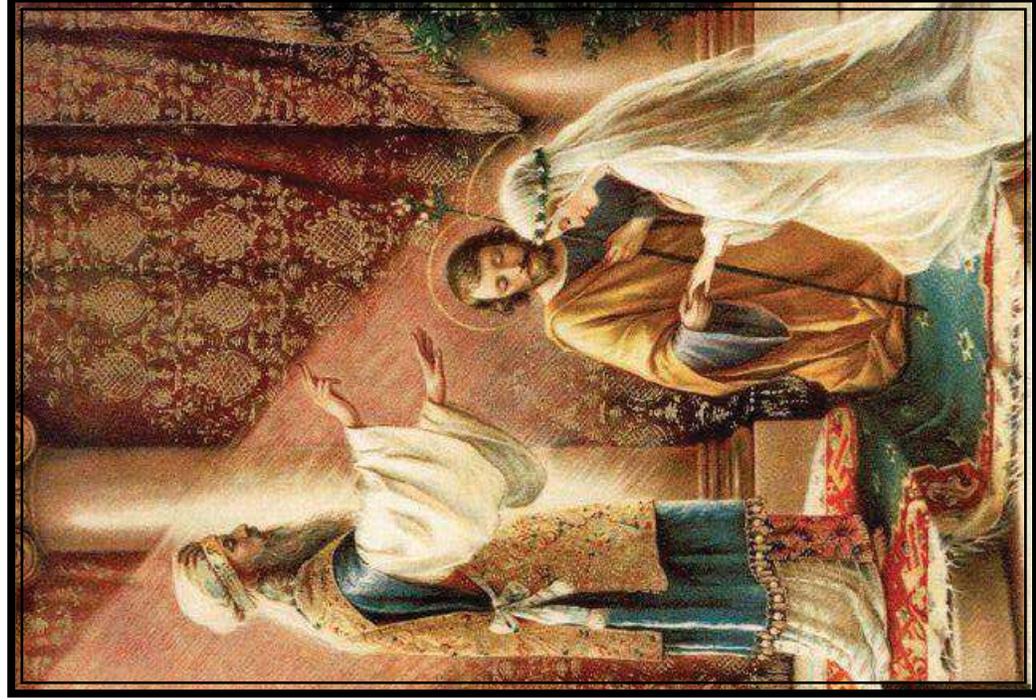


THE SERAPH

January 2018

Vol. XXXVIII No. 5



Espousals of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph

The Seraph

PUBLISHED WITH EPISCOPAL AUTHORIZATION Vol. XXXVIII No. 5
JANUARY 2018

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The **SERAPH** is published monthly except July and August by the Franciscan Friars at 3376 Mt. Read Blvd. Rochester, NY 14616.

The **SERAPH** defends the authentic doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and the moral values upon which Godly nations were founded.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

USA: Free upon request.

Suggested donation \$20.00.

FOREIGN: Air Mail: \$40.00 per year

ALL CORRESPONDENCE
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Publishers

Order of St. Francis of Assisi, Inc.
Rochester, New York 14616 USA

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Beginning or End?

Bishop Giles, OFM

The New Year brings forth a time for reflection. It is a time to look back to see where we have been, how far we have come; and it is a time to look forward and make plans of how to get where we want to be. There are two sides to our being – physical and spiritual. These are often opposed to one another, but they needn't be. When our wills are in conformity to the Will of God, our souls are in order, then it naturally follows that the body will conform to the soul. When our souls are in rebellion against God, then our bodies rebel against our souls. While we are in this life, we are not completely one with Christ and we find a rebellion within us of the body against the soul to the relative degree that our souls are in rebellion against God.

The end of the Old Testament religion (Mosaic Law) and the beginning of the New Testament religion (The Catholic Church) occurred when there was a division within the Temple – there was more than one High Priest. At the same time, there

was unity in the secular realm with most of the known world subject to the Roman power under Caesar. There was unity in the Kingdom of the World, and disunity in the Kingdom of Heaven (here on earth). The physical rose to power and predominance, while the spiritual splintered and fell into disrepute. This was the stage that was prepared for the coming of Jesus.

We think it is well for us to attempt to draw a comparison with this time in history and our own. From the earliest days of the Church, there have been divisions of heresies and schisms. The Protestant revolution, however, ushered in a drastic splintering of the true religion. The devils inspired Luther with the foolish doctrine of “private interpretation” of the Bible, which multiplied without end the various groups and sects that keep multiplying even to this day. It is no longer enough to say you are a Christian, the next question is what denomination of Christian are you? It has

become so ubiquitous that a new denomination now claims to be “non-denominational”. So we find ourselves in a time of history with many factious splintered sects each claiming to hold the Truth, the True Christ. Much as Jesus has predicted that will happen towards the end of time. There will be many that will say He is here or He is there. (St. Matthew 24:23)

For a long time, the True Church was a bulwark against this demonic work of division and splintering. But, with the false Council of Vatican II, a new era in the End of Times was issued in. Under the guise of seeking “unity” the “leadership” of the “Catholic Church” sought to embrace the splintered disunity of heresy and schism and simply rename it as unity. The reduction of the One True Faith to a multiplicity of beliefs that were united by the least common denominator of “belief in a higher being”, or no belief at all, was a clear sign of the end. The Temple was divided before the end of the Old Testament. And the Church is divided before the end of the New Testament. We are no longer shocked or even scandalized by all this. It seems clear that this has all been

revealed to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The suggestion was clear enough – seek that which unites rather than that which divides. Unity was sought by overlooking differences. In order to overlook the differences, we were asked to become indifferent to the differences and to the Truth – God.

There remained a remnant that refused to give into the heresies of indifferentism. They sought to hold onto the true faith without compromise, but this put them at odds with the apparent leadership in the Church. This conflict brought to light, with ever more clarity and the passing of time, that the apparent leadership was no longer truly Catholic as their self-imposed indifferentism opened them up to one after another of many heresies that were presented by the various heretics they sought to embrace. Modernism is the error of embracing all heresies. [See: Pascendi Dominici Gregis (September 8, 1907) Pope Pius X] The change came from within as a military fifth column or Trojan Horse. This created even more divisions of Modernist Novus Ordo on the one side and

now Conservative or Traditional Catholics on the other. However, these Traditionalists were left without a pope, but one or two bishops broke rank with the Modernists and provided Apostolic succession within the remnant of the Church. With valid bishops but without a true pope (the principle of unity), there soon arose splintering and division here, too. So much so, that many returned to the Modernist indifferentism rather than deal with deciphering the various Traditional groups. Divisions arose over the rites, over the ritual and ceremonies, over doctrine, and any other thing that could be argued. Is the head of the Modernists church a true pope or not? How to reconcile with either not having a pope or having one that is a manifest heretic is an essential problem.

To give credit to where credit is due, it seems that the devil has done his homework and has mastered his work of divide and conquer. He has created a multiplicity of false churches and therefore false Christs. We must not be deceived by these. The True Christ will return as lightning from East to West. (St.

Luke 17:24) We need not look for Him in any secret or hidden places. The doctrines of the True Church shine forth to all who will lift up their eyes to see them. These doctrines were true, are true, and remain true for all time. While there are differences and variations in ceremonies and rituals with different rites that are all good and Catholic, the uniting principle is that they all hold to the same doctrines (teachings) and therefore to the same Jesus Christ - God. In our days, it seems that without a visible principle of unity (a true pope), we must cling to the invisible true Head of the Church (Jesus Christ). We look to Him and we cling to Him, in keeping the Commandments, the Laws, the teachings (doctrines) that He has given us. While the true faithful become the remnant, we must keep our eyes lifted up to see Jesus in the whole truth; and not be tricked into seeking Him out in some hidden or novel place or doctrine.

There are many with their own personal doctrine, or hidden agenda vying for our attention - each claiming to have a truth. The fact is that part of the truth is a lie. It is the whole doctrine and truth that reveal to us, Jesus

Christ. To hold onto one doctrine and emphasize it to the neglect or even denial of other doctrines is a false interpretation of doctrine and therefore a lie.

Jesus Christ has spoken dogmatically through His Church and given us all that we need to believe. There is much more that has been dogmatically and infallibly defined by the Holy Ghost through the Church than most people can completely grasp. That is why in "The Act of Faith" we profess to believe all that the Catholic Church teaches - even that which we may be ignorant of. We must hold on to that which we have been given, and still not deny that which we are ignorant of but is also the true teaching of the Church. We can look to the remnant successors of the Apostles (true bishops) and to the approved writings of the True Church for confirmation and verification of various doctrines. The principles of interpretation of these doctrines, as with the Bible, rest with the bishops. We can arrive at a relatively certain understanding of these doctrines in the universal agreement of interpretations by the Fathers of the Church - throughout the ages. We need not know or

understand all the doctrines, we only need to believe them. We believe them because God has revealed them through His Church.

We should cling to the certain (not doubtful) rites, ceremonies, and rituals that have been given to us. These may often be difficult or even impossible for us to find in our days. In such cases, we can still unite ourselves spiritually with all the Masses offered wherever they may be. We are never hindered from making Acts of Contrition, Acts of Faith, Acts of Hope, Acts of Love, as well as Spiritual Communions.

Today and until the end of time (for ourselves or the world), we should keep our spiritual eyes lifted to Jesus Christ. With our hearts filled with Love (Him), we must believe in the complete Jesus - not the false Jesus created by half-truths. Let us not look in corners or darkness, but in the Light of sound approved teachings that have been given to us by our ancestors in the Faith. In this, we find the real Jesus Christ and we may welcome Him with open hearts, as St. John did in the Apocalypse. "Come Lord Jesus! Come!"

Question for the Editor

Bishop Giles, OFM

I have a few “well-intentioned” friends and relatives that like to tell me that I shouldn’t force my kids to be Catholic - that I should let them explore all religions and make their own choice. I find myself a bit tongue-tied and thrown by this statement, that I usually try to change the subject. (This backfires.) Can you help me construct a simple way to respond?

for their children. Parents choose what kind of education and how soon or often their children attend structured (organized) instructions.

These things only touch upon the surface of the many choices that parents must make on behalf of their children. There is no doubt that these are very important decisions to make and that they will have long-term, if not life-long, effects upon the children. These are very important choices that we make for our children, and parents must approach these with great care. There are strong arguments on both sides of every one of these topics. Parents must do their best to sift through the information and make judgments based on their reason, finances, health, social status, etc. Most importantly, however, parents should call upon God and the graces that He has given them for the benefit of these children. Love of our children and common sense combined with cooperation with God is the solid foundation that we should be acting upon.

If all this is true on the natural or material level, it is even more imperative on the supernatural level. Our souls are more important

When we consider the physical lives of our children, parents do not hesitate to make choices for them – choices that will affect them for the rest of their lives. Parents determine what foods they will make available to their children. They determine whether they will go to see a doctor on regular basis. Parents choose whether their children use pharmaceutical medications, take herbal or natural supplements, or simply do nothing and let nature take its course. Guardians choose to vaccinate their children or not, or they choose which vaccines to allow and which ones to decline. Infants are often circumcised for no medical or religious reason – simply a choice that parents make

than our bodies. Eternity is more important than temporality. God has instructed us that baptism is necessary for our eternal happiness. “Unless a man is born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” (St. John 3: 3-5).

The Modernists argue that we should wait until our children are old enough to choose baptism for themselves. However, in choosing not to baptize children, a choice has been made for them. This choice is to deprive them of the grace of Baptism, it is to deprive them of the Supernatural Life of Grace, it is to deny them of the gifts of the Holy Ghost – it is to deprive them of God. They may argue that when children want this then they can choose it for themselves, or they may argue that God’s grace is not necessary for children. Putting these arguments on a material level – then, we should not give our children antibiotics to fight infections or medicines to restore or improve health. We should wait until the children are able to choose if this is what they want. Our hope is that our readers can see the foolishness on this material level and then, understand how much more foolish it is on the spiritual.

We are all born in the deprived state of Original Sin (this is the disease) and the cure is Baptism. We can choose not to allow our children

to receive the cure until they are old enough to make this decision for themselves – but, in doing so we risk that our children will die from this disease or be irreparably harmed by the delay in the administration of the cure. If our children happen to die before they have the opportunity to choose the life-saving sacrament of Baptism, we have chosen to deprive them of what God has declared essential for their happiness. These souls belong to God, and only secondarily to parents, but the parents will have to give an account of these souls that God has entrusted to them. If the souls of these children are lost because of their parents, who had the duty of returning them to God, then these parents must likewise fear their own loss of happiness.

But, what if the child lives until he is old enough to choose for himself? That would be well and good if the child were not put in such a prejudicial situation. Having spent his entire life devoid of the life of his soul – the Holy Ghost, on what basis can he choose? He has only known sin, and the life of grace has been painted to him as nothing but fantasy. He has grown with a constant and progressive sickness of sin. If our children are born with a malady of the eyes, should we administer the curative means to correct and cure this while they are young and it has the best chances of curing; or should we allow the

malady to grow worse until the child can choose the remedy for himself? If we wait, the cure will obviously be less effective, if it is effective at all. If a child injures a limb, should we administer medications for a cure or wait until after infection sets in and the only cure left is the amputation of the limb? Allowing children the “opportunity” to explore other religions is the spiritual equivalent of allowing them to explore harmful and/or illegal substances. Maybe it won’t hurt them, maybe they will make the right choice – or maybe, it will kill them! We should not encourage our children to explore false religions any more than we should encourage them to explore cocaine, heroin, or LSD.

The smallest amount of time that is spent outside of the grace of God is a terrible loss for us. Every moment lived in sin, makes the life of grace that much further out of our reach. If we love God, we do not want to spend a moment of our lives without Him. If we love our children we do not want them to spend a moment of their lives without Him.

Parents, who unnecessarily put off the baptism of their children, show clearly that they do not love God, nor do they love their children. They are content that their children be without the grace of God. This callousness is itself a sin.

There are stubborn people who argue that because the Church teaches that those who die with the desire for baptism will receive the spiritual effects of baptism; then they do not have to have their children baptized, they only need to desire it – not do it. It is very frustrating to deal with such blindness or obstinacy. Such people as these do not even understand the words that they are using. To desire something is not just some empty fanciful dream. If we desire something, then we take the necessary steps to obtain the object of our desire – otherwise, we do not truly desire it. If a person desires baptism for their children, then they must do all that they can to obtain this for them. If a person desires baptism for himself, he takes the necessary steps to receive this grace. The church teaches that if we have this desire (if we are taking the steps to be baptized) then God accepts the desire for the deed. We cannot say that a fanciful whim is the same as a true desire.

When we are told that we should put off the baptism of our children, we should answer that we love our children too much to allow them to be without God’s grace. Every moment without the grace of baptism is a moment too long. We love God and we love our children, and it is only natural and right that these loves of ours be brought together as soon as possible.

St. Francis' Spiritual Revolution

Brother Anthony Lentz, O.F.M.

Part One

The twentieth-century author and lay-theologian G.K. Chesterton once said, “If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change.” He continues by giving us a practical example, “If you leave a white fence post alone it will soon be a black post. If you particularly want it to be white you must be always painting it again; that is, you must be always having a revolution. Briefly, if you want the old white post you must have a new white post.” This is quite an astute observation, but one which could be misunderstood. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines “revolution” as a “sudden, radical, or complete change” or as a “fundamental change in political organization; *esp.*: the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler and a substitution of another by the governed.” Obviously, from the context, Mr. Chesterton means for the word “revolution” to be taken in a broader sense, meaning rather a “reformation.” Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary also defines “(to) reform” as “to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses.” I do not think that he would have condoned an extreme political upheaval and that the use of the word “revolution” was used simply to add impetus to the point he was

trying to make. I believe rather that he was promoting a positive change of mind. This mindset does not come from modern materialistic ideologies, but from the preservation of the wisdom of the past – our Western Christian Culture.

Western culture is simply the amalgam of the cultures of Greece, Rome, and Jerusalem being perfected by Christianity (Catholicism). When a society becomes stagnant it must re-evaluate itself by taking to heart those important lessons given to it by the sages of the past and thus revitalizing itself. Hence, it is simply adding a new coat but with the same old time-tested brand of paint!

Of course, and I am sure Mr. Chesterton would agree, any sort of revolution, or reformation for that matter, must first begin with individuals and then society as a whole. Individuals are often raised up by God to lead and inspire their fellowmen to the paths of virtue, good-sense, and morality.

Now enters St. Francis!

St. Francis’ revolution was not political; it was partly social, but it was mainly spiritual. The term revolution would not be too out of place for describing St. Francis’ transformation because he first

experienced an extreme change within himself. Let us keep in mind that, this change did not mean the destruction of absolutely everything that he was, for the son of Peter Bernadone had many fine qualities. He was naturally generous, chivalric, and chaste; but he was also too attached to the things and honors of this world. Before he could become the herald of Christ the King, he had to be purged, purified and perfected by the fire of Divine Love. This Love had its source in the imitation of Christ crucified.

Many biographers of St. Francis describe thirteenth century Europe as having grown cold in charity, morality, and practically all things spiritual. Europe was in desperate need of a spiritual “revolution.” Such an undertaking could only find success in a man who completely conformed himself to Christ; a man who understood that the words of Christ: “Learn of Me...” was not a mere suggestion but the greatest of all commands. To learn of Christ is to learn the path to supernatural perfection!

Where did St. Francis’ revolution begin? Many biographers suggest that this revolutionary movement began in the dilapidated chapel of San Damiano when Our Lord spoke to him through the Byzantine-style crucifix upon the main altar. Our Lord said, “Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruins.” This command

of Christ has three meanings: the literal, the spiritual, and the personal.

The literal meaning was exactly how Francis first understood this command. He thought that Our Lord was speaking specifically about the dilapidated chapel of San Damiano, and so he began procuring stones and other supplies for its reconstruction. Even though this meaning was not the primary one, it was not without its benefits.

In the beginning, Francis was mocked and jeered at by many of the people of Assisi, who thought that he had completely lost his mind. This merely gave Francis an occasion to practice the virtues of humility, meekness, and long-suffering; all part of his preparation. As time went on though, many of the people saw in Francis a truly devout, sincere, and holy soul. On account of both his fine charismatic qualities and his humble spirit, there were men who wished to join his ranks, as followers of holy poverty.

The spiritual meaning was, or rather is, the primary reason for the vision. Our Lord wished for Francis to be His instrument, to help bring the world out of its spiritual depravity, and lead all men back into the bosom of His Holy Church. Francis was called to bring the Gospel back to life! He was called to renounce the world and its honors, and to give himself totally to the service of God. When he and his band of brothers went to Rome in order to

seek the approval of the Holy See, they were met with opposition from the Church hierarchy. This opposition was not malicious, but cautious. For during that time, there were other groups of men, such as the Waldensians and the Poor Men of Lyons, who also sought to live in strict poverty and to help restore the life of the Church. Objective history does not permit us to ignore the clerical laxity and depravity which plagued the Church at this time. A major proponent of bringing these sad circumstances about was the practice of lay-investitures. That is where sovereigns claimed the right to appoint bishops and other higher clerics for the dioceses in their respective domains. These sovereigns made what should have been a sacred appointment into nothing more than a political chess game, and had absolutely no regard for the spiritual welfare of their subjects. This sad state of affairs was not overlooked by some of the laity, and that is why certain men formed their own religious groups. Their motives may have been pure in the beginning, but they eventually became heretics and schismatics. The reason is simple. They were, at least eventually, filled with a pharisaical “righteousness” and they looked upon themselves as holier than the Church. They seemed to have overlooked the fact that the Church’s holiness is not dependent upon the holiness of her members, whether they are a hierarchy or not, but upon the holiness of Her Divine

Founder. They overlooked that the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit, and therefore, can never err in matters of faith and morals. They, yet again, overlooked that Our Lord promised that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (St. Matthew 16, 18), so even a corrupted clergy could not destroy the life of the Church. What was the result of this lack of knowledge and prudence? They started to verbally and physically attack Church officials, and then, later on, formed strange doctrines which were contrary to her teachings. In short, they created anarchy. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is no wonder why when Francis and his brothers first appeared at Rome, that the Church asked the question, is this just another radical sect waiting to happen?

Of course, Francis and his brothers soon showed themselves to be different from those false self-righteous sects. At the core of this difference was their humble submission and obedience to the Apostolic See. The nature of this submission is clearly stated in the twelfth chapter of the Franciscan rule. St. Francis writes, “And this, moreover, I enjoin on the ministers, by obedience, that they ask of the Lord Pope one of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church to be governor, protector, and corrector of this Fraternity, that always subject and submissive at the feet of the same holy Church, firm in the

Catholic faith, we may observe the poverty and humility and the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we have firmly promised.” (*The Rule of the Friars Minor, Chapter 12*) St. Francis understood that the Church is Christ’s kingdom on earth, and if any change was to be accomplished for the betterment of mankind it must be done through her. It is clear that the Church’s mission and St. Francis’ mission were one in the same – the glory of God and the salvation of souls! Now with the blessing of the Holy See, St. Francis sought to help bring about the sanctification of individuals and society.

It is a simple philosophical principle that a “thing cannot give what it does not have”. This St. Francis understood quite well. He knew that if he was to effectively bring about the spiritual reform of Christ the King, he was going to have to first reform himself. The well known Danish writer and convert, Johannes Jorgensen, made the observation that St. Francis, “...with instinctive certainty... understood that without the reform of the individual, all other reform is meaningless, and therefore he brought about the general reform of conduct which neither the Bulls of excommunication of the Pope nor the thunders of the lay-preachers had been able to effect.” (*St. Francis of Assisi* by Jorgensen, page 90) This was the personal meaning of Christ’s words to Francis in the chapel of San Damiano, “go and

repair my house,” that is “go and repair the house of your soul, which I have given to you.” This command was not meant for merely St. Francis, nor merely for his spiritual sons and daughters (Franciscans), but for all who would profess the name of Christ – Catholics!

When it comes to the spiritual betterment of individual persons the word “revolution” in the stricter sense shows itself to be rather appropriate. When a man turns from the world and gives himself to Christ, he begins a revolution within himself. With the grace of God, a man can overthrow or renounce one ruler – the world, the flesh, and the devil – and substitutes it for another – Christ. This “overthrow” or “renunciation” does not happen overnight, but only over time. St. Francis is a wonderful example of this fact. The rebuilding of his soul was a life-long project and the materials he used in this reconstruction were prayer, the Sacraments, and the using of the graces flowing from both. Just as an architect has a plan for the construction of a building, so too, did St. Francis have a plan. At its heart was the reforming of both his sensual and spiritual faculties, and this was to be accomplished by considering Christ crucified.

How St. Francis exactly went about doing this, and how we can apply his example to our own lives, we will cover in the next article.

Espousals of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph

Bishop Giles, OFM

In our Franciscan calendar, we celebrate the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin Mary with St. Joseph on the twenty-third of January. The marriage of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph was a true marriage, even though Mary is ever-virgin. Many people seem to be under the impression that a valid marriage requires consummation or the loss of virginal integrity but this is not truly the case.

There are two technical terms that the Church employs in understanding the sacrament of marriage – ratified and consummated. A Catholic marriage is ratified by the observance of the regulations of the Church – vows freely made before a Catholic priest and two witnesses. This is what constitutes a valid marriage. The contractual vows are the essence of the sacrament. The sacrament is administered by the man and wife to each other. Their agreement with these vows before the priest and the witnesses makes it legal in the

eyes of the Church. However, even in a secret exchange of these contractual vows, there is a valid marriage – just not a legal one for Catholics. A simply ratified marriage is binding for life. There is no divorce or dissolving of this bond that was knowingly and freely entered upon. Even if the marriage was never consummated – it is a valid and indissoluble union. There cannot be any true divorce or annulment of this bond; the only thing that will dissolve it is the death of at least one of the parties.

Very often, when individuals seek an annulment the term, consummated comes up. This term is generally added to give further proof that the contract (marriage) was made because it was accepted and acted upon. The entering into a sexual union between the husband and wife is added evidence to the fact that these vows and promises were freely made and accepted. Consummation of the marriage does not make it more of a

marriage nor does it complete the marriage. The marriage is true and complete with the union of the two wills at the moment of the giving and receiving of their vows.

Keeping this in mind, we can readily see that the Espousals of Mary and Joseph constituted a true marriage. It is a true marriage even as they lived out their entire lives in the virginal state. The two states are not inherently incompatible.

This is the ideal and perfect situation for the Holy Family, but it is not the ideal that God and the Church put forth for Catholics entering into the holy state of marriage. Theology tells us that the objects of marriage are these three: *(1) The begetting and rearing of offspring in compliance with the divine command to “increase and multiply.” (2) Mutual help and assistance, both bodily and spiritual, for God said in creating Eve, “It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself.” To these two objects has been added since the Fall of our first parents a third, namely, (3) The regulation of the sexual instinct in accordance with the dictates of reason. “For*

fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” The two last-mentioned objects are, however, entirely secondary and subordinate to the first and primary end of marriage.

The consummation of marriage is the natural means that God has given us to bring forth children in time for eternity. It is good and holy – it is cooperation in the creative work of God. Husband and wife cooperate and allow God to work through them in bringing forth souls – souls that are destined to become One with Him in Heaven. It would be presumptuous to expect God to perform a miracle and work outside the natural order that He has created to allow us to maintain virginal integrity alongside parenthood. What is miraculously wonderful in the Holy Family is not for the rest of mankind. In our weakened nature, we should be content with the natural order that God has given us. This is good, holy and pleasing to God.

The marriage of Mary and Joseph made St. Joseph the true father of Jesus Christ. He was not a biological father, but he was/is truly a father in all other

aspects. He stood in the place of God the Father over Jesus Christ; just as every natural father stands in the place of God over his own children. Mary was truly his wife and Jesus was truly his Son. The physical begetting of children is not what makes one truly a parent. The spiritual aspects of parenthood are much more important than the physical part of procreation.

In the marriage vows, we see that marriage is an act of the wills. It is the spiritual union of two wills that are in agreement with each other to pursue the rest of their lives together. The primary object of the will is love. It is love that brings two wills together and thus unites two bodies together. This physical union is a material presentation of the love of two souls for each other (ideally, two souls united in the love of God) and, God willing, they bring forth children as the proper fruit of their mutual love. It is love that makes husband and wife, and it is love that makes children and parents. The physical aspects of both of these are secondary. The primary element in all this is the will. Hence, it is the will that makes us parents, not biology.

This is what enables us to say that St. Joseph is the true father of Jesus Christ.

All that Mary was and had, she gave to St. Joseph on their wedding day. This includes her Son, Jesus Christ. She gave herself body and soul to St. Joseph and he likewise, gave himself body and soul to her. This mutual exchange between them did not take anything away from God, or lessen their love for God in the least. Their marriage did not lessen the amount of love they each had, but rather increased it. God blessed their union with ever increasing graces, but especially with the grace of love. They each loved God more and more every day, as well as daily grew in greater love for each other.

We are given the marriage of Mary and St. Joseph to consider so that we may be inspired to imitate them within the limits of our capabilities. We do not suggest that married people strive to imitate them in complete sexual abstinence. This is not possible to most all married men and women. The physical aspects of married couples are different than those of Mary

and Joseph. It is not realistic or possible, or even desirable that married couples should imitate them in their bodily virginal integrity. God has created our bodies and the functions of our bodies and these are good as long as they are used according to His Will or as long as they are not used against His Will.

Married couples should imitate the spiritual qualities that we see manifested in the married lives of Mary and Joseph. The married vocation calls for the union of wills through love and self-sacrifice, in conformity with the love of God. It is in loving God; and each other: in God, with God, and for God. This love enkindles self-sacrifice for the good of others, and the uniting of our wills to each other in God. This brings forth a cascading of increasing graces and virtues carrying us and those we love in God ever closer to Him. And if He should will to send us children, we should welcome them and the sacrifice that they will demand. We should see them as gifts or tokens of God's love for us – He is entrusting His child to us. It is a huge responsibility – one that we should not take lightly.

Remember to whom much has been given, much will be required. Parents should imitate Mary and Joseph in love for their children, and always remember that these children belong to God, we must do all that we can to assure their eternal life with Him.



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A Chance to Live

Monsignor John P. Carroll-Abbing

IV

THE LOST CHILDREN OF THE WAR

*“ ... They had no longer any wish
for play ... for anything ... all they
wanted was a miracle that might
make them warm again ... ”*

(Continued)

More often than not the children were taken advantage of by the latter, who, by the output of a few pennies here and there, obtained riches worth thousands of lire. This commerce was also given fuel by the Allied soldiers. The *sciucia* with his practical common sense and an inborn feeling for business was the go-between in the marketing of cigarettes, mechanical devices, foodstuffs. Often the merchandise that changed hands was considerable.

The great harbor of Naples was unrecognizable. The boats, gray, camouflaged, dramatic, stopped at the broken-down piers. Cases, boxes, bales of merchandise of all kinds were unloaded and piled high. The port area took on the appearance of a fort under guard, surrounded by barbed wire, alive with soldiers, guns ready to point at any unwary intruder.

Tireless in their efforts, the M.P.'s did their utmost, but they did not seem able to discover how the impossible had been accomplished. A boat was unloaded and on the morrow much of the merchandise had vanished!

Captain Chaplin of the port police was frankly worried at the turn of events. The merchandise kept on disappearing. He and I often discussed the situation at night when we met in a room of the Caetani Palace.

During my second visit to Naples, I was the guest of an American colonel who lived at the palace. At night we met and spoke of the existing problems, and particularly of the widening corruption, trying to formulate an answer to the many questions all responsible elements were asking.

The colonel as well as the captain considered the situation not only from the point of view of military security, but also from its human aspect. It began to look as if the authorities were utterly helpless to cope with the situation.

Whole families were organized, headed by small demons who gave orders and handed out jobs

to their parents and relatives.

A family of five, a father and his four children, three boys and a girl lived in one of the old narrow, crooked streets, alleys to call them by a more correct name, of which there are so many in Naples. Utter neglect and the absence of any work done by the now defunct street cleaning department had brought about a condition of unbelievable squalor.

The place where the family lived could not by any stretch of the imagination be called an apartment. It was in the cellar of an old building, access to it down a couple of steps from the street. Sparsely furnished with pieces that might have seen better days, it spoke of wretchedness and neglect. The faces of the occupants matched the surroundings.

In front of the house, across the street, stood a fish store, where the owner fried fish from morning till night and poisoned the air with the rancid oil he used. Two doors away was the home of the old shrew of the street, the one who knew everybody, was familiar with everybody's business, who gave advice and predicted the future to young and old. They called her the "Capera." The name had clung to her from the old days, when she went from house to house combing the women's

thick, shiny black hair.

The father worked as a waiter, but earned little or nothing. One son and a daughter managed to bring in a few lire. Life became harder each day.

But now the Allies have come, and with them life brightens. Tony, the ten-year-old member of the family, has his wits about him. He is a bright, intelligent child. The Americans take a fancy to him and to his six-year-old sister, Nunziata, whom he always drags along for sympathy. Soon after, bread and corned beef find their way into the house.

Days go by and Tony formulates a plan of his own. He has a number of friends and their pockets are always filled with thousand-lire bills. He must branch out in business if he is to keep up with them.

He borrows a boat from his uncle Gaetano the boatman, and rows out into the bay. Nunziata accompanies him.

The American sailors are very fond of the big Italian pistols. In exchange for them they give away mountains of food. Tony knows of a toy store that manufactures toy pistols that look very much like the real thing. At a distance, from the deck of a boat, for instance, who can tell the difference between a

toy pistol and a real one? Not the sailor boy. He is easily fooled. "Food first, then pistols."

The bargain is concluded. Tony returns.

On another day, Tony again has a bright idea.

"May I come aboard?" he calls up at one of the sailors leaning over the rail of a ship anchored far out in the bay.

The sailor laughs and nods. Tony climbs, small sister close at his heels.

For ten days they live on the boat, away from Naples, stuffing themselves with food. Tony even tries smoking, but he is not too fond of it. He does it only to give himself airs.

Life on the boat also means work for Tony. At the end of his stay, he has learned all he wants to know about ships: where the portholes lead, where the food and the supplies are stored, how to get in and out of a ship with ease and expediency.

Well-fed and well-informed, Tony and Nunziata return home, pockets stuffed with provisions, hands filled with gifts from the friends they have made on the ship.

The operation is repeated again

and again and, each time, Tony and little sister return home with whatever is needed. The father, the older brother and sister, the "Capera" join forces, and as if by magic the miserable hovel is transformed into a storehouse for the food and the variety of merchandise transferred from the well-stocked holds of the Liberty ships.

At first the father and his eldest son are afraid, but Tony allays their fears and urges them to continue their efforts.

The "Capera" with her boasted faculty of seeing into the future predicts villas and palaces.

Tony is happy and gay now. Everyone at home is eating his fill and for a time, at least, there is no thought, no worry of the morrow. He thinks himself a hero who has won his battle against big odds.

He has that Neapolitan trait, made up of big words and big deeds, that often hides deep and noble sentiments. His beloved little sister is never away from him and she always enjoys the best gifts, the sweetest treats.

"Nunziata first . . .," he says every time someone offers him anything.

He never forgets to hide her in a safe spot, whenever he has to go on a particularly hazardous

mission.

And so Tony takes the place of his father, becomes as it were the head of the household.

But effort must be redoubled. Too many are beginning to help themselves at the supply from overseas.

Tony gets more notions. He follows the soldiers, talks to them, suggests, and a new business is on the way. The soldiers send him on errands, more or less honest, the “Caperà” advises, and now he can carry on, in the harbor, on the streets, in and out of houses, wherever he pleases.

“No, Papa, you can’t come along. You would only be in the way.” The small son has become the mentor of the older man. He well understands that his father’s mentality is not suited to the new atmosphere in which he works.

It may be difficult to understand, but it is nevertheless true, that these families, although existing through shady, unlawful means, were not really evil. Some became degenerated, true, in others destructive germs took root, but on the whole there was still real goodness in Naples.

The *sciussia* who stole, who participated in illicit operations, who sold goods on the black

market, who organized a wave of general thievery on the day of the armistice, taking advantage of the drunkenness en masse, who played on the good nature of the boy from Kentucky, did it only because he was hungry, better because those he loved were hungry. This, in his opinion, obliterated all scruples.

“What . . . must I die of hunger?” said one of them to me one day.

Besides, he loved adventure, he loved taking chances, daring was his favorite sport. In this new life, he tasted to the full the boundless freedom he found, and thoroughly enjoyed the triumph of putting something over on those who were older than he, on the rich, on the powerful, on the conquerors.

Once, not too far back, during the bloody “Five days” of Naples, he had helped set the mines that blew up the German tanks; he had scuttled through the streets of the city, had crept under barbed wire, or had dashed from a rain of machine-gun shells to find water for his sick mother “who was so thirsty”; he had climbed atop the roofs of high buildings to hurl the heavy tiles down on those hated steel helmets. Compared to all those adventures, getting a ride on Freddie’s jeep was only a joke! Many times I stopped to talk with

one or another of these youngsters. They were cordial, talkative, unafraid to speak of their deeds, but, deep within them, I sensed a feeling of cynicism and distrust. Cynicism, for too early in life they had come in contact with horror and misery. Distrust, because, in any adult they met, they thought they found a potential enemy, a powerful one who could hurt them, who could deprive them of their hard-won liberty.

And the problem grew. It could be compared to an epidemic spreading its toxin slowly, inexorably, amidst a gunshot, a pinch of cocaine, a holdup and worse.

A realization of what was going on beat its hammer blows on the minds of those who visualized it as a river of unbridled passions rising steadily and finally overflowing its banks. They worried at the sight of the destruction of ideals and traditions handed down through the centuries, at the growth of a new and pitiful way of life.

The Allies had a deep comprehension of the children and their mischievous ways. The G.I.'s in general have left behind them grateful memories of the affection they poured upon the youngsters, the attention they showered upon them. They knew how to forgive their pranks, they

enjoyed themselves at the sight of the natural outburst of gaiety that suddenly rose to the surface in those small friends they had made. Big boys themselves, far away from their own loved ones, they found in the *sciuscia* a younger brother, a small son. Whole days at a time they took them along, sharing their food with them, their cigarettes, their money. It was a common sight to see a G.I. seated in the midst of a crowd of children, laughing, joking, munching away at a bar of chocolate, a piece of candy, an apple and what not.

Officers also made friends of the *sciuscia*.

A general leaves his headquarters and a dark-skinned boy, poorly clad, flashes a bright smile at him as he opens the door of the car waiting at the curb, adding a salute, and a bow as if to the manner born.

The general notices him, smiles in return, steps into the car and off he goes to his destination, the Club.

As the machine comes to a stop, out pops the same boy from no one knows where, opens the door, smiles and bows. Surprised, the general smiles again, ruffles the curly head raised toward him, and gives an order to his aide.

“See that he gets a good lunch. He

looks as if he needed it.”

The episode is repeated a second day, a third. At the end of the third day, the general is moved by the perseverance of the boy who clings to the back of the car and follows him everywhere, ready to open the door with a smile and a bow.

Patsy is rewarded with a sailor's uniform cut to size, complete to the last detail. He reports at all conferences held by his idol and behaves like a perfect gentleman. He does not touch the liqueurs, but he stuffs himself with sweets, not too many for fear of a bellyache, and he sends home to his older brother and sisters the enormous packages of food, cigarettes, sewing needles and soap, that his friends, the sailors, give him.

“Monsignor, all Lux and Palmolive soap . . . two hundred lire a cake. My sister, Assunta, sold them for that much. . . . Gee!” he said to me one day.

The general leaves for America, gives him something for his family, and Patsy returns to his shoeshine box. Not all of these boys, however, acquired a general as a protector, or a fairy godfather. And, as often happens among the homeless, many were more lonely and in a worse state of abandonment than others.

In the palace, under the high, frescoed ceiling, where at night I slept in a huge room, I was assailed by the thought, the necessity of finding some way, some means of helping these poor little brothers of mine.

The spacious room, badly lighted, furnished with antique, moth-eaten pieces did not invite particularly pleasant thoughts. Besides, how could such thoughts germinate after a day in which the best sight I had seen had been that of a boy sitting on the steps of a church, biting into a piece of dry bread, tears coursing down sunken cheeks because his uncle had taken from him a can of pork and beans? I watched the painted canvas hanging from the ceiling swell in the wind like the sail of a ship and kept on thinking.

In that ancient room I relived my night in the broken-down house in Cassino, when the snow had drifted in and piled high around my bed. I recalled the caves and the cellars, the only shelters of so much humanity.

To be continued.

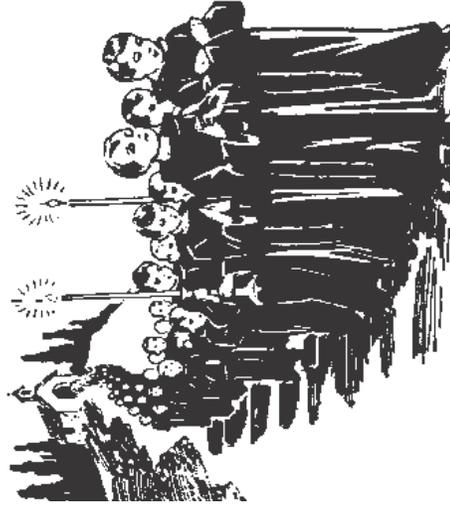
Sister Agnes' Favorites

Prayer to the Wound in the Shoulder

O most loving Jesus, meek Lamb of God, I, a miserable sinner, salute and worship the most sacred Wound of Thy Shoulder on which Thou didst bear Thy heavy cross, which so tore Thy flesh and laid bare Thy bones as to inflict on Thee an anguish greater than any other wound of Thy most blessed body. I adore Thee, O Jesus most sorrowful: I praise and glorify Thee, and give Thee thanks for this most sacred and painful Wound, beseeching Thee by that exceeding pain, and by the crushing burden of Thy heavy cross, to be merciful to me, a sinner, to forgive me all my mortal and venial sins, and to lead me on toward heaven along the Way of Thy Cross. Amen.

It is related in the annals of Clairvoux that St. Bernard asked our Lord which was His greatest unrecorded suffering, and our Lord answered: "I had on My shoulder, while I bore My cross on the Way of Sorrows, a grievous wound, which was more painful than the others, and which is not recorded by men. Honor this wound with thy devotion, and I will grant thee whatsoever thou dost ask through its virtue and merit. And in regard to all those who shall venerate this wound, I will remit to them all their venial sins, and will no longer remember their mortal sins."

Imprimatur:
Thomas D. Beaven
Bishop of Springfield.



Franciscan Saints

JANUARY 9

THE SERVANT OF
GOD PASCHALINE
OF FOLIGNO

Virgin, Third Order

Paschaline, a young noblewoman, born at the end of the thirteenth century in the city of Foligno, despised the goods of this world at a very early age in order to gain Christ. In the year 1290, she left her parents and her relatives and took the habit of the Third Order. She joined the ranks of her friend and guide on the way to perfection, the blessed widow Angela of Foligno, who had already been wearing the garb of the Third Order for some time.

United as sisters, these two women practiced acts of piety and charity with extraordinary zeal. In order to honor Christ in His poor, they used to spend Holy Thursday housecleaning the hospital at Foligno, making up the beds of the sick and washing their hands and feet.

They rendered this service even to the lepers without so much as a sign of dread.

Once when they had nothing to give to the poor, they removed their veils and outer garments and gave them to the superior of the hospital to distribute among the needy. The superior naturally did not want to accept the articles, fearing that the charitable donors would be jeered at by the rabble if they went through the street without being fully dressed. Then Paschaline said: "Why should we be ashamed to be laughed at for Christ's sake, who allowed Himself to be despoiled of His garments and to be mocked for our sakes? That is why we want to give Him our garments through the poor."

With these words they departed, and behold, a devout person met them and furnished them with new garments. This association in doing good made the friendship of the two ladies daily more intimate.

Angela entrusted Paschaline with conducting her correspondence, took her with her on her pilgrimages to Assisi, Loreto, and Rome, and revealed to her all the graces and inspirations which were vouchsafed to her by God. Even after Angela died a blessed death on January 4, 1309, Paschaline continued this intimate friendship. She visited her tomb in the Franciscan church daily and sometimes spent whole nights there in prayer. After carrying out the wish of her friend and mistress to found convents of the Third Order for women at Foligno and Spoleto, she followed her into eternity in the year of the Lord 1313. Her mortal remains were placed by the side of Blessed Angela, and God glorified both with many miracles.

HOLY FRIENDSHIP

1. How edifying and fruitful of blessing was the holy friendship

between the servant of God Paschaline and Blessed Angela. What is said of the friendship between St. Augustine and Alypius, and between St. Basil and St. Gregory, could readily be said of these two saintly women: “There appeared to be but one soul in the two bodies”. It is as if two flames joined and shone forth in a greater glow. When truly pious souls are joined in intimate friendship, the fire of the love of God and neighbor as well as zeal for virtue are increased. Therefore, Holy Writ says of the soul of a faithful friend: “He that hath found him hath found a treasure; no weight of gold and silver is able to countervail; it is the medicine of life and immortality” (Ecclus. 6:14).

2. Consider the path that leads to such friendship. “They that fear the Lord,” the Wise Man says again, “shall find a faithful friend, and he that feareth God shall likewise have a good friendship” (Ecclus. 6:16). Genuine and holy friendship can exist only where the fear of the Lord reigns; and if you are God-fearing, you will also prove a true friend. Do not choose your friends only according to

their natural good qualities and what you like in them; such friendship will not pass the test and there often results nothing but bitterness. “Of all, therefore, that are dear to thee, let Jesus be thy special Beloved” (Imit. 2:8). Then you will never trust too securely to human friendship no matter how good it may be, and if you find that you have been deceived, you will not be too disappointed.

3. Consider that if after mature deliberation you have entered upon any friendship, you should also assume certain responsibilities. You owe it to your friends in true charity to encourage them in all that is good and to preserve them from harm. To flatter their faults is really to be a traitor to them. You must stand by your friend in time of need and be willing to make sacrifices for him after the example of our best Friend, Jesus Christ, “who gave His life for His friends” (John 15:13). True friends will also pray for one another frequently and fervently that their mutual friendship may always become holier and that they may steadily grow in the love of God.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, who by the grace of the Holy Ghost didst pour the gifts of charity into the hearts of Thy faithful, grant to Thy servants and handmaids, for whom we entreat Thy mercy, health of mind and body: that they may love Thee with all their strength and by perfect love do what is pleasing to Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**THE MAKING OF A GOOD
WILL OR TRUST:
HAVE YOU REMEMBERED
GOD?**

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CONTINUE TO BLESS
OTHERS BY
REMEMBERING
THE FRANCISCANS AND
THEIR WORK IN YOUR
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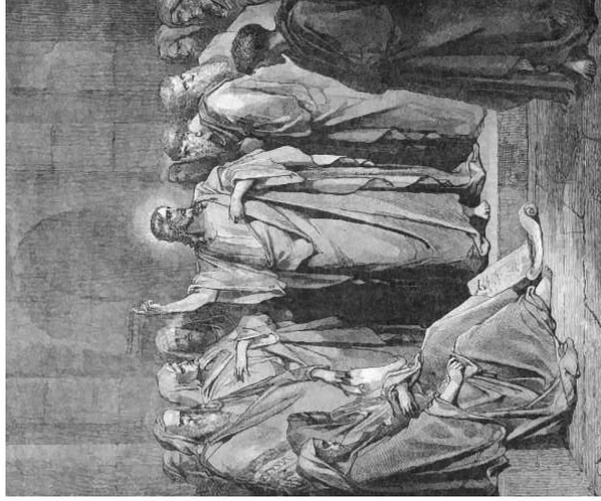
OR,

CONSIDERATIONS ON
THE IMPORTANCE, AND
HAPPINESS, OF ATTENDING
TO THE CARE OF OUR
SALVATION.

BY THE REV. J. FLETCHER, D.D.

“Give me understanding, and I
shall live.” — PSALM cxix.

1834.



CONSIDERATION XVIII. ON THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR SAVIOR.

The wholeness of Christianity, as well as all the wisdom of the Christian, may be compressed into these two words — “*Christ; and Christ crucified.*” This is precisely the doctrine of St. Paul — who, although he had been wrapped up to the third heaven and had there learned secrets the most sublime — still declares that all he knew was “*Christ; and Christ crucified.*” In reality, in these two words are contained all the treasures of the Divine Mercy in the great work of our Redemption. They form a sacred volume in which

are written in large and indelible characters, the whole economy of our salvation; — the rule of our conduct; the direction of our thoughts; the principles of our judgments, — in short, a complete system of Christian theology, and Christian piety.

Such being the case, it ought, of course, to appear to us — as it certainly is — a very urgent and important duty to study the Divine Volume well — that is, to make the sufferings of Our Redeemer the frequent subject of our thoughts, and the theme of our meditations. There is, in fact, no possible subject that is more strikingly calculated to impress upon our minds the infinite value

of our salvation; to awaken in our hearts the best feelings of gratitude and love, and to urge us on to the ardent pursuit of virtue. For, to behold the Lord of Heaven Himself come down from His eternal throne; clothe Himself in a human body; lead a life of poverty and pain; and close ere long a life of distress by a death the most cruel and ignominious — these, surely are circumstances, which if anything can do it — should convince us both how dear we are in the eyes of this Eternal Being; and with what love and fidelity we are bound to serve Him. Whoever, indeed, does not experience a deep interest in all this mystery must be alike insensible to the blessings of his Redemption; and lost to the tender impulses of gratitude and affection. And yet, how true is the fact that, after all, we hardly ever consider the great subject as we should do. Whence, the prophet foreseeing in spirit our indifference complains: “*The Just One dies; and there is no one, who heeds in his heart.*” (Isaiah.) — Wiser, however, and more generous, than this, let it henceforth be our care, as it is our duty, to make the sufferings of our Redeemer the frequent

subject of our thoughts and the nourishment of our devotion.

I. Describing the *general* character of our blessed Redeemer, the Prophet, whose words are just cited, denominates him, “*The Man of Sorrows,*” — a term which whether we consider the sufferings of His Body or the afflictions of His Soul, is of all others perhaps the most appropriate. — Thus, taking a view of His Sacred Body, what do we trace and discover there? — Ah! from the plant of the foot to the top of the head, we see that there is no health, no soundness in It. All is wound, and scar, and pain. Thus, if we follow Him through all the stages of His Passion — from Gethsemane to Calvary — we find that all His steps are everywhere, marked with sufferings and with blood — the house of Caiphas; the tribunal of Pilate; the Pretorium; the pillar; the streets, &c.

Every spot and place are purpled with that stream, which purifies heaven and earth.

II. But, if the cruelties thus inflicted upon the Body of the Sacred Victim were sufficient to render him — as the prophet calls him — “*The Man of*

Sorrows," — how much more strictly, still, may He not be denominated such from the multiplicity of the afflicting circumstances, which were made to assail His Soul. Merely to die, and shed His Blood, was not enough to satisfy His thirst for sufferings and to mark His solicitude for our salvation. To all His torments He chose, that there should be united every form of evil that is distressing to the feelings of sensibility — insults and mockery, &c. Such, indeed, was the pressure of all these upon His tender and generous Heart, that sinking under them He exclaimed — addressing His Heavenly Father — "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" In reality, during each scene of the awful tragedy, not only did He deny Himself everything that can be called consolation, but He drank of the bitter cup of affliction to the very dregs. Compared with His sorrows, the distresses of the martyrs were light and easy: for we remark, that these holy men amidst all their sufferings were usually filled with joy and exultation.

Let us, then, just consider a few only of the many painful circumstances, which distressed

His generous Heart during the various stages of His Passion. — In the series of the ignominious trials, to which He submitted with so much meekness, He was traduced by false witnesses; vilified by calumnies; slandered by reproaches; insulted by scoffs, ridicule, and blasphemies. — Amid the hardships of His persecutions, He suffered cruelly from the neglect and ingratitude of His very friends. For among His apostles, one of them betrayed Him; another denied Him; whilst, at the hour when the aid and interference of friendship were the most wanted — they all — every one of them! — abandoned and forsook Him. — But, the circumstance which, amid these sources of grief went the nearest to His Heart was, after all, the perfidious ingratitude of the people whom He had so much favored; and for whose sake He was now going to sacrifice His very life. This was the sword that pierced His soul with more than a thousand wounds. He saw too — and this again with the most acute affliction — the future sufferings of His elect; the persecutions of His Church; the blood and torments of His martyrs; the profanation of His sacraments; and the little benefit,

which the greater portion of mankind would derive from all that His mercy was now doing to secure their happiness. It was hence — under the weight of all these distresses — He feelingly calls out to each of us: “*All you that pass, by the way, attend; and see, if there be any sorrow, like unto My sorrow.*”

III. But, whilst we thus nourish in our breasts these general feelings and ideas of His sufferings, let it be the ordinary practice of our piety to select each day — or at least frequently — some particular stage or other of His conflicts as the immediate subject for our meditation. Each stage is replete with instruction; and well formed to move any heart, that is not hardened to insensibility: — whilst, moreover, the view of a distinct spectacle will sometimes awake impressions which a general consideration will not. Thus, by the way of example, let us here take for our consideration — pausing for a few moments over each painful circumstance — the spectacle with some of its attendant cruelties — of the Scourging at the Pillar. Behold then, the innocent Lamb in the hands of an immense and barbarous rabble. Away — and amid shouts of savage exultation

— He is dragged and hurried on to the place where stands erected an ignominious stake, designed for the punishment or execution of the meanest slaves. Arrived at the hateful spot, He is here made over into the hands of a band of vigorous and brutal soldiers. These instantly begin their work of cruelty. Tearing off His already torn and miserable garments, they expose Him thus bare and naked to the view of the surrounding mob. They then — having first tied Him hand and foot — bind Him fast to the disgraceful instrument. This done — they now — stimulated by the malice of the Jews as well as excited by their own wickedness — proceed to discharge upon the Body of the Patient Victim a countless number of furious stripes — mangling His tender Flesh; tearing It open to the very bones; and covering the surrounding spot with streams of the hallowed gore; — whilst the crowd, at the same time, like so many demons shout joy at the frightful butchery. — In this way is the execution continued until at length the whole strength of the Holy Victim, from the profuse loss of blood; as well as the strength of the ruffian executioners from the exertions of their fury — become exhausted. Wherefore, they now loosen Him from the shaft. —

But let us again see and trace what follows.

They loosen Him from the shaft. But is it then, to stay His Blood or to heal His wounds? Is it to soothe or assist Him? — No; it is only to add mockery to cruelty, and insult to barbarity. Removing Him from the stake, they now contrive to drag Him into the court of the governor's palace. Here, surrounded by the troops, and an innumerable crowd — His ragged garments again torn off; His body all over streaming and besmeared with blood — they ignominiously place Him upon a bench or stool — designed by their wicked ingenuity to represent a kingly throne. They then — thus savagely carrying on the cruel tragedy — bring forth a miserable purple robe — another emblem again of His insulted royalty — and cast it amid peals of exulting derision upon His sacred shoulders. Next — in order still farther to eke out the brutal sport and to render the tragedy more complete — they plat together a kind of diadem, or crown, composed of long sharp and hardened thorns; and twisting this round His Adorable Head, they press it, with all their violence upon His temples, piercing through each vein and penetrating to the bone.

Then placing in his Hand, as a scepter a piece of stick or reed — intended, once more, as another emblem of degraded majesty — they, with solemn mockery, advance to pay Him the tribute of their homage — kneeling down contemptuously before Him; and with scornful reverence saluting Him, as their king; — “*Hail, king of the Jews!*” Meanwhile, they spit in His Sacred Face; strike Him; buffet Him and heap upon Him every species of insult that the most demon-like malevolence could devise. — Such is one of the spectacles, presented to us in the history of our Savior's sufferings — a spectacle unparalleled in the tragedies of human cruelty. Oh! if then, we have hearts susceptible to the tender feelings of compassion — if we can shed a tear over the sufferings of a fellow-creature if we cannot see the distresses even of the guilty; without some emotion — surely we cannot behold this Innocent Lamb — this great King Himself of Heaven and earth — we cannot behold Him thus degraded, and tormented, without experiencing some sensations of pity and affection. If these be not our sentiments; we are then alike unworthy of the character of Christians, and of men.

IV. And what then, were the

motives — (this is what we should chiefly meditate) — what were the motives which could thus have induced Him to endure so much, and to submit to these gross indignities? His motives were various: but, the two following were those which principally directed His sacred conduct; — the first, to atone for our sins; — the second, to engage us to love Him. — In regard to sin, we do admit that it is a very serious evil. In fact, it is an infinite evil — being infinitely displeasing to God, as opposed to all His divine perfections; and eternally fatal to man, as being the source of his never-ending misery. We may form some notion of its guilt from the consideration of the mere circumstance of that deep affliction which we find overwhelmed the soul of our Savior in the garden of Gethsemane before He entered on the career of His passion. On that striking occasion, we remark, so great — from the mere contemplation of the sins and ingratitude of men — was the oppression of His Heart, that it cast Him into an agony of grief, which endangered almost His Adorable Life. By an effect, which is alike instructive as it was astonishing, it forced from all the pores of His Body a profuse sweat of Blood; — insomuch that,

under the pressure of His distress He emphatically exclaimed: “*My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*” Oh! what proof should better than this convince us of the enormity of sin? To die under the hands of the bloody executioner does not excite our surprise — the effect is only natural, but to die — or nearly to die — from the mere sight of sin, this is indeed an evidence, that its guilt must indeed be horrible. Accordingly, it was hence — in order, that is to expiate this evil — that the Divine Victim during the tragical series of His passion was pleased to endure so much. He was the sacrifice for sin. He was “the emissary goat” — the animal of abomination — loaded with the iniquities of the whole human race. He bore upon Himself the crime of Judas, and of the Jews who took away his life; as well as the vices and disorders of every one of us. Hence, as all sin deserves punishment; and it is only thus that the Divine Justice can be satisfied — so of course, since the generous Being had taken upon Himself the entire mountain weight of our offenses — to suffer for them became an act of necessity. It was, therefore, for this reason, that He suffered — thus appeasing the anger of His Eternal Father and procuring our reconciliation with Him.

The next great motive that engaged him to endure so much was to excite us to love him. Love is, in reality, the genuine principle of religion. Our Redeemer asks nothing of us but our love; because it is the only tribute that is worthy either of His goodness or of the divine perfections. It is the completion of the Law: "**Love; and you have fulfilled the Law.**" "**Love,**" says *St. Austin*, "**is the true worship of God. He is not worshipped properly by any other virtue.**" It is for this reason, therefore, that Jesus, solicitous to win our hearts, has vouchsafed to endure so many ignominies and torments. He might had it pleased His wisdom, have subdued us to His service by the thunders of His justice; or have subjected us to His obedience by the influences

of His power, or the splendors of His greatness. But, He chose to make all His conquests by the arms of **love**, and the tender attractions of His mercy. And hence it is that the strictest of all His injunctions is — that **we should "love Him with all our hearts."**

Wherefore, let us consider well: and let the sufferings of our Redeemer form the frequent subject of our meditations. Such meditations, if we repeat them regularly, will produce this twofold happy effect, — they will inspire us with a horror of sin, seeing that it is so great an evil as to require the death of a God to expiate it; and they will inspire us with the love of Jesus, — feeling that, for our sake, and from the love of us He has been tenderly pleased to lay down His own Sacred Life.

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