does not our Saviour sigh with great longing for our love? "He who loves me will be loved of My Father: and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (Jn. 14:21). Our Saviour explained to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque that nothing pained Him so much as the ingratitude of men. "This causes Me more suffering than I endured in the course of My passion. If men would but give Me some little return of love, I would consider all that I have done for them as nought and would, if it were possible, do yet more. But they reward all My efforts to help them with coldness and indifference."

"I am come to cast fire on the

earth, and what will I but that it be enkindled?" (Lk. 12:49), are words Jesus addressed to His apostles. He spoke of the fire of the love of God, a holy fire, which is to be enkindled in all hearts and is to purify them from the slag of sin and imperfection so that only the pure gold of a true, noble, worthy love remains. For those, however, who resist the sanctifying influence of this divine love, it becomes a fire of judgment. The ungrateful will some day know that no fire burns so terribly as the fire of the rejected love of God. All too late will these coldhearted unfortunates cry out: "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isa. 33:14.)

Dear Jesus, Thou dost still invite us to warm and purify our hearts in the life-giving furnace of Thy divine heart. Today, when we hear Thy voice, we will not harden our hearts, but strive with all our might that the dearest wish of Thy heart be granted and that Thou become better known and loved by men. O Jesus, grant us Thy love and Thy grace. With these we will be rich enough and will have no more to desire.

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