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The SERAPH seeks to serve and unite in spirit all

Roman Catholics faithful to tradition and all men

of good will for the betterment of society according

to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the spirit of St.

Francis of Assisi.

The Honor of Labor

Bishop Giles, OFM

The Son of God chose to be born of the Virgin Mary who was espoused to St. Joseph, a humble carpenter. St. Joseph fed, clothed, and sheltered the Holy Family through the labor of his hands. This is the life that Jesus led until He began His public ministry. From this, we should conclude that God honors and prefers not only the poor and humble but especially the laborer.

When God created the first man – Adam – He commissioned him to labor in maintaining and expanding the Garden of Paradise. It was due to the Fall of Adam that labor became distasteful to mankind. Christ has come, not to destroy labor and toil, but rather to sanctify it and help us to see and understand the necessity of it and no longer fear or dread it. We are asked to make a leap of faith and willingly embrace our daily crosses for the love of Him and in imitation of Him. If we will do this, He has promised to make our crosses light rather than heavy, sweet rather than bitter, joyful rather than sorrowful.

There was once a time when Catholic laborers were preferred

to any other. This was due to the fact that Catholics once understood the value of labor. We are called upon to give the best that we have to offer in all that we do because we do it for God and offer it to God. We do it with the hope of meritizing an eternal reward in Heaven. The Catholic laborer once understood that he should do his best regardless of how much he is compensated monetarily in this life. The worldly wages are a secondary incentive to labor and to do well, but sadly, the eternal wages have been forgotten and most of the world only pursues the monetary wages.

When working only for the material advantages, the laborer is placed at odds with his employer. The laborer's intention is to labor as little as possible and collect as much as possible as monetary compensation. The intention of the employer becomes that of getting as much work out of the laborer as possible while paying him as little as possible.

The very natures of labor and capital demand that they work together for the good of both, but our fallen natures pit one against

the other. When this happens no true progress is made. It is possible for capital to abuse and take advantage of labor for a time. But, eventually, this business will fail because laborers will go to work elsewhere, or the laborer will not be able to buy the very products that he is helping to produce and the fruits of production will sit unused and the business will fail.

It is also possible for labor to abuse capital and accept unmerited or unearned pay. They may also offer substandard work, in the end destroying the business. When the business fails, both capital and labor have failed and suffer from this failure. When each fulfills his part well, the business thrives and everyone benefits. There must be a cooperation.

Our cooperation with one another is an essential element in God's plan. The inequalities that God has created among us give us undeniable proof of this. Male and female are not meant to compete with each other but, rather to cooperate with one another and complement each other. Old and young are also designed by God to cooperate and complement each other. The old imparting wisdom and understanding to the

young and the young employing their strength and vitality to aid and support the old. In a similar manner, the rich and the poor must complement and support each other.

Christ has come to honor and elevate the weaker of every one of these inequalities. He has shown us that what the world considers the weaker side in these inequalities is actually the greater side. The poor are closer to Jesus than the rich, and the laborer is more like Him than the employer. What the world looks down upon, God lifts up higher than the rest. The virtues of humility and meekness appear to the world to be weakness, but they are actually the greatest strengths and draw us very close in following and imitating the God-Man Jesus Christ. For He said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart." (St. Matthew 11: 29)

God does not need our labors, but we need them. We cannot truly do anything for God, but we can do many things for one another. God accepts what we do for each other as if we have done it for Him. Nothing is ever truly lost to us when we give of ourselves to one another. When our neighbors benefit, we also benefit. What we

do for them is done for ourselves. We benefit in this life materially, but we also benefit spiritually and merit an eternal reward in Heaven.

It is necessary that we serve God and that we do good deeds if we are to get into Heaven. We are called upon to serve one another as if we are serving God. “What you do to the least of My brethren, you do to Me.” (Matthew 25, 40) Those who serve Jesus in their fellow men obtain a reward in Heaven. Those who fail to serve Jesus in their fellow men fail to obtain Heaven. St. James tells us that “Faith without works is dead.” (St. James 2, 14) Good works are, therefore, necessary.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, explained to us that we must not do our works before men to be seen by them, (St. Matthew 6, 1) but rather we are to perform our works in secret before God. Then, again, He tells us that we should let our lights shine before men (St. Matthew 5, 16).

We must labor, but on the one hand we must hide our labors from one another, and on the other hand, we must display them. There is a profound mystery for our contemplation in these ideas. The key to obtaining a grasp of these things is to be

found in our intentions. Everyone must labor, both the Catholic and the heathen. That which distinguishes one from the other is their intentions. The heathen labors for material gain and often dishonestly seeks to obtain more for less. In this, he harms his neighbor and his business and, therefore, indirectly himself. His dishonesty leads him to put on a good show so that others may praise him and increase his merit or reward in this life. This attitude is filled with pride and vanity. It is harmful in this world to others but especially to himself; but even more tragically, it is eternally damaging to his soul.

The Catholic’s intention is to humbly do his best not for the praise of men, but for the love of God. His works are done not to be seen and praised or rewarded by men but are done with the intention of doing his best for God. In this manner, his true works are hidden from the eyes of men and are in a sense done in secret. At the same time, the world does see his diligence in labor, his honesty, and integrity, his meekness and humility. In this manner, his light shines before men.

Traditional Protesters

Bishop Giles, OFM

St. Francis of Assisi sought to live and teach the simplicity of Jesus Christ. Jesus has instructed us that unless we become like little children we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. There is little of the subtle and fine distinctions in the hearts and minds of children compared to that of adults and the more educated men. This simplicity is honest and straightforward. The basic principles of logic are natural to their minds – a thing either is or it is not. An object is hot or it is not hot. Something is sweet or it is not sweet. A thing is beautiful or it is not beautiful.

While all this is good and necessary, a certain honesty and integrity seems to fade with the simplicity. A bigger problem emerges with the euphemisms that we invent to disguise what we say or how we judge in order to make it more palatable or appealing to others. Instead of simply beautiful or not beautiful, we might suggest that something is “nice” rather than honestly suggesting that it is not beautiful. Someone who is old now is referred to as being “mature”. The short are now labeled, “vertically challenged”.

In this beautiful simplicity, there is much that is lost. The various degrees and levels of distinctions are often necessary as we come to the judgment and mature evaluation of things. For the advanced and more mature mind, we need to put things on a scale or measure. We want to know how hot something is. Children begin learning the distinctions from: cold, cool, warm to hot. Then, they advance to comparisons with a thermometer.

The honesty and integrity of our hearts and minds appear to fade as simplicity is replaced with complexity, and we advance in our studies into the various aspects of the world around us and into our very selves. The same applies to religion. The simplicity of the child in understanding that something is a sin “matures” into the distinction between mortal and venial sin. The further progression continues to the distinction between subjective

and objective sin as well as culpability. The theoretical distinctions are easy enough to understand and appreciate, however, the practical judgments often prove elusively difficult to unravel. For example: The angry thought that I had concerning my neighbor. Was it deliberate or willful? Was it a sin or merely a temptation? Did I entertain it or was it just passing? Did I take pleasure in it or not? If it was sinful, was it venial or mortal? And the list goes on. The more we know and are able to examine and discern, it seems the less sure we necessarily become of our judgments.

Sometimes we can find any number of excuses or extenuating circumstances for our own conduct, but we fail or refuse to see or even allow them to others. In this, our charity grows cold. The brutal honesty of the child may not be in us and we now follow the socially accepted norms. We appear to be kind while we secretly wound and tear down others. This hypocrisy is clearly seen in the Pharisees condemned so many times by Jesus in the Gospels. From their lips comes the honeyed words, “Good Master,” while from their hearts comes the poison to

kill. This hypocrisy has become ubiquitous in our world today. We soon learn to read, or listen to things and, as they say, take them with a grain of salt. That is, we consider the source, we question the motives and the choice of words, because so many times before, we have been deceived.

The words at face value may be true, but there is hidden in them a deeper lie. It is very much like so many laws – something may be legal, but it is not right. The euphemisms we invent to whitewash evil seem to be limitless. Rather than speak of murdering our children, we simply rename it and call it abortion. Rather than the murder of the elderly or sick, we call it a mercy killing, or euthanasia. Call it by whatever name you like, it does not change the reality of what it is.

This duplicity and sophistry has deeply infected and undermined the very foundations of The Church here on earth. We find many Protestants who unashamedly pray the words of the Creed and profess to be Catholic. These soon convince themselves that they are the true recipients of the doctrines of Jesus Christ. We see Modernists

within the Church call themselves Catholic and insist that the true Church is with them. They can point to all the material property of the Church as theirs and give as testimony that because they have the property they also possess the doctrine and the Truth of Jesus Christ. We find “Traditionalists” holding on to one or more tradition or ritual at the sacrifice of doctrine and discipline, and these boldly present themselves as The True Church.

The doctrinal “logical” arguments put forth to defend one or the other group – even the argument of the True Church – become mind-boggling. The distinctions and excuses that one allows for his own group, he vehemently denies to others. The technicalities are often more than well-trained minds can follow, much less those of the untrained populace. There is the joke that “there are no theologians in Hell because they all have an angle” seems to be what every sect is holding onto. They all have their “angle.” Something that excuses themselves but condemns all others. The gamut runs from the barely Christian soul that is not quite an atheist, to the truly pious soul who is nearest to God.

From the most liberal to the most austere.

Can God expect us all to correctly discern every angle? We believe that He does not. What He expects of us is to be simple, honest and forthright as little children. We can leave the distinctions and hair-splitting to Him. He is the only One truly capable and competent for this task. He would have us judge ourselves, lest we force Him to judge us. He would have us not judge one another, lest we sin against charity in making wrong or false judgments. There are exceptions to this. Parents and superiors must judge and correct their children or subordinates, but they must always remember that they stand in the place of God. They must always strive to be true, fair, and merciful, as well as just.

When we consider the various positions of the “Traditional Catholics,” we are invariably confronted by the status of a pope. There has been an endless expenditure of paper and words on this very topic, with many and various theories each apparently more convoluted than the other. In the Conciliar Church, the Church of the Vatican II Council,

they find nothing amiss in the man presented as the Pope of the Catholic Church. However, outside of this, we find many, even non-Catholics, pointing to the words, writings and actions of the various men presented as popes as being questionably Catholic or even outright heresies.

This is where the childlike simplicity quickly fades away. Can a pope be a heretic? Should we make a distinction between the office and the man? Are we confusing impeccability with infallibility? Do heretical words, writings, and actions make someone a heretic? Can a heretic still be a pope? Is the papacy a spiritual office, or simply a ministerial office? Who is capable of judging a pope? If the papacy is vacant (*Sede Vacante*), how will it ever be filled canonically again? Can it ever be restored?

Of particular importance: do we obey and follow him or not? The distinctions between a material pope and formal pope are often bandied about. There are many who say "Holy Father" but then do whatever they want in total disregard to any laws, rules, or commands that their

"Holy Father" makes concerning themselves. Distinctions are made between anti-pope or simply a bad pope. Arguments can be made that we must obey his authority in everything that is not sinful, in keeping with the understanding of the Fourth Commandment.

Where has all this led, but to divisions and sectarianism? At least the "Councilarians" have some semblance of order, while "Traditionalists" seem to be nothing but disorder, if not outright anarchy. These last days seem to be fraught with splits and splintering – each one claiming "Here He is!" It appears we will only know for certain the entire Truth when Jesus returns and lifts the veils that are clouding our hearts and minds. Until that time, perhaps we should strive to be much more childlike. Let us strive for simplicity, honesty, and integrity, even if we are labeled by those around us as "simpletons," "ignorant," and "foolish."

In all simplicity, it seems to us that: someone who consistently writes, speaks, and acts in ways that are heretical is a heretic. Heretics are not Catholic. A true pope must be Catholic (not a

heretic). [How can he be the head of a body he is cut off from?] Material cannot be separated from its form – so there is no material apple without it being at the same time a formal apple. Hence, there is no material pope that is not a formal pope. A man either is or is not a pope.

If he is the pope we must obey him. We must not insist upon our wills over his. When a pope says cease and desist from building churches or even saying Mass, every Catholic must obey him. We cannot argue that it is sinful for us to stop building churches. We cannot argue that it is sinful for a priest to not offer the Mass. These are privileges rather than rights. Just because we are entrusted with the power to do something does not mean we have the right to do it. If the head of the Conciliar Church is the pope, then we must obey him. We must obey the bishops throughout the world that are in union with him. We must obey the priest appointed by the bishops who are in union with the pope. This seems to be the only honest and straightforward answer. If he is the pope we must obey.

with him, we are either sinfully in schism – or we must declare that he is not the pope and does not have the right or authority to command anything of us. Traditionalists cannot, in any other way, justify their actions if this Conciliar pope is a true pope. The material/formal theory is convoluted Pharisee-ism. The theory of a true pope that we do not have to obey is simply demonic rebellion – the satanic “Non-Servium” (I will not obey).

The Conciliar departure from the Catholic Faith seems very simple and clear. The head of this church, their “pope” is not the head of the Catholic Church. There appears no other reasonable claimant to this office. Hence, in simple childlike logic and understanding the Chair of St. Peter is vacant. The visible shepherd (the Vicar of Jesus Christ) has been struck and the sheep are now terribly scattered.

What must the humble children do now? We must hold on to the Faith as best as we can. We must return to the childlike simplicity of St. Francis, and seek to live the Gospel in our own lives. The vicar (the visible head) has been struck, but the invisible and True Head, Jesus Christ, cannot be

struck down. He is still the Good Shepherd. Though many have been scattered, He knows His own and His own know Him. He has not lost sight of us, even if we sometimes lose sight of Him.

We, obviously, do not recognize the voice of these Councillor popes. These are not the true shepherds of our souls. But, are we deceived by others' voices? We must learn to recognize the voice of Jesus Christ. If we hear Him, we hear His soft and gentle Voice inviting us to come to Him. He invites us to allow Him to return us to His fold. The true fold of Jesus Christ is none other than the Remnant of the Catholic Church. We must focus on Him,

and not so much on what others are doing or saying. We must not follow a crowd but listen to Him. It is painful because we must deny ourselves, take up a daily cross, and follow Him.

May our constant prayer to this Good Shepherd be to give us the grace to know His voice and not to be deceived by the many hirelings or wolves in sheep's clothing. We must beg of Him the grace to know Him and find Him in whatever remnant remains of His Mystical Body (The Church) in this world. Let this be our prayer for ourselves, our family, friends, neighbors, and for all those that God has chosen. Amen.



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Praying the Rosary: *Its Difficulties and its Great Benefits*

Brother Anthony Lentz, O.F.M.

"Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

The Angelic Salutation is the principal prayer of the Rosary. Here we recall, with every recitation, the Mystery of the Incarnation. The role of the Blessed Virgin in the Incarnation is that of hand-maiden and of mother. She was from all eternity in the mind of God, and the object of His predilection. True, she could have refused the vocation of being the Mother of God, but such a refusal would have been highly unlikely because she was so wonderfully conformed to the Divine Will. When we give honor to the Mother, we give honor to the Son; and also if we were to despise the Mother, we then despise the Son.

The principal means of honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary is by the method of prayer that she herself prescribed – the Rosary. There are various forms of Rosaries – the Dominican with the five Joyful, five Sorrowful, and five Glorious mysteries making fifteen mysteries in all; the Franciscan Crown commemorating her Seven Joys; or the Servite Rosary

commemorating her Seven Sorrows. There is no method of the Rosary which is superior, for they each are laudable in their own way. Being a Franciscan, I obviously have a preference for the Seven Joys and it is this method that is recited publicly in our missions throughout the country. I find it strange that a sort of bigotry, if you want to call it that, exists with some Catholics who are not accustomed to a form that is different. I have actually met a person who was trying to convince me that we should be saying the Dominican Rosary before Mass, instead of the Franciscan. I explained that since this is a Franciscan church, it is only fitting that the Franciscan Crown is prayed. He said that he understood that, but it wasn't "the Rosary." No one should criticize a form that is different.

If you have one you prefer and it stirs within your heart a greater devotion to Mary, then that is the form to use. Do not force your form of the Rosary upon someone else, or you run the risk of becoming a fanatic instead of a Catholic. You will then end up basing your entire religion upon something that is not even dogmatic, but simply a matter

of preference. How many souls have been lost due to this kind of narrow-mindedness? Only God knows.

While there are various forms of the Rosary, with specific prayers attached to each, their foundation is the same. They all contain the recitation of Hail Marys and Our Fathers. The mysteries of both the Dominican and the Franciscan rosaries are divided into decades – one Our Father and ten Hail Marys. The mysteries of the Servite rosary are divided by one Our Father and seven Hail Marys. Each mystery is accompanied by a meditation upon that particular event in the life of Our Lord and/or the Blessed Mother. The part I want to focus upon is the act of praying the Rosary (meditation) in itself.

I have heard it said that if you do not have a devotion to the Rosary, you then do not have a devotion to the Blessed Virgin. I don't know if this can be taken as an absolute statement, for it is certainly not dogmatic, but the point is well taken. Think about it! If we neglect a prayer that the Blessed Virgin Mary herself gave to us to be said in her honor, how can we say that we have a devotion to her? I must confess that for years since I was a child, I did not care to pray the Rosary.

Yes, it is true. You could give me any other kind of prayer – a novena, the Stations of the Cross, or a short chaplet – I preferred any of them over the Rosary. The Rosary to me always seemed dull and tedious. I never felt that I got anything out of saying it, and if I knew that I couldn't get out of it then I had the attitude of “okay, let's do it right away and get it over with.” This is an embarrassing admission, but I do it with a purpose. I would like to help those, whether children or adults, who have an aversion to praying the Rosary foster much-needed devotion and to help those who have a waning devotion to re-ignite it. Here are some practical tips on how to foster devotion, how to pray, and how to deal with some of the more common problems that can occur while praying the Rosary.

Pray to Mary

St. Anthony of the Desert gives us a very concise solution to the problem of praying. He says that if you have an aversion or maybe a dislike for prayer then simply pray more. If this aversion is directed towards the Rosary in particular, then ask the Blessed Virgin to help you. It may seem that I have presented a paradox as the solution. “How can the answer to lack of devotion of

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praying the Rosary be prayer?" you may ask, "Would I not simply be going around in circles, and never accomplishing anything?" Well, I suppose you could think that, but it is more of an excuse to not put forth any real effort. Besides, this is not an illogical solution, it is quite the contrary. I did not say ask for Mary's help by praying the Rosary, I said ask for her help by prayer in general. A short and simple ejaculation would be all you may need. Ask Mary, through her title as Our Lady of the Rosary, to help you foster this devotion! You desire to serve Our Lord and, as St. Louis De Montfort assures us, there is no better way than through Mary! "*Oh Lady of the Rosary, help me to appreciate this great gift. Give me proper focus upon the mysteries and help me to grow in grace until the end of my life, through Christ Jesus, your Son, Our Lord. Amen.*"

Pick a time to pray the Rosary

There is one practical thing that every Catholic should desire to have in their everyday life – regularity. Regularity is structure; it is order. We all are probably familiar with the old saying: "*An idle mind is the devil's playground.*" A person with too much free time on his hands will usually fall into some kind of temptation. A life with some sort

of set schedule is essential if you want to advance in virtue. True, your life does not have to be so rigid that you cannot veer from it from time to time. This is usually called "a day off." I am not talking about the exceptions, I am talking about the rule. How should you schedule your time? Well, you know your life, so you will have to be the judge and work out the specifics. Generally speaking, though, you want a balanced life of prayer, work, and recreation. I will leave the work and recreation for you to sort out on your own, but with prayer I advise a morning offering, reciting the Angelus (6 am, 12 pm & 6 pm), an evening prayer followed with an examination of conscience before you retire, and, of course, the Rosary. As far as the Rosary is concerned, there is no set time that you have to say it – like the Angelus (I should add that even with that there is a little leeway). Most people say it in the evening because that is usually when the entire family can get together. If you are a single person, the time you say the Rosary may be determined by your work schedule. Yes, I know that some do not have set schedules and so to have a set time for the Rosary may be hard. One solution is to simply make it a priority to say it, even if the time is not ideal. Another solution is

to recite different decades during different parts of your day. This has its benefits because it also helps to develop the practice of keeping the thought of God and things spiritual in the forefront of your mind throughout the day.

Focusing – God is looking for effort, not absolute perfection

Distractions are troubling for a soul that wants to turn its focus upon spiritual matters. You kneel down to pray the Rosary (or sit, or stand, depending on your situation) and you have every intention of “giving it your all,” but right as you begin a million and one thoughts pop in your head. One religious sister humorously remarked to me that it seemed that best time for her to go over her “to do list” is when she is in the chapel praying because everything comes out so clearly! So, how can you focus? First thing is, don’t get worked up, and take the advice of this sister—laugh at the situation! You cannot take yourself too seriously. Just laugh at yourself acknowledging to God that you were depending too much on yourself, which is rather laughable when you think about it! Tell God that you are unable to pray without His grace, and beseech His aid. Then take a deep breath and quietly continue. And don’t be alarmed if the distractions keep happening.

God is not demanding absolute perfection only that you do your best and are never satisfied with “good enough”. It is a well-known fact in the spiritual life that a person can gain more merit for Heaven when he has to struggle to focus upon prayer, rather than when it has gone smoothly. Keep your emotions at bay and simply pray!

Praying the Rosary with others

Our Lord told us that, when two or three are gathered together in His Name, He is present (spiritually speaking). From this, we can conclude that praying the Rosary together as a group bestows greater graces. Although, since each person has different tendencies and preferences, praying together as a group can be difficult. The complaint that I have normally heard is that “this particular group” prays the Rosary either too fast or too slow. Now, these complaints are subjective and depend greatly upon the preference, intellect, and temperament of the Catholic involved. Objectively speaking, when a group prays the Rosary there should be a nice steady even pace. It is true that certain people like to say the Rosary slower, so that they may meditate easier. Other like to say it faster. At first glance, you might say that the Rosary being said slower

would be more meritorious, but we have to take into consideration the intellect and temperament of the individual praying. Once I was praying the Rosary in a group and one person in our company was leading a decade of the Rosary. He said it so fast that I nicknamed him the “Rosary-rambler.” I asked him about slowing it down and he said to me that he focuses on the Rosary better when it is fast. The simple lesson is that we are given a chance to practice humility and self-denial. If a group says the Rosary faster or slower than you do, or the group that you usually recite it with, simply adapt yourself to their speed. You should deny your own will and try to recite it at their pace. Do not consciously disrupt their cadence by purposely saying it faster or slower than the group. By doing this, you will only accomplish one of two things (or maybe both): one, drawing attention to yourself and thus swelling yourself with pride thinking, “I will show them how to do it right,” and two, upsetting others who are trying to pray. Here you run the risk of making others angry or upset with you and thus, making yourself an occasion of sin. It is an act of charity to seek out the benefits in the cadence that a different group uses, and you have the other added benefits

of finding new possible subjects for meditation.

The Subject matter of our meditation

In order to help stir devotion, I would like to suggest reading the works of St. Louis De Montfort especially *True Devotion to Mary and Secrets of the Rosary*; he gives us many suggestions which may be used when praying the Rosary. I should add that, in his books, St. Louis focuses upon the Dominican Rosary in particular. This is understandable because it is the most popular and he himself was a Dominican Tertiary. Be that as it may, his suggestions may be applied to any of the various forms. For the sake of brevity, I will only mention the two simplest methods which may be used – meditating upon the words vocal prayer itself (the Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.) or meditating upon the mystery that is currently being recited. The first method is very laudable and helps us to remember that these prayers continually have a message to teach us. Let’s take the Hail Mary for example. St. Louis says that when you are praying the Rosary picture in your mind’s eye that you are praying to Mary and that all your words are directed to her. This makes praying the Hail Mary more special in the eyes of Mary

because she is always pleased to relieve the Annunciation when the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowed her and Our Lord was made flesh inside her womb. The second method is the most common and usually, the one sought after. To relieve the life of Christ and that of His Blessed Mother in our minds and hearts. This one offers us the chance to focus on their virtues and to learn how we too can carry our daily crosses. In short, we learn how to daily grow in the love of God. Because we are fickle creatures, the Catholic may find it beneficial to interchange the method of meditation, so that he may continuously stir up his devotion. Or, you could combine them by having a short meditation upon the event or the particular virtue being demonstrated in that Mystery, before you begin reciting, and then continue by meditating upon the prayers themselves. In fact, you could learn how to recite one of the other different forms and by mixing it up weekly or monthly, thus giving yourself ample subject matter for meditation. Of course, the time you have available may dictate which method or form to use, but don't be afraid to mix it up and constantly challenge yourself, and overcome any possible mediocrity.

Prayer and Devotion to Mary

It seems well to conclude this article with just a few thoughts upon prayer and devotion to Mary. Remember that prayer is your chance to talk to God and praying the Rosary is your chance to honor the Blessed Virgin as your very special advocate. Our devotion to the Blessed Virgin is primarily, as it was already said in the first paragraph, based upon her Divine Motherhood, but we also have a devotion to her because of the examples she has given to us, especially her example of humility. Her humility is a shining star, which shines forth to give us light, so we may see the right course through the sea of spiritual darkness. The Rosary is our compass, so that we may follow her example as demonstrated by the mysteries. So make praying the Rosary mean something special to you! Make a greater effort, with God's grace, to pray it every day! Use it as the means of fostering in your hearts a true devotion to Mary. She will be grateful and will pray for you now and at the hour of your death.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Sister Agnes' Favorites

To Mary Help of Christians

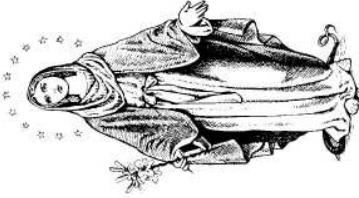
Holy Mary, we implore thee
By thy purity divine:
Help us, bending here before thee,
Help us truly to be thine.
Thou, unfolding wide the portals
Of the kingdom in the skies,
Holy Virgin hast to mortals
Shown the land of paradise.

Teach, oh! Teach us, holy Mother,
How to conquer every sin,
How to love and help each other,
How the prize of life to win.
Thou to whom a Child was given
Greater than the sons of men,
Coming down from highest heaven
To create this world again.

Thou, when deepest night infernal
Had for ages shrouded man,
Gavest us that life eternal
Promised since the world began.
God in thee hath showered plenty
On the hungry and the weak;
Sending back the mighty, empty,
Setting up on high, the neck.

O! By that Almighty Maker,
Whom thyself a virgin bore;
O! by Thy Supreme Creator,
Linked with thee for evermore;
By the hope thy name inspires,
By our doom reversed through thee;
Help us Queen of Angel choirs,
Now and through eternity.

Thine the province to deliver
Souls that deep in bondage lie
Thine to crush, and crush for ever,
Life destroying heresy.
Thine to show that earthly pleasures,
All the world's enchanting bloom,
Are outrivaled by the treasures
Of the glorious life to come.



A Chance to Live

Monsignor John P. Carroll-Abbing

V

TWO WORLDS UNITED IN CHARITY

“And the greatest of these is
Charity . . .” St. Paul

(Continued)

I found them much taller, but they were the same affectionate little fellows I had played with in the meadow. More tranquil perhaps, a little sadder, with a greater realization of what life meant for them. One of them was so proud of being able to read, his lips running swiftly across the page; another showed his ability in using his artificial hands. Each one was glad of the victory achieved in the battle he had fought so patiently.

“See you again, children. I shall be back soon.”

This time I meant every word of it.

My short visits to the numerous houses that sprang up all over Italy brought the same feeling of loss, whenever I had to leave. However, although my work at Santa Marinello, the home for boys near Rome, kept me busy,

I did not neglect them. In fact, it was really during this period that saw the beginning of a whole series of new constructions, new children’s villages, which I was able to erect thanks to American generosity. All of them had the same aim, the rehabilitation of the homeless and the abandoned. All of them were permanent memories to that sublime sense of brotherhood in the American people.

Among my principal cares was finding a new home for the boys in the Via Varese. They were in good hands, but there was room for improvement as far as the quarters were concerned.

The cellar had been providential when necessity pressed, but it was far from being suitable for a permanent home. The place was small, too small, too dark, with none of the good sunshine and the open spaces for the exercise the boys needed to keep well. It was, moreover, too close to the old haunts where temptation might prove too strong to resist. I kept dreaming of some old building on the outskirts of

Rome, which might possibly be renovated and equipped, but where was it to be found?

The barracks were filled with refugees. Other buildings that might have been useful were occupied by the personnel of the Allied armies, who used them as headquarters and offices. Notwithstanding the interest shown us by highly placed persons, it was impossible to get a suitable place from the Allied Command. Everyone understood and yet everywhere there were other and greater needs, engendered by the state of emergency brought about by the aftermath of the war.

One fine day, the Salesian Fathers informed me that they had found an old fort that had all the appearance of having been abandoned.

I went to see it. The looks of the place certainly did not awaken my unalloyed enthusiasm. The fort was a mere skeleton of a place, ruined by the war and plundered by vagabonds.

The surroundings did hold a certain charm. There were trees and green grass and there were possibilities for the purpose we had in mind. Added to this was the fact that the neighborhood

might profit by having a shelter for boys in its midst.

The fort was situated in one of the remote suburbs of Rome. Many families from the capital had migrated there when the planning of new streets and squares had necessitated their dispossession from their old homes. It was a crowded area and far from progressive.

A fair number of families had clung steadfastly to the tradition of what a home should be. Struck by unemployment, they had nevertheless tried to make a living by fair, honest means. But there were still others who, unnerved by trials and tribulations, had succumbed to the false promises offered by the moment.

Misery and neglect met the onlooker at every turn. Shacks that had been put up temporarily were still standing and crowded. Scores of children played in the mud of the streets. Dust, shattered windows, sagging walls, gray, hopeless people. Their children looked at me and in their eyes was a mute appeal for a better, healthier life.

This time the problems that confronted us seemed insurmountable and we were

almost tempted to give up the project.

We did not. The boys in the Via Varese were waiting and God helped us to fulfill their hopes. One after another the barriers that stood in our path were leveled and we obtained permission to use the old fort.

The Holy Father was our first benefactor. He sent us a substantial contribution and then others came, slowly at first, but at regular intervals. American Relief for Italy, as usual, came to the fore. Construction, renovations began and we were on our way!

The sum received by the A.R.I. at that time and other sums sent later made it possible not only to repair the original buildings but also to erect new houses with modern equipment.

“May God with the help of His Divine Grace replace the attraction of evil with the appeal of virtue, that idleness and inertia may give way to the joy of honorable work and that the hungry and the naked be given assistance through the Divine Charity of Christ, the Charity which in a particular manner, must at the present time, take root and grow in the hearts of

His followers.”

Thus wrote the Holy Father in his encyclical of January 6, 1946. The charity of which he spoke and which I found in the souls of our generous helpers permitted the realization of what, a year before, had seemed a nebulous dream.

On July 18, 1948, in the presence of His Eminence Cardinal Pizzardo, my former chief and one of the greatest of our friends, the new village was formally inaugurated. Present at the celebration were representatives of the new government of Italy and members of the diplomatic corps. In the name of the “Foundation for Homeless Boys,” I entrusted the village to the Salesians. On that day was born another of the glorious houses of the Congregation of Don Bosco.

A poet once said that “each tear that is dried on the cheek of a child rises to Heaven as a newborn star.” I have no doubt that many a new star found a home on July 18, 1948.

Weeds and refuse had covered this land, the skeleton buildings had lifted impotent arms to heaven. Today the sight that met my eyes was so very different!

Gaiety and the fervor of activity were all about me.

The white buildings framed in the green of tall, strong trees held a welcoming look. The sound of happy laughter emerged from those walls, the playing fields were alive with happiness and youth.

Rome from a distance was a tranquil vision of ancient splendor. And yet I knew that inside those antique walls and within the walls of many another Italian city children wept, waiting and hoping that a day might dawn when they, too, would cast off their abandonment and misery.

It was a spring day in 1947 that I landed at La Guardia Field in New York. As foreign representative of A.R.I., Inc., I had come to report on the progress made by the official Italian relief distribution agency in apportioning the immense quantities of relief supplies that A.R.I. had collected and sent to Italy, and to outline Italy's future needs.

The chairman of the board of directors of A.R.I. was Myron Taylor, a good friend of Italy, the President's personal representative to the Vatican and

an outstanding benefactor of our street boys.

Judge Marchisio, the president of the A.R.I., was at the airport to meet me. From the start, I had admired his generous and self-sacrificing work for war-damaged Italy. He was to become the warmest and most devoted supporter of our work for the boys.

Working with these pre-eminent figures, there had been a host of others, who moved silently, efficiently, coordinating the aid we received, laboring with unselfish fervor to help the unfortunate people of Italy.

I had the good fortune of meeting scores of them, of being a guest in their homes. They were from all walks of life; their homes were often modest, at times poor. I marveled at the warmth of the attachment of the Italo-Americans to the land of their birth. There were representatives of every region of that fair land, but most of them had come from the southern end of the Peninsula. After scores of years, the deep-seated love for the country where they had been born, for the "Old Boot," as they called it, was still alive. As they talked to me, they went back into

the memoried past, and recalled the field that refused to yield a fair harvest, the blue bay their fathers returned to at eve after a hard day's work in the fishing boats, or in the sulphur mines, where hardships and death were only too common.

From New York to California, the enthusiasm of everyone for our work was overwhelming. In San Francisco, the press conference lasted an hour and a half. I gave a detailed account of the work done for the reconstruction of the country and emphasized the firm determination of the people of Italy to lift themselves out of the abyss into which the war had flung them.

This great nation, good, hard-working, thrifty, had the right to life. It had more than demonstrated by its efforts during the dramatic period following the war that it possessed the qualities needed to take its place among the nations standing at the vanguard of civilization.

To feel within us the spirit of Italy is to understand fully the strength and the forward stride of Western civilization.

The San Francisco reporters showed their amazement at such enthusiastic words on

Italy coming from an Irishman. They concurred, however, in my judgment that the new bonds between Italy and the United States should be strengthened so that the friendship between our two great people might, in mutual understanding and common aspirations, grow ever stronger.

In Italy often, far too often, we heard of the fabulous American wealth, and aid was sometimes thought of as coming only from the rich industrialist or the men who were predominant in the economic life of the country. In truth, the help that flowed into the Peninsula from private individuals more often than not came in offerings made by the laborer, the mother of a humble home, the farmer, the man in the street.

As had been the case in Italy, so now in America, I found that those who had least in the world's goods were the most generous.

I was invited to speak at a woman's club in a modest neighborhood in New York City. The mothers and the wives sitting before me listened attentively as I told them of the trials the Italian mothers had been asked to bear,

of the superhuman efforts they had made and were making to save their families.

The meeting over, the women served refreshments and I stayed on to chat with them. Some of them spoke in a strange mixture of Italian, English, and the dialect of their origin. The meaning underlying their words belonged to only one language, that of the brotherhood of man. “I should like to do something for the poor ‘bambini’ of Italy,” said one of them to me, her voice low and shy, “but the trouble, Monsignor, is that I get paid only once a month and I’ll have to wait until the first. If you are staying in New York, I’ll send you what I can.”

She was a hard-working cleaning woman, one of the huge army that gets busy at night, after everyone else has gone home, and scrubs, polishes, and dusts the rooms and offices of the New York skyscrapers. I learned from a friend of hers that each year she was already sending away to a foundling home a large sum for the care and maintenance of two small orphans, in addition to food and clothing.

Face to face with the spirit of such charity, I asked myself who

was more blessed, he who gives or the recipient of so much love and devotion?

The universality of this spirit of charity in America gave me food for thought. It was touching that the Italo-Americans should help the land of their ancestors so generously, but much more so when a large number of the contributions came from men and women who were not Italian and had no direct ties with Italy. Add to this that several of them had lost dear ones in the war, sons, brothers, relatives. Their losses had not embittered them. Rather their hearts seemed to have opened wider with a real understanding of the brotherhood of man.

This leveling of frontiers, this consideration of all men as brothers regardless of national boundaries, caused some to fear the wiping out of the love of one’s own country. This fear recalled to me Hilaire Belloc’s words:

*God gave all men all earth to
love
But since man’s heart is small
Ordained for each one spot
should prove
Beloved over all.*

A profound love for our own land should not necessarily prevent that wide comprehension that stretches out toward the whole of humanity. In fact, he who loves his own with a deep, tender affection is likely to feel more strongly the love for his fellow man.

Many committees that were formed in America were the living proof of this particular as well as universal quality that joins together in charity men of different races, origins, languages, traditions, and customs.

How many of my most generous helpers, for instance, most generous not only in money but in giving of their time, their advice, their unstinted support had been Jews! Their real feeling for our poor children touched me deeply. Nowhere was this better illustrated than in a little incident that happened to me in Philadelphia and that I shall not soon forget.

He was an old man, a Russian Jew, a retired worker on a modest pension and he had entered the room where I was talking to the manager of his union. He sat down on a chair by the door, humbly patient. I

asked the official not to keep him waiting and the old man came to the desk.

He took out a handful of dollar bills and coins from his pocket.

"I wanted to send \$15 for the children in Italy. Then I heard that Father would be here himself today. I have only \$13.50. If you can add the \$1.50," he said to the manager, "I will bring it to you next week."

I looked out of the window at the street below. How many of the smartly dressed businessmen, the well-gowned women hastening by, would have bothered to glance at the shabby, bent old man as he walked down the street? Yet, what sublime goodness in him, unsullied by ambition or desire for praise! I felt proud and humbled as I took his hand. If I were ever to waste \$15 of the money destined to the children, I would feel that it was these hard-earned, precious dollars I was throwing away!

To be continued.



Franciscan Saints

MAY 21

BLESSED WALDO

Confessor; Third Order

Waldo, called also Vivaldo or Ubaldo, was a disciple of the saintly Tertiary priest Bartolo, whose life is sketched under date of December thirteenth. They were natives of the same place, San Gemignano, in northern Italy. When Bartolo was attacked with leprosy and betook himself to the leper hospital near San Gemignano, Waldo offered him his services and for twenty years, until the death of Bartolo, rendered him every possible kindness. In return, Waldo received salutary instructions toward progress in Christian perfection from the holy priest, and at his advice joined the Third Order of St. Francis.

After the death of his spiritual father in 1300, Waldo resolved to withdraw altogether from

the world and the association of men, in order to converse only with God and live for heaven. He repaired to a large forest several miles distant from his native town. There he found a hollow chestnut tree of great girth, the cavity of which he turned into a cell for himself, he had hardly room enough to kneel in it. There he meant to spend the remainder of his life. Severe penances and the contemplation of heavenly things were his occupations.

Records indicate that Waldo spent quite twenty years in this complete solitude. Then one day in May in 1320 the bells of the adjacent village of Monteone began to ring of their own accord, to the amazement of the people.

They all ran to the church. There they saw and heard the bells continue in full peal although no

human hand was setting them in motion.

Presently a hunter came out of the forest, who told that his hounds had circled around a hollow chestnut tree, barking in excitement. When he went to investigate he found a recluse in the tree dead on his knees. As the hunter finished his tale, the bells ceased ringing.

The inhabitants of Monteone recognized in this incident the holiness of the deceased hermit. In procession, they went to the narrow cell of Blessed Waldo and brought the body to the church, where it was laid to rest beneath the high altar. God glorified the tomb with many miracles. The cell in the tree was converted into a chapel in honor of our Lady, in connection with which a Franciscan convent was later built. Blessed Waldo's feast is observed on May twenty-first.

ON LONGING FOR HEAVEN

1. “God is wonderful in his saints” (Ps. 67:36). He leads them in the most varied ways. But all whom He draws to Himself, He detaches in heart from material things and infuses into them holy longing for heavenly things. What a sweet foretaste of heavenly joy Blessed

Waldo must have experienced in his deep seclusion. — If you have only a slight longing for heaven, then fear that you will have but a slight share in the childhood of God. They that in the hardness of their hearts find their delight only in worldly pursuits and want nothing to do with heavenly things, will incur the judgment which the Lord uttered by the mouth of the prophet: “I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest” (Ps. 94:11).

2. Consider why it must be very displeasing to God if we have little or no desire for heaven. He has created us for heaven. There in the company of the angels and saints He Himself wishes to be our joy. He sent His only-begotten Son into this world that through His suffering and death He might re-open heaven for us, to whom it had been closed. He lets us live on this earth only to earn heaven and promises us in return for our earthly hardships a superabundant reward. How grievously, then, it must wound His fatherly heart if we rarely think about heavenly things and do not long for them. Even though we die in God’s grace, shall we not have to suffer in purgatory for such indifference,

by being made to yearn for heaven in pain?

3. Consider how we should stimulate our desire for heaven. Amid the brief joys of this world and the constant sufferings of this earthly life, look up to heaven and reflect on the glorious City of God, to which God wishes to lead His true servants and to which the best persons we have known have already gone. Remember the words of the Apostle: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). Then your heart will be inflamed with holy desire, and you will sigh with Thomas a Kempis (3:48). "Ah, most happy mansion of the

supernal city! Oh, most bright day of eternity, which no night ever obscureth! A day always joyful, always secure! Oh, that this day would shine forth, and that all these temporal things would come to an end!" Then plead with the same mystic, "Be mindful of me, O my God, and direct me in the right path to Thy kingdom!"

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH (Secret on *the Last Sunday after Pentecost*)

Be propitious, O Lord, to our supplications, and accept the offerings and prayers of Thy people; turn all our hearts unto Thee, that, being delivered from earthly appetites, we may pass on to the enjoyment of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

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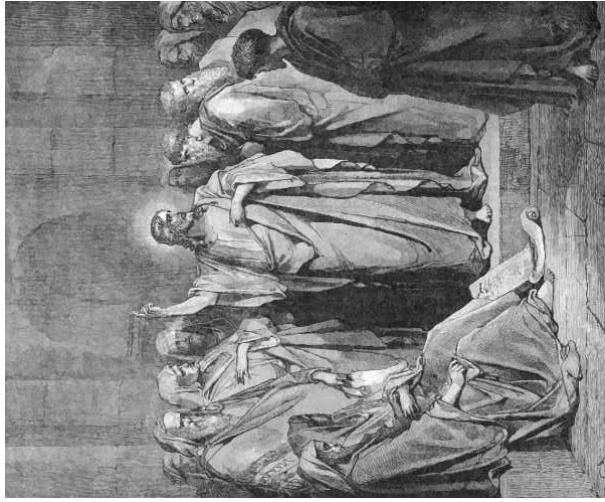
OR,

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 XXII.

ON THE BENEFITS OF THINKING ON OUR LAST END.

There is, perhaps, hardly any subject — if indeed any — that would contribute more effectually to promote our salvation, to inspire us with the fear of sin; and a zeal for virtue, than the frequent consideration of our last end. Hence that saying of the Divine Wisdom; “Remember thy last end; and thou shalt never sin.” In reality, with this remembrance deeply impressed upon our minds; — with the reflection often present to our recollection that, at any moment, we may be snatched

away from life; and if in sin be consigned to eternal misery — who is there amongst us that, with these remembrances constantly before him would have the dreadful imprudence to offend his God? Or who, with these remembrances would not consider sin as the greatest of all possible evils, and fly from it with the utmost dread? Yes; at the thought of our last end; — at the consideration of that awful hour, that must soon introduce us into the regions of eternity; and decide our everlasting doom — at these recollections, the mind is deeply affected; the passions are alarmed; vice seems the only evil that should distress us;

virtue, the only good that really deserves our care.

Similar almost to these principles of Christian prudence are the sentiments which we, not infrequently, find recorded among the maxims even of pagan wisdom. For, by some of the most enlightened of the ancient philosophers, it is laid down as an axiom that, for men to live well the only sure method is, to study carefully how to die well. Whence, also they contend that the main study of life is the assiduous study of death. Such ideas are, in fact, but the dictates of true philosophy, as they are the suggestions of real religion.

The thought indeed, of our last end, and of our little, brief, mortality, is a subject that gives pain to the delicacy of our self-love and sensibility. To the sinner it is frightful; and to the lover of the world, awfully distressing. However, these are the very feelings that prove its utility. It is by giving us pain, that it helps to cure us; and, by awakening distress, that it ultimately gives us comfort. So that if, in our breasts, the salutary reflection comes sometimes to excite uneasiness — oh, let us cherish the happy sentiment. It is the beginning, and pledge, of our return to God — the aurora

of virtue preparing to shed its beams through the perhaps hitherto dark and neglected tabernacle of our hearts.

I. That our death is certain and inevitable; — that each day and each hour bring us nearer to the awful term — these are truths too plain to be called into question. Not a day occurs, but we see executed the sentence which condemns us to the grave. We hear constantly from our steeples the solemn knell proclaiming the fatal verdict. Its voice — its severe and frightful language — is heard amid the din and dissipations of pleasure; and the noise and confusion of public life. Not even can we move a step, but we meet with some proof or other of our frail mortality. We trample, almost everywhere, upon the victims of death. Neither science nor skill; neither the flattery of our self-love, nor the tumult of our passions, which cheat, and deceive us so much, can remove from before our eyes the alarming specter. To doubt of the certainty of death is impossible.

There is another consideration too, which ought here again to awaken our sensibility. It is this — that precisely as our death is certain, just so the circumstances connected with it — the precise

time, the place, the manner, &c. *are uncertain.* Respecting all these, we know nothing. We merely know that we shall die. All the rest is a secret, which no human sagacity can so much as pretend to penetrate. “*You know not,*” says our Divine Savior, “*the day, nor the hour.*” There are immense multitudes everywhere blindly exulting today in the full vigor of youth and health, who tomorrow will be languishing on the bed of sickness; and thence hurried to an untimely grave. These are events, which we witness every day. Death constantly comes, as we are forewarned, like the thief in the night — at the hour when we least expect it.

II. As for the situation in which it will place us in regard to this world — this is a point which, — although the least interesting to us as Christians and immortal beings — is still deserving of our serious consideration. In regard to this world — death causes, we all know, a complete separation from it — an entire removal from all its scenes; a total privation of everything that it contains. It separates children from parents; relatives from relatives; friends from friends. It takes away from us riches,

comforts, honors, pleasures — everything, that is either dear to our hearts or gratifying to our passions. Such is the state to which death reduces us in relation to this world.

In regard of the state to which it introduces us in the world to come — Oh, this is the important question — this, the subject that should excite all the strongest feelings of our solicitude. By death we are at once ushered into a new life. We are introduced — despoiled of everything; and trembling with apprehension — into a new and unknown region. Here we are instantly summoned to appear before our God. We are placed at the bar of His tribunal, there to receive from the mouth of His Justice either that sentence which will exalt us to eternal happiness; or that verdict which consigns us to everlasting misery. Such is the fate — the fate perhaps now actually hanging over us — that awaits us on the occasion of our exit hence; — joys which will last forever; or torments which will never end. The Christian, who does not seriously reflect on this must surely have lost either his reason or his faith. It is indeed, a subject of surprise that, considering all these

circumstances — considering the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the hour that will call us away — considering above all, the awful reversion that must shortly become our lot — it is a subject of surprise, that the thought of our last end should not be more frequently present to our minds. The neglect too, is the more astonishing; since, as we have already remarked, almost everything around us serves to call our attention to it — sicknesses and accidents and deaths; mornings, crapes, gravestones, and the sad sound of the funeral bell, announcing to us constantly the departure — the perhaps sudden departure — of some acquaintance, or friend, or other. So that nothing, in reality, should seem to be so natural and familiar to us as the frequent remembrance of our last end.

III. And, oh whilst this awful remembrance should thus seem so natural to us — what effects and important benefits would it not produce in the whole order of our lives — both sanctifying all our actions; and even promoting our present happiness. The grave is a wise instructor. It enlightens us by its

darkness, and by its silence — a silence more eloquent than any words — it teaches us the vanity of everything that passes away with time. Let us, therefore, often consult the useful monitor. Seating ourselves sometimes by the side of a grave, and fixed there in serious thought, let us listen attentively to the lessons, which it will dictate to us. "This narrow, gloomy, house," it will say to us, "must very shortly become your abode — your only abode in this world. Here, in the course of a few days, those bodies of yours, which you now pamper and indulge so much, shall become the food of worms — mere masses of rottenness, and corruption — dust returned into dust again. Here, all your schemes, and projects; your cares, and your solicitudes — your riches, honors, pleasures, comforts, beauty — shall all soon come; and miserably terminate; not leaving so much as a trace behind them — save the evidence of your folly for having, for such trifles, sacrificed your eternal happiness. Learn prudence, therefore, from me: and since all worldly things are transient and undeserving of your care so fix your hearts only upon those which will flourish

and subsist forever. Such as these are a few of the many instructions — the thing is at present we listened to them! — that are given to us by the grave.

And whilst we are thus fixed in contemplation, and attending to these useful warnings, we may perhaps chance to see lying beside us — just thrown out of their dark repository by the spade of the digger — the moldered remains, — perchance the skull of some individual, which had long been rotting there. In this case, casting our eyes upon the instructive object, and continuing our meditation, let us say to ourselves, and ask the question: “Whose head, some years ago, was this? It was perhaps, that of some rich, gay, dissipated, worldling; perhaps, that of some beauty, once vain of her charms, and the idol of admiring multitudes; or else it may be it was that of some poor and ignoble being, the outcast of society and the object during life of indifference and neglect. To which of these did this head belong? Of which of these did it once form the member? Alas, of all this not the slenderest mark remains: not a single vestige by which the distinction can now be ascertained. Rich or poor; great

or mean; beautiful or deformed — the thing is at present immaterial. Death has put its seal upon it; and every difference and distinction is completely done away.” Such as these, again, are the lessons which the grave imparts: and such as this it tells us is the vanity of all worldly and human things.

IV. We might, whilst we are thus absorbed in these considerations carry our reflections still farther. Viewing this moldered portion of this once animated clay, we might moreover ask the question: “What now is the fate or what the situation of the soul, which once inhabited it? Where now is its portion? and what its eternal doom?” However, of all this, we can know nothing. We merely know that its works have followed it; and that if these were evil its lot is now truly deplorable — that it is the victim of hell and the companion of insulting devils; and that miserable or happy, it now views at all events with ineffable indifference and contempt, all the momentary pleasures and trifling distinctions of this world. If, then, by the use of considerations like these, we had only the prudence to bring the subject of our last end close

to the feelings of our hearts and to the instincts of our reason, how fortunate in such case, would be the consequences; and how wonderful the effects, that would be produced, both in the regulation of our thoughts and in the whole order of our conduct. Then, impressed with the grandeur of our immortal destiny, we should entertain sentiments the most exalted and sublime. We should feel that we are made for something far better than the transient advantages or the trifling distinctions or pleasures of this world. Then, whether we chance to be rich or poor; — adorned in purple or clothed in rags, would appear to us a matter almost of complete indifference. Virtue alone would seem our only good; vice, our only evil. In short, deeply sensible of the vanity of all that passes away with time; and of the infinite importance of what lasts forever — we should deem the work of our salvation the sole business, that really deserves our care, or that merits our esteem. Whence animated thus, our conduct would in everything be Christian and consistent. We should acquit ourselves of every obligation; and perform every duty well — as having soon

to render an exact account of them all — to be rewarded with immortal happiness, if we have acted virtuously; to be punished with eternal torments if we have lived in sin.

Wherefore, let us consider seriously: and since we know that we must die soon; since we have no assurance that we shall so much as live to see tomorrow's dawn — so let us labor to employ all the little time that may be given to us, to the best advantage. Let us husband it well, and even spend each day as if we apprehended that it might chance to be our last. At all events, let us keep our last end and our immortal destiny constantly in view, meditating frequently upon the momentous subjects; and endeavoring, by the efforts of our piety, to prepare ourselves for a happy exit. By these means, whilst we shall improve daily and rapidly in virtue, we shall grow also in every earthly consolation. So that let the hour of death come when it may, we shall resign our souls without fear into the hands of Him who made us; and shall lift up our heads because our redemption is at hand.

THE END.

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