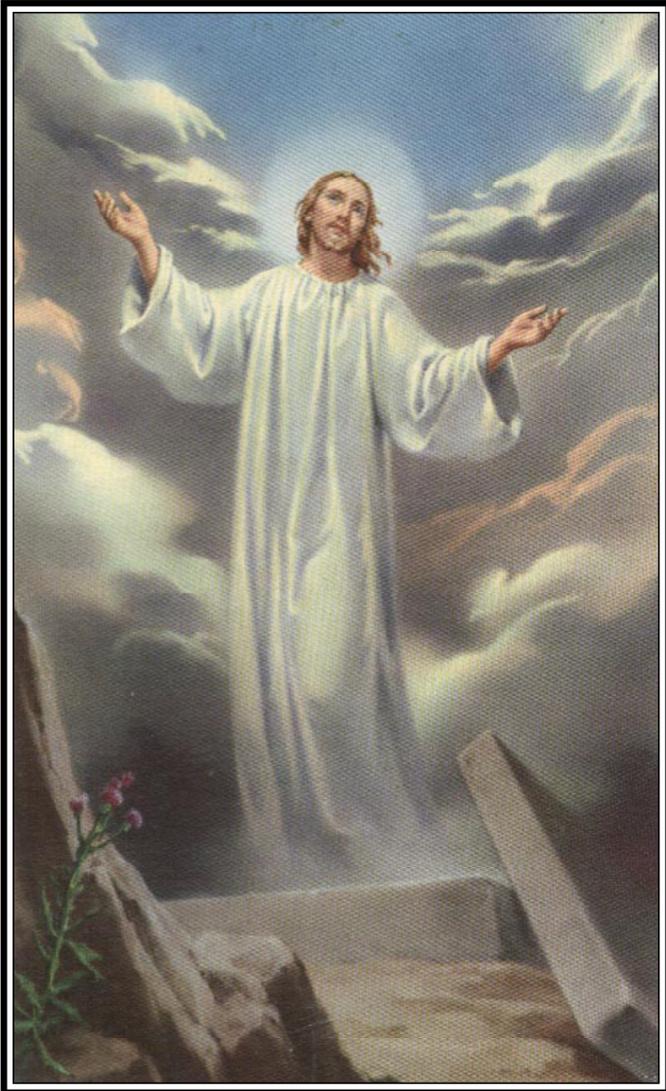


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EDITORIAL

Traditionalists are thinly disguised neo-Protestants often possessed by none other than scribes and Pharisees from the depths of Hell. A harsh saying, but nevertheless painfully true.

It would seem that history has made a complete turn and has returned to those early centuries when great saints battled against heretics and schismatics. One need only read the Fathers of the Church to be convinced of this.

The scribes and Pharisees were laymen who meddled in religion. They appeared to be zealous for the law, but in fact were the hypocrites so labeled by Jesus Christ. Today, these same “scribes and Pharisees” are not restricted to the heretical sect commonly known as “Judaism.” Their spirit jumps out at you like the Jack-in-the-Box with that same startling surprise.

The spirit of the scribe and window-dressing Pharisee shows itself in much the same way today as it did from the days of the Babylonian and Syrian captivities. Today, one might hear such bleating as “concerned Catholic layman” from the oddest

corners. And when this “concern” is seriously and objectively considered, the conclusion is always the same: Perverted ambition in an area that goes against the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

Satan has certainly succeeded in blowing the dust of dissent and division into the minds of many. Years ago, when an individual had a misunderstanding with his pastor, he did the only reasonable thing he could do: He stopped going to church. Of course, such conduct is unreasonable. But when one becomes the toy of tyrannical devils today, the exaggerated perception of evil erupts into defiantly childish absurdities.

The wolf is no longer satisfied in destroying the sheep, he would destroy the shepherd.

This is the simple picture of what passes for “Catholicism” in the minds of so many misguided (self-guided) people who fancy themselves more competent than those whom the Holy Ghost has appointed to succeed the Apostles.

It is because these “concerned”

Catholics are a danger to themselves and to others that the laws of the Church regarding censorship must be applied to the internet as a source of constant error cleverly disguised in smatterings of truth. More souls have been led astray because the Devil tempts them into thinking they are competent judges in spiritual matters.

The number of otherwise good people who have been negatively influenced by do-it-yourself “spiritual directors” and “theologians” is extremely large.

While making rosaries is a worthy use of one’s time, it is no substitute for serious prayer and study of the faith under the guidance of a qualified clergyman.

Life never goes backwards. The direction we take apart from that already defined by the Church and based on experience is certain to

end badly. For this reason we ask all those who would be Catholic to curb their curiosity in religious matters and turn their attention only to approved authors whether in reading printed matter or going on line to the many Catholic-sounding traps set up by Satan.

It is the apostate Church that has erased the necessary distinction between the “Church Teaching” and the “Church Learning”. The Church Learning, or, Taught is comprised of the laity and lower clergy (priests). The Church Teaching is comprised of a valid Pope and Bishops. This is the organization of the true Church of the New Covenant.

No one has the right to call oneself a “Catholic” who will not abide by this divinely instituted order. Those who would dispute this divinely instituted order should know that they merit the name “heretic” and “schismatic.”

**THE MAKING OF A GOOD WILL OR TRUST:
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The Bishop Speaks

Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM

THE REMNANT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AGAINST THE DEMONIC DISORIENTATION OF TRADITIONALISTS McKenna the “Theologian”

PRESERVE UNITY IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. This was done before the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the Franciscan grounds in Greece, NY.

Most readers are eager to learn of the “McKenna fallacies” as it would be proper to describe them. Before doing so, it is necessary to make a point concerning the Catholic hierarchy as opposed to the Modernist Apostate hierarchy and the usurper “bishops” of the “Traditionalist” variety.

At the time the following declaration was written and signed by four Bishops, there were only two valid and legitimate Bishops in the entire United States. Of the four Bishops, two had been consecrated by Archbishop Ngo in France. Both were from Mexico. These two Bishops were the co-consecrators with Bishop Musey in the consecration of Bishop Louis Vezelis, OFM on August 24, 1982.

On the following day, August 25, 1982, these four Bishops signed an OATH TO CONSERVE AND

The oath stated:

Because Our Lord Jesus Christ greatly desired that we should all form but one single fold under one shepherd, and praying for this unity to His heavenly Father in the prayer at the Last Supper:

“HOLY FATHER, KEEP IN THY NAME THOSE WHOM THOU HAST GIVEN ME THAT THEY MAY BE ONE EVEN AS WE ARE.” (John 17, 11)

We must occupy ourselves with the task of conserving and preserving this unity so ardently desired by our Divine Redeemer. But, we cannot conserve and preserve this unity unless we mutually promise and recognize under oath His Excellency Archbishop PETRUS MARTINUS NGO DINH

THUC as our legitimate superior and as the legitimate superior of all the faithful in the world – since the Apostolic See is vacant – in view of the fact that he is the only one who has publicly proven his fidelity to Christ, to His Church and to His doctrine.

Therefore, do you accept Archbishop Thuc as your legitimate ecclesiastical superior?

Do you promise him obedience and fidelity?

Do you vow not to proceed with any ordinations or consecrations without Archbishop Thuc’s prior authorization, or that of his legitimate successor or legitimate representative?

And furthermore, that which is of still greater importance:

Do you vow to conserve incorrupt the SACRED DEPOSIT OF THE FAITH, TO PROPAGATE IT AND TO DEFEND IT, even at the cost of your own life?

Do you vow to defend the rights of Christ and of His Church?

May Jesus, in Whose presence we have taken this oath give us the grace to accomplish it; may the Holy Virgin, our prayerful Mother, intercede for us.

EACH BISHOP SIGNED AND WITNESSED EACH OTHERS’ SIGNATURE!

This may be said to be the beginning of the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the United States and Mexico. Unfortunately, two of the signers broke their vow shortly after making it. These were Bishops Musey and Carmona. Bishop Zamora and I remained faithful to our vow.

In view of the spirit of anarchy that reigns among Traditionalists, the details of this oath were not surprisingly ignored. Despite the nefarious machinations of those inspired by Satan, the oath remained and remains valid to this day. The legitimate representative of Archbishop Ngo remains Bishop Vezelis, OFM. The fierce and frenzied attempts at character assassination on the part of certain individuals motivated by pride and ambition and a Satanic spirit of disobedience are more than giving one’s physical life that can only be

taken once. The “doctors of detraction” never cease their evil work simply because their teacher and father is no other than Satan himself.

Perhaps it is too much to expect people to honor their word and even public vows and oaths. It seems that there are never enough demands for some kind of documentation to establish some kind of objective veracity. There was a time when doctors took the Hippocratic Oath which is the embodiment of a code of medical ethics generally taken by those receiving a medical degree. Among the noble things promised is to seek the cure and health of one’s patients. Today, however, we find so many doctors eager to profit from the sufferings of their patients by feeding them poison in the name of “medicine.” So many have become the degenerate murderers of unborn infants still in a mother’s womb.

Lawyers of a particular ilk no longer work to see justice done but only expend their efforts to convince a jury with lies in favor of a client. Judges are no longer the public defenders of law and the protectors of the innocent. All down the line we encounter the lack of honesty and nobility of spirit.

Is religion an exception? I’m afraid not. Apart from the multitude of conflicting Christian sects alone, even within what is perceived to be the true Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the horns of Hell gore their victims and those who lend themselves willingly to deception.

Priests who have taken oaths no longer see the sacredness before God and man of the privileged information gained in the most hallowed of human trust in another person: the secret of the confessional. Despite the Church’s most severe censure for the violation of the secret of the confessional, there seems to be no censure strong enough to seal the lips of a man in whom trust has been misplaced.

When the Laws of the Church become an obstacle, they are ignored or cast into “doubt”.

This is the case with McKenna for whom there is only one law of the Church worthwhile: Canon 209. If he accepts this canon, how can he reject all the others?

This reminds me of my days in the seminary when during a class the Professor, Fr. Leonard Puech, OFM, explained how the salvation

of a soul or souls could be subject to the whim of a clergyman. After class, I went to him and asked him to explain how someone could do such a thing. He paused for a moment and said: “It’s very easy. They just did it.” No further explanation necessary; like so many other things today, they just do it...and hardly anyone cares. The few knowledgeable souls who protest are quickly eliminated by silence or detraction. And so, error continues; souls are lost before they even give serious thought to their condition.

Take as an example those false bishops who have some young ladies dressed as nuns or Sisters. How many parents would be willing to learn the truth that their “priest” or “bishop” is nothing more than a layman dressed in ecclesiastical attire no different than an Anglican. Just imagine the consequences: All the Sacraments and Masses are gravely sinful mockeries. But, these are supernatural realities that we know only through faith. What is immediately perceived as a “blessing” is that their children are “getting a good Catholic education” at the hands of dedicated young “Sisters” – what can be more convenient than that?

Clothed in the external symbols of Catholicity – colorful blue and white in honor of Mary; processions and other external cardboard reminders of what was once inspired by genuine faith, the masses are religiously entertained and wrapped in their illusions.

One is reminded of Simon Magus. Remember him? He was the magician who wanted to buy the power of the Holy Ghost from Peter. We read this in the Acts of the Apostles: **“Now a man named Simon had previously been practicing sorcery in that city and astounding the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; and all from least to greatest listened to him, saying, ‘This man is the power of God, which is called great.’ And they gave heed to him because for a long time he had bewitched them with his sorceries.”**

We are told that Simon also believed and was baptized and associated himself with Philip. Because Philip was only a deacon, he could not administer Confirmation upon those whom he had baptized. It is for this reason that Peter and John came – to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. On this occasion,

Simon Magus was impressed with the power coming from Peter as he laid hands upon those whom he confirmed. Simon tried to buy this power for his own lucrative purposes.

He offered money to Peter for this power. Peter replied: **“Thy money go to destruction with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money.” (Acts 8, 9-14; 20)**

From this event, we learn of something not so rare in our day: Simony – taken from the name of the man who attempted to buy spiritual power for money. There are those among the Traditionalists who, it appears, have purchased consecrations as bishops.

Simony in the strict sense refers to material bribery. There is, however, another form of Simony of a spiritual nature. Such would be the pretended acceptance of a bizarre theory of a bishop who has devised an absurd “theory” that would permit him to labor under the illusion that there is a “material pope” who is not a “formal pope.” This avoids the painful and, frankly, not very profitable problem of having to reject an anti-pope – something not very

tasty if you want people to support you.

And so, spiritual Simony is quite real among those who style themselves “Catholics forever.” Forever? How long, one might legitimately ask, is “forever?”

We will deal with this absurd theory shortly. When sound reason is sent on “vacation,” there are no limits to unbridled imagination.

Is McKenna alone in such crass deliberate rejection of the Laws of the Church? Unfortunately, he is not. Without a doubt (No need to invoke canon 209) almost all those Traditionalists do the same thing. It is merely a matter of degree. That is all. The reader is wondering what “Canon 209” is. The canon states: **“In common error or in positive and probable doubt of law or fact, the Church supplies jurisdiction for both the external and internal forum” (C.209).**

The first to violate this oath was Bishop George Musey. This he did even during the lifetime of Archbishop Ngo while the Archbishop resided at the Franciscan Friary in Greece, NY. Next to follow was Bishop Carmona who had been warned not

to involve himself in the “consecrations” of incompetents orchestrated by the laicized former clergyman, Thomas Fouhy. Altenbach was a Feenyite and Siebert was a psychological cripple who lost all free will power due to Chinese Communist torture.

From Bishops Musey and Carmona were spawned the invalid and/or schismatic bishops in violation of the seemingly “sacred” oath to which these two individuals had affixed their signatures before the Blessed Sacrament.

It is then that McKenna became impatient and chose to deal with Bishop Musey and the two other “bishops”.

Now there is such a proliferation of pseudo-bishops so cleverly arranged by the Devil himself, that people and priests would need deep faith to adhere to the true bishops.

It is for this reason that my own position as the Archbishop’s representative required me to make the public statement whereby I would not recognize as a Roman Catholic Bishop anyone in whose nomination I had no voice.

One rightly assumes that The Catholic hierarchy cannot be preserved by doubtful and/or invalid bishops.

Let the hounds of Hell rage around us, we will not be intimidated from doing our sacred duty. There are only two valid Roman Catholic Bishops in the United States having the fullness of episcopal authority given them by the Holy Ghost.

Those who may wish to dispute this may do so. However, they will have to resort to twisted theology and sophistic logic to justify their spirit of demonic anarchy. All of which makes them heretics and schismatics, placing them outside the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

It is not in the least surprising that the Devil would inspire those with a mentality inspired by the Scribes and Pharisees whose abode is Hell with a hatred for the true Bishops.

There is nothing new under the sun. The sad situation which we experience in the Church today merely echoes the same thing that had taken place in the early years of the Church.

Pope St. Leo the Great who was consecrated Bishop of Rome on

September 29, 440, was often forced to write to bishops who were abusing their positions and violating the canons of Church Law.

St. Leo the Great was writing at a time of great trial in the Church. Ambitious clergymen, often backed by laymen, were violating the canons regarding the consecration of bishops.

In a letter directed to all the bishops presiding in the sees of Caesaria Mauritania, he speaks among other things about the violation of the canon laws of his day. He writes:

“But if wise and prudent care must be exerted so that nothing may be amiss or out of order in the Lord’s house in any of the Church’s ranks, with how much greater effort must mistakes be avoided in choosing him who is set up over all ranks? The welfare and order of the Lord’s entire family will falter if what is required of the body is not likewise found in the head. In that passage where the blessed Apostle Paul, inspired by the Spirit of God, gave instruction to all Christ’s bishops in the person of Timothy, the statement is also made for each of us: ‘Do not lay hands hastily upon anyone, and

do not be a partner in other men’s sins’ (1 Tim. 5, 22).

What does ‘lay hands hastily’ mean except to give the episcopal honor to the untried, to those who have not reached the age of maturity, before the time of examination, before their obedience has been tried, before they have experienced discipline? And what is to ‘be a partner in other men’s sins’ except for the one consecrating to become like the non-deserving person whom he consecrates?”

In this same letter, St. Leo the Great writes:

“We are truly desirous that among all the regulations of the canons the following one pertaining to the episcopal dignity be observed: bishops are not to be consecrated for any sort of place, for any sort of hamlet, and for places where they did not exist previously. For where there are fewer people and smaller congregations, the care of the priests will suffice. But the rule of bishops ought to be restricted to larger groups of people and more populated cities. Otherwise, contrary to the

divinely inspired decrees of the holy Fathers, the highest priestly office will be assigned to villages and rural estates or to obscure and out of the way towns; and the honored office, to which more important matters should be entrusted, will be cheapened by the very commonness of the matter.”

Noteworthy is the common tactic of Traditionalists and all those, for that matter, who pretend to serve the Church while being secretly guilty of the very truth spoken by St. Peter regarding the care of the faithful: **“Now, I exhort the presbyters among youtend the flock of God which is among you, governing not under constraint, but willingly, according to God; nor yet for the sake of base gain, but eagerly; nor yet as lording it over your charges, but becoming from the heart a pattern to the flock. And when the Prince of the shepherds appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (I Peter 5, 1-4).**

St. Peter speaks here of bishops because he refers to himself as a “fellow-presbyter” whose duty among other things is to govern the flock of God.

The Church must have suffered from such mercenary clergy in the time of St. Peter; otherwise he would not have brought this subject up in an Epistle. Nothing has changed after almost two thousand years.

The Church can exist for a greater or shorter time without a Pope as history proves. But the Church would cease to exist if there were not at least ONE true bishop – a valid and legitimate successor of the Apostles.

This is why we say in the Credo: “... the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

It was pointed out earlier that McKenna who styles himself many things is not a valid bishop. It was further pointed out that he imprudently placed himself between those who claim to be Catholics and the only Bishop from whom they may expect valid and fruitful Sacraments as well as the spiritual guidance that only a true shepherd can give.

Again, for the sake of those who seek to find fault and would indulge in detraction rather than supernatural obedience to the shepherd provided by the Holy Ghost, we ask the

question: “From whom do you receive the authority to teach in the name of the Church?” And, their response is that they are “concerned Catholic laymen” and our answer to that would be the same: “Are you not, then, like the scribes and Pharisees – laymen who usurped the priestly authority of the Levitical priesthood?” At least the original scribes knew something about religion unlike today’s Pharisees.

For, surely, these laymen are possessed of the damned spirits of those ancient laymen who loved to be called “rabbi”. From whence can such arrogance and pride come if not from the bowels of Hell? Who would be so blind as to ascribe such a blatant disorder to the Holy Ghost Who is the soul of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ?

If we are to take seriously the words of Holy Scripture instructing us of the different fruits from the different trees, how can we reconcile the proud hostility of men like McKenna who accuses Ratzinger of being “insane” while taking upon himself the prerogatives of a Pope?

Observe the folly of this man that he has spawned by careless attempts to ordain and consecrate.

He has not prepared a single candidate to the Dominican Order in all these years, while ridiculing the humble and fanfare-free preparation of young men to the Franciscan Order and the priesthood.

He has ignored the serious and objective evaluation of the entire sect established by Marcel Lefebvre and the terrible consequences of perceived ordination and consecration by a Freemason, the religion and goal of which is to destroy the Roman Catholic Church.

This is no small thing. It is something this author cannot take lightly without violating the trust and mandate imposed upon him by the Holy Ghost at the time of consecration.

Yet, in open defiance – almost maniacal malice – McKenna flatters those Lefebvrite “clergymen” even to the point of invalidly consecrating some of these non-priests. The tragedy is that all those “Traditionalists” have fallen into the same demonic ditch – like the blind leading the blind.

Just as one example, let us consider the case of the man named Slupski. This man seems to continue offering Mass and administering the

Sacraments to a heretical and schismatic sect located in Rockford, IL.

This man Slupski was consecrated by a heretical bishop whose orders *are* valid. This can only be assumed on the testimony of Slupski himself. He showed me the document attesting to his consecration. He had no doubt that he was a bishop. Then, McKenna “consecrated” Slupski. In a public statement coming from McKenna, it was announced that he, McKenna, “consecrated Slupski ten years ago and has heard nothing from him in nine years!”

The same is true of a man by the name of Oraveck. We know enough about this man to be cautious as to his validity as a priest. When Oraveck approached me to give him faculties to hear confessions, this was granted conditionally. The condition being, of course, is that he was honest and sincere and a valid priest. Shortly thereafter, Oraveck joined McKenna, whereupon any faculties received from me automatically terminated.

The validity of the Lefebvite Sect (They have no canonical standing in the Church) was objectively

investigated and the conclusion was that Freemason Lienart could not possibly have had the required intention to ordain or consecrate because his position in the Luciferian sect of the Freemasons was completely opposed to the life of the Roman Catholic Church.

This question was already addressed on several occasions in previous issues of *The Seraph*.

But, for the convenience of the reader, the following practice of the Church is presented.

On the subject of the reiterating of the Sacraments, Noldin (A highly reputable theologian) makes the following practical remarks: “**1. In themselves, some Sacraments can be repeated such as Penance (and in certain cases MUST be) and Holy Eucharist (Which is a Sacrament permanent in itself and for the faithful); 2. Every Sacrament that is *doubtful*, provided the doubt is a prudent and reasonable one. Some *must be repeated* (Baptism especially). The same is true of the consecration so that the faithful do not commit the sin of material idolatry in venerating an unconsecrated piece of bread or a chalice of wine; likewise**

Ordination in order to assure valid Sacraments.”

Rather than humbly submit to this wisdom and prudence expressed and approved by the Church’s authorities, McKenna threw prudence and caution to the winds merely to place himself above and to contradict his bishop. Wisely did St. Caesarius of Arles emphasize the duties of a bishop on the occasion of the consecration of a bishop: He first distinguishes the correct motive for anyone aspiring to become a bishop from that base and despicable motive born of arrogance and ambition.

He says in this sermon: **“...I advise you with a unique and singular charity, that authority may not be lacking to your humility, that gentleness may offset your firmness, mildness temper your justice, and patience restrain your freedom of action. Avoid pride, into which it is natural for anyone to fall, and pursue humility, in which everyone ought to grow. Let your beloved self not be ignorant of the laws of the Church, in order that you may keep the rights of your authority within the rules and regulations of the Fathers. To be sure it is said ‘that the law is not**

aimed at the good man,’ because he fulfills the norm of the precept by the judgment of his will. True love holds within itself both the authority of the Apostles and canonical sanctions, and let your pious will always pursue examples of these.”

Pope St. Leo the Great was writing to set aright some departure from the **“canons of the holy Fathers established through the Holy Spirit and hallowed by the respect of the entire world...”** He further puts stress on the observance of the canons (laws) of the Church: **“...They are not to depart from established ordinances by any neglect or presumption.”** A mere mention concerning the choice of candidates to the episcopacy can be made: **“This choosing of bishops is so pre-eminent a matter that what is not called a fault for other members of the Church is, nevertheless, to be considered illicit for them.”**

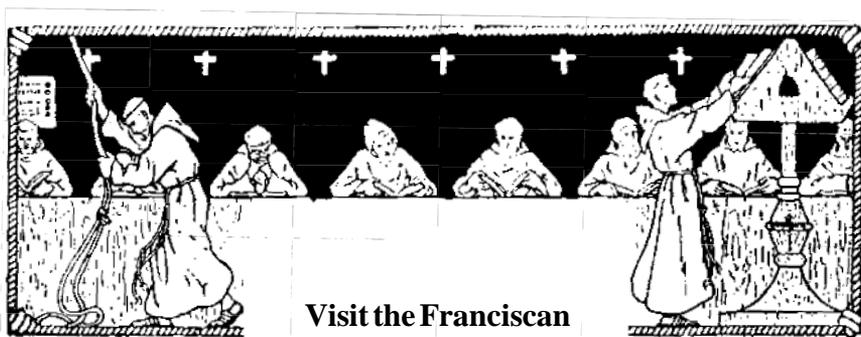
Just as there is a super-abundance of “popes” today, there is also a plethora of “bishops” designed by Satan to confound and confuse the people.

As a matter of principle for the protection of the faith and salvation of all those who wish to remain Catholics and to persevere in the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ until called by God, let this injunction, warning and admonition suffice for the wise and prudent:

Robert Fidelis McKenna *is not a valid Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church. At best he is of doubtful validity. Therefore, any actions presumed by this*

man under whatever disguise or presumption can only be considered DOUBTFUL. Any administration of Catholic Sacraments by this man can only be regarded as doubtful and sacrilegious.

We will finally end this discussion of McKenna as a bishop, restraining from any stronger comments in a spirit of charity. Our next issue of The Seraph will consider McKenna's erratic "theology".



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Archbishop Ngo-Dinh-Thuc Martyr for the Faith

On February 25, 1981, Archbishop Ngo-Dinh-Thuc (elder brother of assassinated president of South Vietnam, President Ngo-Dinh-Diem) made a startling public declaration. He spoke as a Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church - successor of the Apostles - and with full knowledge of his episcopal authority.

Archbishop Ngo was hated by a lot of people - including his own countrymen, among whom were those he had seen to the altar of God as priests. He was a real problem for the Conciliar Modernists because he was not just an ordinary Archbishop, but even more: he was the older brother of the President of Vietnam.

Until Archbishop Ngo, there was anarchy. There is still anarchy only because the anarchists profit by the confusion they create. The order established by God continues, just as the crucifixion did not put an end to the Church.

The Archbishop condemned the New Mass and the New Sacraments as invalid. He condemned the Modernism reigning supreme in the Vatican; He condemned the false ecumenism, the adoration of man (the cult of man), religious liberty to embrace any religion whatever; the refusal of Church authorities to condemn heresies and to expel heretics. As a necessary and logical conclusion to

all the accusations made - accusations which really needed no proof because their truth was so public - Archbishop Ngo declared:

“Ideo, quatenus episcopus Ecclesiae Catholicae Romanae, judico sedem Ecclesiae Catholicae Romanae vacantem esse, et oportet me, uti episcopus, omnia facere ut Ecclesias Catholicae Romae perduret ad salutem aeternam animarum.”

What this declaration means is that he, Archbishop Ngo, having weighed all that was transpiring in Rome and elsewhere was forced to one conclusion: All the evils poisoning the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ can have but one source: the very heart of Catholicism: the Vatican! The blood is poisoned with Modernism, as Pope St. Pius X had stated in his Encyclical Letter “Pascendi” against Modernism. Archbishop Ngo perceived this same thing and as a faithful and courageous bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, he knew he must act.

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THE NATIONS THE
BUILDING

(Continued)

Now, the persecution of Domitian lasted but a short time, and therefore brief was the suffering of the Church and the fear of those who had embraced it. Besides, if there had been many apostasies, it would be

hard to explain the splendid condition of the Church so very soon after, in the time of Trajan; and difficult also to understand what Tertullian says at the end of the second century or the beginning of the third: "If we should separate ourselves from you, your kingdom would scarcely stand, weakened by the loss of so many and such good citizens." So certain was he of what he wrote that he feared not to cry out in the very face of the pagans, that the Christians filled every province that belonged to the empire, the cities, the islands, the forts, the towns, the camps, the palace, the senate, the forum, all places save the temples where they (the pagans) worshiped their lying divinities.

Passing over every other testimony upon this point, let me conclude this part of my argument by affirming that either Tacitus, Pliny, Clement the Roman, and Tertullian were utterly deceived upon a point concerning which they had certainly the best possible information, or Renan and all his followers are utterly unworthy of credence. For surely, if they refuse to believe Clement and Tertullian, accusing them of wishing to add glory to the Christian Church, they certainly cannot accuse Tacitus and Pliny of

the same motives. It seems to me, therefore, that nothing can be plainer from a historical standpoint than the fact that from the very beginning the number of converts won over to Christianity was marvelously large.

So we may consider as established the first proposition we set out to prove, namely, from its very beginning the Christian Church was no mere handful of people, but a vast organization, the influence and power of which were promptly recognized by the rulers, both ecclesiastical and civil, of the Jewish and pagan world of that day.

We now come to the second question: What was the character of these converts? What was their position, socially and intellectually? Were they people of the lowest classes only and a multitude of credulous women, or were they rather gathered from every class?

The object of our enemies in asserting that the Church's following is made, and from the first always consisted, of people worthy of small consideration, is to throw a shadow upon the noble character of the Church's influence. Were this not historically false, we might pass it over in silence without delaying to refute it. For with the followers of

the true faith, nobility and greatness do not consist in mere pride of birth, ancestry, or wealth; but in the virtue of the soul, in humility, in justice and charity. But for the sake of historical truth, if for no other reason, we must turn the light of research upon the origins of the Church. In this light it will be easily seen that the doctrine of Christ, while giving consolation and comfort to the lowly, nevertheless, in all times, has brought to its allegiance the rich, the powerful, and the learned; because incomparably better and clearer than any other system of philosophy, it solved the great questions of life.

To begin with the time of Christ, Joseph of Arimathea, one of the early disciples of Christ, was a rich man and a member of the Sanhedrim. Again, Nicodemus, also one of the early disciples, was a Jewish prince. Lazarus was a rich ruler who had great possessions. Joanna, one of the women who ministered to Him, was wife of Chusa, Herod's steward. Zaccheus, too, was a nobleman and very rich.

In the Acts, we are told that a great number of priests became subject to the faith, and we know that the priests, among the Jews, were of the most honorable class of society. Among those who first received the

faith from the Apostles was Cornelius, a noble centurion, who was converted with all his family and baptized by St. Peter. One of the early converts of St. Paul was Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus. We are distinctly told that the chamberlain of the queen of the Ethiopians, who was baptized by Philip the disciple, was a man of great authority. That the new faith satisfied the minds of the most learned philosophers of the day, is plain from the fact of the conversion of Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, the greatest school of learning of its day. St. Luke, again writing of the converts made by the preaching of St. Paul, tells us that among the number were many noble women.

Now, to turn from the Sacred Writings to authors of the period just later, how and by what arguments can our calumniators prove that among the immense number of Christians spoken of by Tacitus, and described by Clement, were only people of the lowest classes; since we know that in the times of Titus and Domitian, among the Christians of that day, are to be numbered Flavius Clemens, a consul, and Flavia Domitilla, who was the niece of Domitian; as well as Glabrio, who was a consul under Trajan.

Moreover, we learn from the Apologists that many of those who dwelt in the imperial palace professed the faith, some of them even of the blood of the Caesars; and this fact is attested by St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians from Rome: "All salute you, especially they that are of Caesar's household." (Phil. iv, 22.)

Pliny, the Younger, writing to Trajan about the beginning of the second century, describing the inroads which Christianity was making in the province of Bithynia, assures the Emperor that the professors of the Christian religion were of every age and condition and rank. In the Acts of the Martyrs, we read that about the year 150, one of those who suffered for the faith under the emperor Antoninus, was St. Felicitas, who was designated as "*illustris femina*," by which appellation it was intended to indicate her noble birth. Again in the same place mention is made of a certain Marius, a general of the army, put to death during the persecution of Adrian. Eusebius of Caesarea, in his fourth book of Ecclesiastical History, has a magnificent eulogy on Vitius Epagatus, a member of a noble senatorial family who suffered martyrdom under Lucius Virus. To

conclude this list of testimony, which more than proves the absurdity of the calumny, we might finally cite the words of Tertullian who, in his apology for the Christians, boldly declares “that they filled every office, and even were to be numbered among the Senate, and that they were no strangers in the Curia, the palace or the army.”

It is plain, therefore, that the Church was Catholic in every sense, from the very beginning. As Christ had died for all, the rich and the poor, the titled and the humble, so His voice and His inspiration reached to every class and position in life, and His Apostles and disciples, who were no respecters of persons, invited to His divine banquet plebeian and patrician alike. Thus was fulfilled the design of His commission, “Go preach the Gospel to every creature.”

Now we come to the third part of the conference, which is to show that this great multitude of people of every class were moved to place themselves under the banner of Christianity, not by human considerations or natural causes, but by supernatural motives, and that, therefore, the wonderful spread of the Gospel was the result of a special Providence and one of the greatest

proofs of the Divine origin of the Church.

To understand the difficulties that confronted the Apostles and early preachers of the Word, in propagating the faith, and in persuading men of the truth of the Christian religion, it is necessary to glance at the character of the superstitions which prevailed at that time, and at the general opinion in which the faith of Christ was held. The two religions prevailing were the Hebrew and the Pagan. The first was the inheritance of a particular nation, which was to all intents and purposes completely isolated from the rest of the world, and which held all other nations in contempt. It nevertheless could boast, and truly, that it was the true religion and one revealed by God; whereas the religion of the Gentiles was totally rotten and corrupt, a religion in which the human passions were allowed freest indulgence; indeed, their very gods were the deified patrons of crime. Both, from different causes, had the strongest possible hold upon the people that professed them. The Hebrews were sure of the truth which their religion preserved, and which had been confirmed again and again by sublime miracles and marvelous prophecies. The Gentiles clung most

tenaciously to their worship of idols because it laid no restraint upon their passions, it satisfied their desire of public pomp and ceremony; and, besides, it was maintained by the state, and its chief patrons were the Roman Emperors, the princes of the various countries, and therefore it was the fashionable religion. Now, what was the opinion which the followers of both these religions entertained of the religion of Christ? St. Paul sums it all up when he writes to the Corinthians “that he preached Christ Crucified, a scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles.” Therefore to convert either Jews or Gentiles to the faith, it was necessary to prove that this same Christ, a blasphemy to one and a ridicule to the other, was God Himself, Wisdom and Virtue incarnate, in whose Name alone could be found eternal salvation.

To realize the full extent of the tremendous change of sentiment which was necessary to take place in the heart and mind of a Jew, before he could give his assent to the doctrines of Christianity, we need but recall the story of the life of Christ, to review the scenes, in which are plainly set forth the fierce tenacity, the obdurate prejudice, insurmountable even by the sight of the greatest miracles, with which the

Hebrew nation clung to its ancient religion, and the dreadful opposition, carried out with the most cruel heartlessness, with which it spurned every attempt to draw it from its stubborn allegiance to the traditional faith.

If, on the other hand, we consider the obstacles which Paganism placed in the path of Christianity, the difficulty seems even greater. For the Jews, at least, already possessed a moral code, and a knowledge of the attributes of the true God. The substance of Christianity was already foreshadowed in their laws and doctrines. But with the Gentiles there was absolutely no foundation to work upon, and no common field whereon to meet. In fact; Christianity was the very reverse of Paganism. It had to start from the beginning, and had even to demolish what existed before it could establish first principles. It meant the utter destruction of most cherished idols; for with all their laxity of morals and corruption of ideals, their gods of bronze and marble were dear to them as the apple of the eye. Were not the imperial Caesars themselves honored as gods? Therefore, to destroy the gods meant the destruction of the Caesars; and that of course was highest treason.

Again, consider the prejudices of caste which the magnificent democracy of Christianity completely ignored. With the Roman, the slave was a possession, a chattel, a thing, whose very existence depended upon the clemency of his master. The new religion proclaimed that God was no respecter of persons; that in His eyes, the soul of the slave was quite as precious and of precisely equal value as the soul of the senator, the consul, and the emperor. How could a Roman ever be brought to accept such a doctrine? Then, again, Christianity put a bridle upon the passions, it prohibited the sinful debaucheries that characterized their festivals and holidays; in fact, it meant the complete subversion of every law and custom in which they had been brought up and educated, and which formed an essential part of the national life and their individual existence. Is it any wonder that St. Paul calls the faith “a scandal” to the Jews, and “foolishness to the Gentiles”?

Could any human power prevail against such opposition? With the Jews, Christ was a false pretender, a lying impostor; with the Romans and the Gentile world, He was simply a common criminal, a vile

malefactor, for as such His death upon the Cross had stamped Him.

To the words and preaching of Christ, the Jews cited in opposition Moses and their prophets; to the pretensions of this crucified slave, the Romans held up to view the glorious attributes of Jove. If the common people were told that this Christ was God, they would naturally laugh and ask: “How is it, then, that He could not liberate Himself from the hands of the Jews?” Moreover, as a reward for giving up all their cherished gratifications and indulgences in the freedom of life, all that was offered to them by Christianity was tribulation, persecution, and the contempt of their fellow-men. Now, besides, who were these people who preached this strange doctrine? They had neither learning nor fame nor wealth to give them standing or reputation with even the poorest and humblest of the people.

When we consider all this, the natural hesitation to give up a religion cherished by one’s ancestors, and in which one has been reared, added to the apparent unreasonableness and disadvantage of the whole system of belief, what human reason or force could prevail to turn the veneration of Manes and

Penates into the adoration of the Son of God? And yet this came to pass. The rites of the Gentiles fell into disuse, the statues and images of their idols were broken into pieces; the Cross of Christ was planted in the public places; the Emperors themselves submitted to the yoke of Christ, and the whole world rang with the victory of Christianity. Christ finally conquered. Christ ruled even in Jerusalem and Rome itself. This is among the greatest miracles which God has ever wrought. It is the fact which never can be explained, unless it be at once admitted that not for human motives or by human causes or by human influence, but by the special providence of God this wonderful change was accomplished.

There were, indeed, some circumstances which, though they were utterly unavailable to explain the wonderful propagation of Christianity, nevertheless favored and assisted its growth once established. Thus, for instance, the uniting of nearly all the world under the single dominion of the Roman Empire, and so establishing facility of intercourse and communication between all the provinces and the great capital; the almost universal use of the Greek language, establishing a common means of disseminating

ideas, and the active trade which at that time was carried on between the various nations. But is it not plain in the light of after events, that all these circumstances were designs of that great Providence which wished to lead back to the knowledge of the truth, and bind together in the bonds of brotherhood the scattered children of men?

Suppose, the better to realize the extent of this wonderful diffusion of the truth, we briefly trace its march through the various countries where it successively set up its throne. First, it becomes visible in Palestine and Syria; thence it spreads to Mesopotamia, to Asia Minor, to Egypt. Onward still farther to the south, it marches in triumph to Nubia and Ethiopia, extending even into Arabia. Westward we follow its course through Greece and Italy, till it reaches the very centre of Paganism, Rome.

From Rome, its champions carry the banner of the Cross into Gaul, invading the strongholds of infidelity at Arles, Limoges, Marseilles and Aix. Crossing the snowy heights of the Pyrenees, it descends into the confines of Spain, to Saragossa and Tarragona; then across the seas into the islands of the oceans thought then to be the ends of the world. To

York, and London, and Lincoln, the new faith is borne by these heralds of the cross.

The impassable Alps proved no barrier to its progress, for next we see in Germany, along the Rhine, the people gathered to hear the tidings of peace. At Cologne, at Mayence, and Strasburg, the northern barbarians were led willing captives to Christ. Neither the arid plains nor the burning deserts of the East proved more impassable than the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the sea. To the farthest East, to Assyria, to Persia and distant Parthia and onward still to India, the voice of God was carried, was heard and obeyed, so that it might be truly said:

“In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum”; for at that time, these were the limits of the known world.

In three short centuries, with every human agency against them, with the threats of rulers sounding in their ears, and the sword of princes gleaming before their eyes, undaunted, undismayed, the first followers of Christ stood before frowning strangers and sneering philosophers, and in spite of every obstacle won the whole world from blackest night of superstition and idolatry to the bright light of Christian truth.

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Everyone Has A Religion

The need for faith is engraved in our
heart

It is a longing from the start.

We either follow our Lord Jesus and
His Church;

Or the devil and his legion.

Thus, we all have a religion.

It is all disguised into the worship of
the moon, the sun, constant
references to the solstice, the
goddess Gaia,

And of course Halloween.

Some follow Rock and Roll music, TV
and the movie screen.

There are many cults which consider
themselves righteous and are
enamored with their own
beauty.

One way is narrow, the other offers a
wide

Assortment of “fun and games” with
no

Supernatural direction, no sense of
right or wrong, no obligation,
no duty.

From morning to nightfall no time nor
desire to pray for self, others
or to repent.

Gossip is permitted and there is plenty
of time to complain and to
resent.

Some say: “I am not religious”, but I
Saw one woman in a black costume

Of a “witch” on All Hallow’s Eve.
What a way to deceive!

There are those who are constantly
meditating in Alcoholic
Anonymous and Alanon!

Who do they pray to?

What do they say?

What do they hear?

Who is their seer?

The Buddhists and the Hindus I meet
Are yelling in unison: “peace” and are
Awaiting their death and
reincarnation,

As well as Buddha’s return in his fifth
emanation.

More individuals born into the “true-
faith,” are all over the place,
Choosing all kinds of Protestant sects.
Running and seeking and not able to
discern

Our sweet Redeemer Jesus said: “Will
there be any faith left when I
return??”

It is very disturbing to be around
these days

Do not expect any praise

However, when we stand alone in a
small or large crowd, we do
get strength from our friends
in heaven who send us
messages in their own ways.

Even through heavenly rays!

By J.M.

Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.

HOLY WATER

On the eve of the First Friday the ladies of the Sanctuary Society were preparing the altar for Mass on the following morning.



“Miss Brown,” one of the ladies whispered, “there is practically no holy water in the fonts at the church door and the supply in the sacristy seems to be exhausted. It

hardly seems possible that it could be exhausted so soon; it is only a month since Easter.”

Miss Brown smiled. “We do not use Easter water in the holy water fonts. The water blessed on Holy Saturday is intended to be used in the baptismal font for the solemn administration of the Sacrament of Baptism in the church, but is not essential in case of necessity. Before the oil of catechumens is poured in, some of the water is given to the people to sprinkle in their homes on Holy Saturday morning. The holy

water used in the fonts and in the administration of the other Sacraments and at the Asperges before Mass is different from Easter water and has its own special blessing which may be given at any time during the year. We shall ask Father White to bless some holy water for us. If you come with me, I will show you what to prepare. We need water and a little bowl of salt.”

“Salt?” Miss Brown’s companion asked.

“Yes,” the sacristan answered. “When the priest blesses the water, he first blesses salt, then the water, and mixes both together with special prayers. The water is emblematic of purity of soul while the salt expresses prudence and incorruption, the combination being the symbol of purity and incorruption, namely, of holiness and immortality.”

Father White came into the sacristy and, on learning that holy water was needed, put on his surplice and violet stole and began the beautiful prayers for the blessing of the holy water. When he had finished, he sprinkled the little group that knelt

in the sacristy. As he removed the stole and as they arose from their knees, Miss Brown said: “Now, Father, would you mind telling us something about the prayers you have just read in Latin?”

“Briefly, the prayers beg God to infuse into the combination of salt and water the power of His blessing that He may protect us from every bodily and spiritual ill and from the wickedness and deceits of the devil. Ancient writers of the Church show us that holy water was used from the very beginning in the ceremonials of the Church and forms of blessing water exist from the fifth or sixth centuries.

“Holy water fonts at the church doors may be traced to the fountain supplying water to the basin which was used for the purification of the hands and faces of the worshipers as they entered the church. This washing was an expression of respect for the Holy Eucharist, for the Blessed Sacrament was placed in the right hand of each communicant. When the Church, in the sixth century, ceased the custom of placing the Blessed Sacrament in the hand of the communicant, the basins disappeared to be replaced by the holy water fonts with which we are familiar.

“The Asperges or sprinkling of the congregation with holy water before the principal Mass on Sunday, probably grew out of the custom of blessing water for the Faithful on Sundays. Its object is to drive away distractions and to move the congregation to sentiments of penance and reverence. To receive the benefit of the Asperges it is not necessary that the holy water reach each individual in the congregation. There is an Indulgence of 100 days each time that one, having contrition for his sins, makes the Sign of the Cross with holy water, saying at the same time, ‘In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.’ In the middle ages holy water was not taken on leaving the church; the modern custom, however, because of the Indulgences which may be gained, is to take holy water both on entering and leaving the church.”

Every Catholic family should have holy water in the house not only for the time of illness, when the priest comes to give the Sacraments, but for daily use. A Catholic mother should sprinkle her little one with holy water before they fall asleep at night and teach them to say the words, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.”

The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

(Continued)

“But do not think that the soul receives such ardor and nourishment from prayer, if she pray only vocally, as do many souls whose prayers are rather words than love. Such as these give heed to nothing except to completing Psalms and saying many paternosters. And when they have once completed their appointed tale, they do not appear to think of anything further, but seem to place devout attention and love in merely vocal recitation, which the soul is not required to do, for, in doing only this, she bears but little fruit, which pleases Me but little. But if you ask Me, whether the soul should abandon vocal prayer, since it does not seem to all that they are called to mental prayer, I should reply ‘No.’ The soul should advance by degrees, and I know well that, just as the soul is at first imperfect and afterwards perfect, so also is it with her prayer. She should nevertheless continue in vocal prayer, while she is yet imperfect, so as not to fall into idleness. But she should not say her vocal prayers without joining them to mental

prayer, that is to say, that while she is reciting, she should endeavor to elevate her mind in My love, with the consideration of her own defects and of the Blood of My only-begotten Son, wherein she finds the breadth of My charity and the remission of her sins. And this she should do, so that self-knowledge and the consideration of her own defects should make her recognize My goodness in herself and continue her exercises with true humility. I do not wish defects to be considered in particular, but in general, so that the mind may not be contaminated by the remembrance of particular and hideous sins. But, as I said, I do not wish the soul to consider her sins, either in general or in particular, without also remembering the Blood and the broadness of My mercy, for fear that otherwise she should be brought to confusion. And together with confusion would come the Devil, who has caused it, under color of contrition and displeasure of sin, and so she would arrive at eternal damnation, not only on account of her confusion, but also through the despair which would come to her, because she did not

seize the arm of My mercy. This is one of the subtle devices with which the Devil deludes My servants, and, in order to escape from his deceit, and to be pleasing to Me, you must enlarge your hearts and affections in My boundless mercy, with true humility. You know that the pride of the Devil cannot resist the humble mind, nor can any confusion of spirit be greater than the broadness of My good mercy, if the soul will only truly hope therein. Wherefore it was, if you remember rightly, that, once, when the Devil wished to overthrow you, by confusion, wishing to prove to you that your life had been deluded, and that you had not followed My will, you did that which was your duty, which My goodness (which is never withheld from him who will receive it) gave you strength to do, that is you rose, humbly trusting in My mercy, and saying: 'I confess to my Creator that my life has indeed been passed in darkness, but I will hide myself in the wounds of Christ crucified, and bathe myself in His Blood and so shall my iniquities be consumed, and with desire will I rejoice in my Creator.' You remember that then the Devil fled, and, turning round to the opposite side, he endeavored to inflate you with pride, saying: 'You are perfect and pleasing to God, and there is no more need for you to

afflict yourself or to lament your sins.' And once more I gave you the light to see your true path, namely, humiliation of yourself, and you answered the Devil with these words: 'Wretch that I am, John the Baptist never sinned and was sanctified in his mother's womb. And I have committed so many sins, and have hardly begun to know them with grief and true contrition, seeing who God is, who is offended by me, and who I am, who offend Him.' Then the Devil, not being able to resist your humble hope in My goodness, said to you: 'Cursed that you are, for I can find no way to take you. If I put you down through confusion, you rise to Heaven on the wings of mercy, and if I raise you on high, you humble yourself down to Hell, and when I go into Hell you persecute me, so that I will return to you no more, because you strike me with the stick of charity.' The soul, therefore, should season the knowledge of herself with the knowledge of My goodness, and then vocal prayer will be of use to the soul who makes it, and pleasing to Me, and she will arrive, from the vocal imperfect prayer, exercised with perseverance, at perfect mental prayer; but if she simply aims at completing her tale, and, for vocal abandons mental prayer, she will never arrive at it. Sometimes the soul

will be so ignorant that, having resolved to say so many prayers vocally, and I, visiting her mind sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another, in a flash of self-knowledge or of contrition for sin, sometimes in the broadness of My charity, and sometimes by placing before her mind, in diverse ways, according to My pleasure and the desire of the soul, the presence of My Truth, she (the soul), in order to complete her tale, will abandon My visitation, that she feels, as it were, by conscience, rather than abandon that which she had begun. She should not do so, for, in so doing, she yields to a deception of the Devil. The moment she feels her mind disposed by My visitation, in the many ways I have told you, she should abandon vocal prayer; then, My visitation past, if there be time, she can resume the vocal prayers which she had resolved to say, but if she has not time to complete them, she ought not on that account to be troubled or suffer annoyance and confusion of mind; of course provided that it were not the Divine office which clerics and religious are bound and obliged to say under penalty of offending Me, for, they must, until death, say their office. But if they, at the hour appointed for saying it, should feel their minds drawn and raised by desire, they

should so arrange as to say it before or after My visitation, so that the debt of rendering the office be not omitted. But, in any other case, vocal prayer should be immediately abandoned for the said cause. Vocal prayer, made in the way that I have told you, will enable the soul to arrive at perfection, and therefore she should not abandon it, but use it in the way that I have told you.

And so, with exercise in perseverance, she will taste prayer in truth, and the food of the Blood of My only-begotten Son, and therefore I told you that some communicated virtually with the Body and Blood of Christ, although not sacramentally; that is, they communicate in the affection of charity, which they taste by means of holy prayer, little or much, according to the affection with which they pray. They who proceed with little prudence and without method, taste little, and they who proceed with much, taste much. For the more the soul tries to loosen her affection from herself, and fasten it in Me with the light of the intellect, the more she knows; and the more she knows, the more she loves, and, loving much, she tastes much. You see then, that perfect prayer is not attained to through many words, but through affection of desire, the soul

raising herself to Me, with knowledge of herself and of My mercy, seasoned the one with the other. Thus she will exercise together mental and vocal prayer, for, even as the active and contemplative life is one, so are they. Although vocal or mental prayer can be understood in many and diverse ways, for I have told you that a holy desire is a continual prayer, in this sense that a good and holy will disposes itself with desire to the occasion actually appointed for prayer in addition to the continual prayer of holy desire, wherefore vocal prayer will be made at the appointed time by the soul who remains firm in a habitual holy will, and will sometimes be continued beyond the appointed time, according as charity commands for the salvation of the neighbor, if the soul see him to be in need, and also her own necessities according to the state in which I have placed her. Each one, according to his condition, ought to exert himself for the salvation of souls, for this exercise lies at the root of a holy will, and whatever he may contribute, by words or deeds, towards the salvation of his neighbor, is virtually a prayer, although it does not replace a prayer which one should make oneself at the appointed season, as My glorious standard-bearer Paul said,

in the words, 'He who ceases not to work ceases not to pray.' It was for this reason that I told you that prayer was made in many ways, that is, that actual prayer may be united with mental prayer if made with the affection of charity, which charity is itself continual prayer. I have now told you how mental prayer is reached by exercise and perseverance, and by leaving vocal prayer for mental when I visit the soul. I have also spoken to you of common prayer, that is, of vocal prayer in general, made outside of ordained times, and of the prayers of good-will, and how every exercise, whether performed in oneself or in one's neighbor, with good-will, is prayer. The enclosed soul should therefore spur herself on with prayer, and when she has arrived at friendly and filial love she does so. Unless the soul keep to this path, she will always remain tepid and imperfect, and will only love Me and her neighbor in proportion to the pleasure which she finds in My service."

Of the method by which the soul separates herself from imperfect love, and attains to perfect love, friendly and filial.

"Hitherto I have shown you in many ways how the soul raises herself

from imperfection and attains to perfection, which she does after she has attained to friendly and filial love. I tell you that she arrives at perfect love by means of perseverance, barring herself into the House of Self-Knowledge, which knowledge of self requires to be seasoned with knowledge of Me, lest it bring the soul to confusion, for it would cause the soul to hate her own sensitive pleasure and the delight of her own consolations. But from this hatred, founded in humility, she will draw patience, with which she will become strong against the attacks of the Devil, against the persecutions of man, and towards Me, when, for her good, I withdraw delight from her mind. And if her sensuality, through malevolence, should lift its head against reason, the judgment of conscience should rise against it, and, with hatred of it, hold out reason against it, not allowing such evil emotions to get by it. Though sometimes the soul who lives in holy hatred corrects and reproves herself, not only for those things that are against reason, but also for things that in reality come from Me, which is what My sweet servant S. Gregory meant, when he said that a holy and pure conscience made sin where there was no sin, that is, that through purity of conscience, it saw sin where there was no sin.

“Now the soul who wishes to rise above imperfection should await My Providence in the House of Self-Knowledge, with the light of faith, as did the disciples, who remained in the house in perseverance and in watching, and in humble and continual prayer, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. She should remain fasting and watching, the eye of her intellect fastened on the doctrine of My Truth, and she will become humble because she will know herself in humble and continual prayer and holy and true desire.”

Of the signs by which the soul knows she has arrived at perfect love.

“It now remains to be told you how it can be seen that souls have arrived at perfect love. This is seen by the same sign that was given to the holy disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit, when they came forth from the house, and fearlessly announced the doctrine of My Word, My only-begotten Son, not fearing pain, but rather glorying therein. They did not mind going before the tyrants of the world, to announce to them the truth, for the glory and praise of My Name. So the soul, who has awaited Me in self-

knowledge as I have told you, receives Me, on My return to her, with the fire of charity, in which charity, while still remaining in the house with perseverance, she conceives the virtues by affection of love, participating in My power; with which power and virtues she overrules and conquers her own sensitive passions, and through which charity she participates in the wisdom of My Son, in which she sees and knows, with the eye of her intellect, My Truth and the deceptions of spiritual self-love, that is, the imperfect love of her own consolations, as has been said, and she knows also the malice and deceit of the devil, which he practices on those souls who are bound by that imperfect love. She therefore arises, with hatred of that imperfection and with love of perfection, and, through this charity, which is of the Holy Spirit, she participates in His will, fortifying her own to be willing to suffer pain, and, coming out of the house through My Name, she brings forth the virtues on her neighbor. Not that by coming out to bring forth the virtues, I mean that she issues out of the House of Self-Knowledge, but that, in the time of the neighbor's necessity she loses that fear of being deprived of her own consolations, and so issues forth to give birth to those virtues

which she has conceived through affection of love. The souls, who have thus come forth, have reached the fourth state, that is, from the third state, which is a perfect state, in which they taste charity and give birth to it on their neighbors, they have arrived at the fourth state, which is one of perfect union with Me. The two last-mentioned states are united, that is to say, one cannot be without the other, for there cannot be love of Me, without love of the neighbor, nor love of the neighbor without love of Me.”

(To be continued)



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