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EDITORIAL

There is a Credo in the Roman Catholic Church that has been almost lost in oblivion. This Credo has been the target for forgetfulness in the Apostate Church because of what it clearly states concerning the Roman Catholic Church and salvation.

The name of this Credo has taken the name of its author, the Deacon, St. Athanasius. Accordingly, it is known as the “Athanasian Creed”.

It was said in the Divine Office on certain Sundays of the liturgical year at Prime which is one of the liturgical hours. It was the unhappy victim of the ecumenical axe that chopped away at everything genuinely Catholic. It had to go because it taught a doctrine incompatible with the new religion of syncretism.

However, the Athanasian Creed is still in force in the true Roman Catholic Church of all time.

What was so offensive to the Modernist heretics in this creed that nothing was spared just to erase this one truth from the memory of man?

Quite simply, the very beginning of the creed destroyed any and all doubt as to the necessity of the Roman Catholic Church for salvation. The creed begins: **“Whosoever wills to be saved must before all else hold true to the Catholic faith. And unless everyone keeps this faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he will perish forever.”**

St. Athanasius was only a deacon. Yet, He is given the illustrious title of “Father of Orthodoxy” because he stood before all others as the greatest luminary among the Oriental Doctors. He was chosen by God to be the champion and defender of His Church against the Arian heresy

Athanasius was born in Alexandria about the year 296 and was ordained a deacon in 319. He was chosen by his Bishop to accompany him to the Council of Nice. Athanasius’ acuteness, learning and eloquence in that Council primarily led the Council to condemn Arianism.

We Catholics of our day can learn much from the example of this

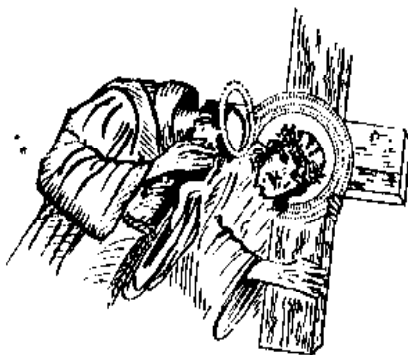
intrepid warrior of God against all error and heresy.

When Alexander died in 328, Athanasius became the patriarch of Alexandria. During forty-five years, he withstood, often almost alone, the whole brunt of the Arian attacks. He stood unmoved against four Roman Emperors, was banished five times, was the butt of every wrong and calumny the Arians could invent and lived in constant peril of death. Firm and unbending in defense of the Catholic faith, it is no wonder that he merited the honorable title of “Father of Orthodoxy.” His stormy life ended in peace, 373 A.D.

Well worth our attention are the truths yet to become a reality: **“...He shall come to judge the living and the dead; at Whose coming all men shall rise again in their bodies, and shall give an account of their works. They that have done good shall go into**

everlasting life, but they that have done evil into everlasting fire. All this is Catholic faith which, every man must believe faithfully and firmly, else he cannot be saved.”

What then must be thought of the “Spirit of Vatican II”? What, then, must be thought of Ratzinger *alias* “Pope Benedict XVI”? May the spirit of St. Athanasius take possession of those who must do battle against all enemies of the Church – whatever pietistic titles they may give themselves.



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THE SERAPH

The Bishop Speaks

Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM

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

In his Encyclical Letter *Aeterni Patris*, Pope Leo XIII rightly praised the study of what has become known as “Scholastic Philosophy.”

Encyclical Letters are directed to the teaching authority of the Church and not to just anyone. That is why in the introduction of such a solemn statement, the Pope addresses those to whom the Encyclical is directed:

“To Our Venerable Brethren, All Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic World, In Grace and Communion With the Apostolic See...” And then the subject matter of the letter follows.

Note well to whom the Encyclical is first and foremost directed. The “venerable brethren” is then listed. Nowhere does the letter address the “ecclesia discens” – the “Church

learning” which is comprised of lower clergy and the laity.

The Pope addresses his venerable brethren who make up the “ecclesia docens” – the “teaching Church” for a reason.

The reason is based on the divine order established by Jesus Christ when, among other things, He commanded the apostles, as the Pope affirms from Holy Scripture **“to go and teach all nations (Matt. 28, 19), and left the Church which He had founded to be the common and supreme teacher of the peoples. For men, whom the truth had set free, were to be preserved by the truth; nor would the fruits of heavenly doctrines by which salvation comes to men, have long remained had not the Lord Christ appointed an unfailing authority for the instruction of the faithful.”**

This true Pope of the Roman Catholic Church stresses the point that **“The Church...so faithfully followed out His commands that its constant aim and chief wish**

was this, to teach true religion and contend forever against errors.

To this end assuredly have tended the incessant labor of individual bishops; to this end also the published laws and decrees of Councils, and especially the constant watchfulness of the Roman Pontiffs, to whom as successors of the blessed Peter in the primacy of the apostles, belongs the right and office of teaching and confirming their brethren in the faith.” (Aeterni Patris).

What this dedicated Pope foresaw over one hundred years’ ago is so prevalent today. For, it is the false philosophy decried by Pope Leo XIII that prevailed in Wojtyla whose philosophy was tainted with the false philosophy of the world.

Pope Leo XIII continues: **“Since, then, according to the warning of the apostle, the minds of Christ’s faithful are apt to be deceived and the integrity of the faith to be corrupted among men by philosophy and vain deceit (Coloss. 2, 8), the supreme pastors of the Church have always thought it their duty to advance, by every means in their**

power, science truly so called, and at the same time to provide with special care that all studies should accord with the Catholic faith, especially philosophy, on which a right apprehension of the other sciences in great part depends. Indeed, Venerable Brethren, on this very subject among others, We briefly admonished you in Our first Encyclical Letter; but now, both by reason of the gravity of the subject and the condition of the time, we are again compelled to speak to you on the mode of taking up the study of philosophy which shall respond most fitly to the true faith, and at the same time be most consonant with the dignity of human knowledge.”

This Holy Father pinpoints the cause of all the strife in the world as being due to false philosophy. False philosophy has led States to follow the erroneous conclusions in every area of their competency and all this percolated down to the masses.

We need to consider more earnestly the consequences of false ideas that have infiltrated the Church. Most people may be unaware of the insidious nature of false ideas conjured up by the mind to draw the will into words and actions

contrary to the divinely revealed truths of the faith.

Perhaps Pope Leo XIII repeats what many of our readers already know. Namely, **“For since it is in the very nature of man to follow the guide of reason in his actions, if his intellect sins at all his will soon follows; and thus it happens that looseness of intellectual opinion influences human actions and perverts them. Whereas, on the other hand, if men be of sound mind and take their stand on true and solid principles, there will result a vast amount of benefits for the public and private good.”**

It is very significant that scholastic philosophy, also called “perennial” philosophy is no longer taught in once-Catholic universities. It is also true that many of those who once sat in the classroom as seminarians and studied the different branches of philosophy no longer remember what they have been taught.

Pope Pius XII lamented this fact when he, too, was forced to write an Encyclical Letter **“ON CERTAIN FALSE OPINIONS which threaten to undermine the foundations of catholic doctrine.**

This is not the first time that timely quotations from this Encyclical have been printed in **The Seraph** for the instruction of all Catholics.

In this Encyclical, Pope Pius XII points out the obstacles that stand in the way of recognizing truth. He writes:

“It is not surprising that such discord and error should always have existed outside the fold of Christ. For though, absolutely speaking, human reason by its own natural force and light can arrive at a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God, who by His providence watches over and governs the world, and also the natural law, which the Creator has written in our hearts, still there are not a few obstacles to prevent reason from making efficient and fruitful use of its natural ability. The truths that have to do with God and the relations between God and men completely surpass the sensible order and demand self-surrender and self-abnegation in order to be put into practice and to influence practical life. Now the human intellect, in gaining the knowledge of such truths, is hampered both by the activity of the senses and the imagination,

and by evil passions arising from original sin. Hence men easily persuade themselves in such matters that what they do not wish to believe is false or at least doubtful.” (*Humani Generis*, August 10, 1950).

Obviously, these Encyclical Letters are written so that all those with teaching authority might be made aware of the errors that may well be promoted behind their backs in private.

Errors in belief – theological errors – invariably have their origin in errors of thought. As St. Anthony of Padua had said: “...all heresies have their origin in the idea that it is necessary to adapt to the spirit of the times.”

There are many who propose the idea even in public that papal Encyclicals have no weight because they are not solemnly pronounced and, therefore, do not seem to invoke the supreme power of a Pope’s Teaching Authority.

Pope Pius XII answers this error with the following doctrinal statement: “**Nor must it be thought that what is expounded in Encyclicals Letters does not of itself demand consent since in**

writing such Letters the Popes do not exercise the supreme power of their Teaching Authority. For these matters are taught with the ordinary teaching authority, of which it is true to say: ‘He who hears you, hears me’ (Luke 10: 16); and generally what is expounded and inculcated in Encyclical Letters already for other reasons appertains to Catholic doctrine. But if the Supreme Pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgment on a matter up to that time under dispute, it is obvious that that matter, according to the mind and will of the same Pontiffs, cannot be any longer considered a question open to discussion among theologians.” (*Humani Generis*).

Our concern is not the obvious errors of the Modernist Church. What is to be seriously considered are those who confuse and deceive those Catholics who have had the courage to separate themselves from the Apostate Church.

In dealing with the errors of McKenna, some might mistakenly conclude that I am scoffing at some serious philosophical and theological work. This is not my

intention. It is not my intention because the purpose of every word and work in the name of the Mystical Body must begin with truth, continue in the truth and lead to a fuller understanding of the truth.

It is not my wish to argue with the serious theologian who would seek to clarify some confused area of thinking on the matter of validity of the recent occupants of the papacy, but only with the sophist who would explain away a painful reality.

Although accused by one whose reasoning is spiced with sophistry, it has always been my intention to educate and enlighten the faithful concerning the realities which we face today. The sophist, however, does not have this intention, but rather plays to the gallery, as he did in ancient Greece. **“The sophist appeals to the ignorant, especially when he appeals to the learned”** (G.K. Chesterton).

I do not think it amiss to describe as best I can with the aid of a good dictionary, just what a sophist does, and why he does it. Much time cannot be used to enter into a finely detailed psychoanalysis of the sophist mentality. Suffice it to say for practical purposes that the sophist mentality is a devious

mentality because the sophist uses deceptive words. The purpose is to deceive. And, when it comes to matters regarding the eternal salvation of souls, there can be no recourse to false charity.

St. Anthony of Padua and every saint of the Church were sooner or later engaged in the defense of the teaching and practices of the Church against those who sought to “interpret” these things to fit their particular mould. In a word, one might say that rather than re-making oneself in the image and likeness of Christ, these individuals seek to make Christ in *their* image and likeness.

How serious can these considerations be? Ask yourself this question: If you believe, as a Catholic must believe, that the Sacraments are necessary means of salvation, can you be satisfied if someone not a priest or even if he is a priest and not having authority from his bishop attempts to absolve you from your sins? But this is what McKenna preaches and practices.

Do you think *your wishing* is enough to make a host become the Body of Christ and the wine to become the Blood of Christ? Furthermore, even if someone is

dressed like a priest and has all the paraphernalia of a clergymen, yet lacking valid and licit reception of Holy Orders? In a word, he only *looks* like a priest. But this is the tragic case of all those “ordained” by Marcel Lefebvre and his subsequent “bishops” as well as all those of the Modernist, Apostate Church who have been “ordained” or “consecrated” after 1968 when the valid ritual for ordinations was changed into a Protestant invalid ritual.

McKenna has brazenly mocked the need for an internal intention by temerarily rejecting the sound practice of the Church as presented by myself in exercising the heavy burden of defending the faith against any and all. McKenna has even rejected St. Thomas Aquinas on this matter and has placed himself at the head of the “Church teaching” like some kind of “ambassador without portfolio.”

But to prove the correctness of the Church’s doctrine and practice in such matters, allow the following citation to be presented. It is a matter of historical fact.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth century, hundreds of thousands of Jews entered the Church in Spain.

One Jewish infiltrator by the name of Andres Gomalz who was a parish priest in Toledo, Spain (1486) admitted that for fourteen years he had said his parish Mass without having the express intention of consecrating. During that same time, this man admitted that he secretly never gave absolution to those who came to him for Confession.

Do you think this most successful tactic of the Jews is no longer practiced? Think again!

Those who have some knowledge (Sadly, not enough!) of the different tactics of these determined enemies of the Catholic Church painfully fall into the trap of our arch-enemies.

Consider for a moment – those who are honest and courageous enough – the basic cause for the Great Apostasy: **Religious indifference**. How could it be that although boasting of a billion “Roman Catholics” worldwide that so may bishops and priests so easily melted before the clever tactics of just a few Freemasons who had already a strong foothold in the Vatican?

Achilles Lienart, the 30th degree Freemason who was so active during this “Second Vatican

Council” was very close to Lefebvre even from Lefebvre’s seminary days in Lyon, France with Lienart as his professor and later “ordaining” and “consecrating” perceived “bishop.”

Yes, it is very embarrassing to admit such a humiliating and tragic reality. Who knows how many false priests and false bishops were spread around the world? Some of them, perhaps, completely ignorant of their tragic situation, while others regaled in their cynical parody of a priesthood they sought to discredit and destroy.

The case of the Lefebvrite Sect was amply treated in previous articles of The Seraph. Only a brief mention of it is enough to point up McKenna’s blind spite that would sacrifice souls to eternal damnation simply because his deep-seated pride and foolish ambition had led him to wallow in the grime and grit of heresy and schism.

Again, anyone can read the extensive study that had been made on the need for an internal intention for the validity of a Sacrament. Yet, rather than honestly and thankfully accept the teachings of the Church as they were faithfully presented by a bishop endowed with supernatural teaching authority, McKenna

maliciously contacted a Fr. Francis Nugent who was the head of an extra-canonical Benedictine group in Oregon with the idea that I, Bishop Louis Vezelis, OFM, did not have the intention of ordaining Rev. Aidan Miller who had been expelled from the Franciscan Order.

This is true because Fr. Nugent called me and asked the question, saying; “I KNOW WHAT YOU WILL SAY, BUT I WANT TO HEAR IT FROM YOU.” He also added that it was McKenna who was saying these things.

The teaching of the Church is very clear for those who are true Catholics. Not only the matter and form of a Sacrament are necessary for validity but also the inner intention. *It is not enough to simply say the words (the form of the Sacrament) for the respective Sacrament, but there must be the intention of doing what the Church does.*

Proof has been given why a Freemason cannot have such an intention because his entire religion is Luciferian and his goal is to destroy the Roman Catholic Church and to replace it with the religion of the Antichrist: Talmudic-Freemasonry.

McKenna clings obstinately to this error and can only be considered a heretic and schismatic outside the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

The constant teaching of the Church of which St. Thomas Aquinas is among the greatest lights have all taught the necessity of that intention which is called “interior” because it comes from that part of human actions that have their origin in the soul.

No where in the words (the form) that are necessary for the validity of a Sacrament is there mention made of the mere mechanical repetition of the words for the Sacrament to be produced.

The Council of Trent defined that intention in the minister of the Sacraments is necessary, that is, the will to do what the Church does “Si quis dixerit, in ministris dum sacramenta conficiunt et conferunt, non requirit intentionem saltem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia; A.S.” (That is “anathema sit” – let them be condemned). Sess. 14, can.9, et cap. 6).

To will to do what the Church does means the same thing as to will to do what Christ intended concerning

the Sacraments. This need for the interior intention is a dogma of our faith. Just because it was not an explicit theory in ancient times, it is clear that the Church practiced at all times what later was made more explicit.

According to reputable theologians, there are two main kinds of intention of doing what the Church does. Namely, the mere exterior intention and the interior intention.

Here is where we must be alert and focus our attention. In the case where the intention is merely exterior and comprises the intention to perform the serious and complete accomplishment of the sacramental rite; and actually does so, *but inwardly, yet without any outward evidence thereof, he has the intention of acting in mockery or even has the positive intention not to confer the sacrament.*

We have just seen the account of just such a situation where the Mass was visibly offered while the “celebrant” did not have the interior intention of consecrating.

We need not go far to witness the same thing. Priests (Who, in reality are not priests despite appearances) are at the altar, dressed in priestly

vestments, and performing all the ceremonies of the Mass, reciting all the prayers, even the words of consecration, but who, through a sacrilegious simulation, would have the formal intention not to consecrate, and would be acting with a merely exterior intention.

When does a valid priest have the internal intention? He has the interior intention not only when he intends to accomplish the sacramental rite, but, in his inmost heart, he purposes with all sincerity to do what the Church does.

The question was once asked: Is the interior intention absolutely necessary for validity? Would not the exterior intention be sufficient?

Ambrose Catharinus, O.P. and many who followed him after his death thought that the exterior intention was the only one required for the validity of the Sacrament.

This theory, although seemingly a valid one, contained such flaws that it was eventually scrapped in favor of the explanation and position of Hugh of St. Victor. To the argument that if the interior intention were necessary, then the faithful would never be sure as to the validity of the Sacraments they receive. Yes,

this may be true on the surface. Nevertheless, we have already seen one or two facts where everything exteriorly was complete in the rite, but the minister of the Sacrament did not have the intention of doing what the Church does.

It may even be suggested that there were many infiltrators into the Church and still are such for the purpose of undermining the faith and eventually destroying it, using the tactic of false conversion, or false reception of Holy Orders.

If Catholic dogmas were mere human doctrines, it would be conceivable that the faithful would never be sure of valid and fruitful Sacraments. Perhaps the biggest problem with many theologians is that they become so engrossed in promoting their theories that they forget that the Church is a supernatural institution guided and protected by the Holy Ghost.

Often things take an unexpected turn in the Church. There arose a new theological school that revived the teaching of Hugh of St. Victor, which had not been forgotten from the 12th to the 16th century, and affirmed that the minister must have and interior intention. Among the principal theologians who embraced

this opinion were Bellarmine, Suarez, Vasquez, de Lugo, Tournely, Benedict XIV, Franzelin, Hurter, Chr. Pesch, Morgott, Billot, and many others.

Who would wish to argue with the objective truth of those who see in the necessity of an interior intention the very association as ministers of Jesus Christ in carrying out their duties? For, the administration of valid Sacraments cannot be achieved satisfactorily by just performing the external rites of the Sacrament.

The administration of the Sacraments requires that the minister must have the sincere intention in his inmost soul to do what the Church does.

The minister of the Sacrament is the representative of Christ and the Church; in the sacramental action he must conform his will to that of Christ and the Church. If someone were to administer a Sacrament merely by perfectly observing the external rite while having an intention completely opposed to what he was doing, the Sacrament would be **invalid**.

We might consider the minister of the Sacraments as the agent of his

principal. Even civil law recognizes the need for the agent to have the internal intention, or, desire, to fulfill the requirements set down by the principal.

The agent must adhere strictly to the conditions of his agency. Also, the argument of those who would resurrect the opinion of Catharinus fail to see that a Sacrament can be rendered invalid by other means than just by the lack of the proper intention. Material may be substituted for valid matter; a word added or subtracted from the form would render a Sacrament invalid.

The Augustinian monk, Francis Farvacques defended the following proposition at Lovain in 1678: “Baptism is validly conferred by a minister who observes all the external rite and preserves the form of the sacrament, but says resolutely to himself: ‘I have no intention of doing what the Church does.’”

According to Very Rev. P. Pourrat, V.G. Rector of the Theological Seminary of Lyons (France) from which most of the material is taken (Theology of the Sacraments, 1924), that proposition was condemned December 7, 1690 by Pope Alexander VIII.

The author points out that Catharinus' doctrine was not censured because he, Catharinus, was content to say that the exterior intention was sufficient without adding or specifying as Farvacques did that it would be so even when the minister would have in his inmost soul the positive intention of not doing what the Church does.

Although Catharinus was not condemned, nevertheless, the condemnation of Farvacques was calculated to discredit Catharinus' doctrine. And this is exactly what happened. So much so that hardly anyone now dares openly to adopt it.

This is a way to silence those obstinate opinions that keep showing up and too often lack a deeper insight into the psychology of the sacraments.

While the Apostles were not theologians in the accepted meaning, their theology was the practical application of what Christ taught them by word and example. They did as Christ commanded them to do without knowing the metaphysical or psychological details. These latter were left, by divine design, for future generations. No one would fault St. Thomas

Aquinas for his mistaken understanding of the soul in the light of Aristotelian thinking. It took the subtle insights of the Franciscan, Blessed John Duns Scotus, to elucidate the psychological question of when does the rational (human) soul enter the tiny person in its mother's womb.

What are some conclusions of all that has been presented here in order to show that McKenna's "theology" on the necessary intention for the validity of a Sacrament is not in line with the teachings and practice of the Roman Catholic Church.

In practice, one is never allowed to act according to that opinion. For although there seem to be good reasons in its favor, in the administration of the Sacraments, the safest course must ever be followed.

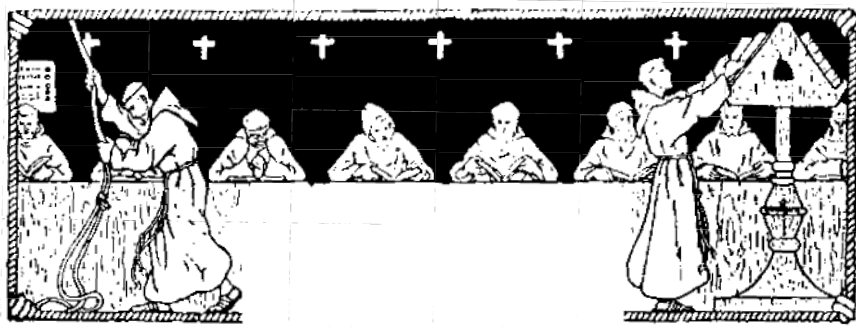
According to Bernedoct XIV, when there is reason to believe that a sacrament which cannot be repeated and has been very probably conferred by a minister who had not the interior intention, that sacrament is to be repeated conditionally, unless time allows to consult Rome on the line of conduct to be followed. Rome's answer will

almost always be that Baptism and Ordination must be repeated conditionally.

Since the Council of Trent it appears that decidedly there is little favor for the system of Catharinus.

It is important that every Catholic be made aware of the false teaching of McKenna because he shamelessly ignores the practice of the Church and pretends, at least, to recognize the validity of Holy

Orders administered by a Freemason whose religion is that of the Antichrist and, therefore, could not possibly have the requisite internal intention needed for a valid Sacrament. In this case, we reiterate our warning to all those who will take their eternal salvation seriously: **Those ordained or consecrated in the Lefebvrite line are not valid priests nor are they valid bishops. They are merely Protestant ministers clothed in the garments of Catholicism.**



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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.

You can read this and much more in the book .

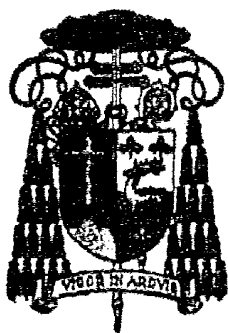
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THE PERSECUTIONS, THE
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THE story of the persecutions of the Church of Christ is so unique in the history of the human race, that it might seem incredible were it not that witnesses and monuments above any possible exception render it certain beyond any doubt. For who would believe that emperors, rulers,

governors, magistrates and men in general of all classes would unrelentingly harass, combat and punish a religion the sole object and purpose of which is to teach justice and holiness here in this life, and point to peace and happiness in the life to come: a religion which led the world back again to the knowledge of truth, and taught men, rulers and ruled, their duties toward God, their neighbor, and themselves, duties which rightly fulfilled could have but one effect, the diffusion through all the world of peace, making earth an image of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yet "Fremuerunt gentes: adstiterunt reges terrae, et principes convenerunt in unum adversus Dominum, et adversus Christum ejus." If we consider only the Roman Emperors, from Tiberius, under whom Christ completed His mission, and died upon the Cross for our salvation, down to Constantine the Great, we may enumerate forty-seven Caesars. Of these, not all indeed were like Nero, monsters of cruelty and inhumanity; many distinguished themselves by military valor and wise government, caring deeply for the welfare of their people and the glory of their kingdom, and yet even among these were many who enacted laws and drew the imperial sword fierce and

sharp against the Christians, flooding the Roman Empire with the blood of the innocent. Mark, we pass over now, the persecutions raised by the Jews and by the nations of the provinces of imperial Rome. For, were we to take an account of these also, we might well assert that from the birth of the Church of Christ, down through three long, weary, heartless centuries, Christianity had no peace, or enjoyed it at such brief intervals, that one storm had scarcely abated before there was heard in the distance the rumbling and murmur of another that soon beat with increased fury.

The argument which Christians draw from the fierceness of the persecutions, the invincible constancy of the martyrs and the triumph of the Church in spite of universal opposition; is one of the strongest in demonstrating its divine origin. It explains why the enemies of the Church endeavor to extenuate the fierceness of the persecutions and diminish the number of the Martyrs. Henry Dodwell, in his "*Quaestiones Cyprianicae*," published in 1684, seeks to prove that the number of those who shed their blood as confessors and martyrs of the faith, is greatly exaggerated; while in our days, Renan among others, to the same

end, attempts to disprove the indubitable inhumanity of the Church's earliest foes. But the most learned students of that period allow neither Dodwell nor Renan room for credence. Among these, worthy of special praise, are Ruinart and Mamachio. But the glory of refuting beyond all response Dodwell and Renan was reserved to the learned and conscientious French student Paul Allard, who, in his five volumes of the "*History of the Persecutions of the First Two Centuries*," based upon the most trustworthy and authentic documents of archaeology, with wonderful erudition and precision of argument, closes forever the mouths of the Church's enemies on this subject.

Upon the subject of to-day's conference, we must consider many points, for under this subject I must look into the causes, the occasions, the pretexts of the persecutions, their extent, duration, ferocity, and number. You are not unaware that the story of the persecutions even summarily told, would fill volumes, and therefore, I need hardly say that in this lecture I shall be compelled merely to indicate what history reveals. Let us first consider the causes which have been assigned for the early trials of the Church. As there was no real cause for hunting

down and endeavoring to extirpate an organization so purely beneficent in design and pacific in measures as Christianity, many causes and reasons were invented. These we may gather from the contumelious names by which the Christians were designated. They were called factious enemies of the Emperor, dangerous to the state, haters of the human race, sacrilegious, criminals, irreligious, and atheists. From these calumnious appellations, we may gather the causes which roused the early pagans against our fathers in the Faith. They were considered as the enemies of the religion of the Empire and its divinities, and therefore, of the state itself. Moreover, they were accused of the most infamous crimes. Were the book “*De Officio Proconsulis*” still extant, in which the famous advocate Domitius, in the time of Alexander Severus (222-235) gathered all the edicts of the Emperors against the Christians, we should have at hand the various causes which they alleged to have moved them in the suppression of Christianity; but unfortunately, this book has perished and we remain still uncertain as to the exact reasons. Nevertheless, the great historian Eusebius has conserved some edicts, published by the later Emperors, from which we may

collect some of the causes assigned by their predecessors as inspiring them to act with such relentless hatred and persistent tyranny. In that of Maximianus, promulgated in 311, we read that his distrust and fear, and consequently his persecution of the Christians of his time, arose from the fact that they despised the rights and institutions of the Empire, that they dared to make laws for their own governance, independent of the state, and held aloof from the public rites. The Emperor Maximinus, in his letter dated the year 312, affirms that the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, were impelled to persecute the Christians, because “almost all men abandoning the worship of the immortal gods, had betaken themselves to the sect of the Christians.” “*Diocletianus et Maximianus cum cunctos fere homines, relicto Deorum immortalium cultu, ad Christianorum sectam se applicuisse cernerant.*”

It is plain therefore from this edict, that the cause assigned by these Emperors for their animosity against their Christian subjects, was the refusal of the latter to worship the national divinities. But from the calumnies hurled against them by the people, as well as from the jests and caricatures of which they were the butt, we may well argue that in the

popular mind, other causes and motives were assigned for their harsh and cruel treatment. Enmity towards the human race and criminal superstition and witchcraft, which were all crimes against the state, were among these; and both Tacitus and Suetonius intend to indicate just these accusations when the first writes that the Christians in the persecutions under Nero were convicted “*de odio humani generis*”; and the other accuses them “*superstitionis novae et maleficae*.”

But whatever the causes alleged for the persecutions enacted against the Christians, and so bitterly carried out, they were all unfounded, unjust, and unreasonable. The real causes were the foolish superstition of the pagans themselves, the private jealousies and hatred of the common people towards their Christian neighbors, the fear of the priests of losing their clientele; and at times the weakness of the Emperors in yielding to the whims of the people, or their desire to turn away the torrent of distrust and dislike which the people bore towards themselves.

We can best understand the fear, the hatred, and, consequently, the persecution of the followers of the Cross, if we place ourselves for a moment back into the times of which

we treat, and among the people who arrayed themselves against the new faith. The golden age of Augustus had not all passed away; poetry, eloquence, and the fine arts still adorned life. Luxury, following in the wake of wealth and the enormous riches in which the Romans of that day reveled, had begun its effects upon its devotees. Pleasure and enjoyment were the only occupations of the hour, even the temples were but theatres where magnificent pomp and glittering ceremonial satisfied the craving of the Roman heart for show and pageantry. Bacchus and Venus received fullest adoration from all classes, the noble patrician, the prosperous merchant, the freedman, and the slave. Their religious festivals were nothing more than orgies, where the most absolute license was permitted, and decency and the last vestige of modesty were thrown to the winds under the veil of worship to the gods. The feast day of the Emperor was a time when voluptuousness, drunkenness, disorder were the best proofs of loyalty to the Imperial Majesty. The whole day was often spent at the bath, which served as a place of the most sensual recreation; and what time could be spared from this debauchery was filled up by attendance at the circus, where, as

is not seldom the case, cruelty and the most outrageous heartlessness succeeded to effeminacy and luxury. For there the same eyes that were delighted with the most finished works of art gloated upon the fierce combat of the gladiators and the most revolting scenes of bloodshed. The gravity and power of the Senate had vanished; the honest, vigorous manliness that had made Rome what it was, was no longer visible. The Palatine gleamed all night with the lamps of banquet halls, filled with the gay and dissolute court. Seriousness, moral law, justice, moderation were gone forever. Behold in the midst of this effeminate, pleasure-loving, licentious throng, a little group, who, by the strong contrast of their dress, their bearing, their very countenance, appeared distinct and different from all their surroundings. They took no part in the long, gorgeous processions that filed under the triumphal arches, along the gaily decorated streets, up to the marble temples, where the fragrant incense was burned, and the dazzling scene of crowds and vestals and gold-robed priests stood around the altar, and to softest music from a thousand pipes sang the praises of their false divinities.

They shrink into the by-ways and

hurry on to out-of-the-way temples to join still others already assembled at the simplicity of ceremonial that distinguished this strange religion. Issuing from these quiet places, they meet the rollicking and reckless crowd that, half drunk from their libations, and wreathed with garlands torn from their shrines, rent the air with lascivious jest and indecent mirth and song.

To the invitations to join their bacchanalian dances, where men and women, half nude, gave free vent to their lawless passions, these worshipers of Christ turned their heads in unfeigned disgust and disapproval. Even in the Emperors' feasts they still held themselves from the mad gatherings and their wild excesses. At the baths they were never seen, and they never entered the portals of the great amphitheatre to witness the great gladiatorial feats and the slaughter of the slaves. Hence, forsooth, judged from their absence from the feasts of both Gods and Emperor, they were at once stamped as atheists and traitors. Above the music of the dance, the coarse song of the orgies and the vivats that rose up to the imperial palace, ascended the cry which spread from lip to lip, bringing terror to the souls of the early faithful, "To the lions with the

Christians, the Christians to the lions.”

This is the picture that Tertullian hands down to us in describing the causes which prompted the pagans of his day to single out as enemies of the human race, despisers of the gods, and rebellious citizens, the men and women who, faithful to the teachings of the true faith, refused to participate in these scenes of crime and licentiousness. Reproached for their singular indifference to the common pastimes and public holidays, and absence from the temples, he thus responds “The theatre is the scene of impure love. What Christian mother could gaze upon these views of immodesty unshocked; what Christian but would blush at the company he finds there?”

Again he answers, “Truly Christians are savages and enemies of the state, because they do not assist at your festivities, but celebrate with a joy wholly interior, and not with debauchery, your Emperor’s feast days. How truly deserving of death we are for offering up prayers for the Emperor without ceasing to be chaste and modest.” Here we have indicated plainly the first reasons which turned towards the Christians the hatred and suspicion of their

pagan neighbors. Once made the mark of pagan hatred, on account of this singular abstention from the public festivities, the imagination soon helped to fill out other and more explicit accusations. Their meetings in private, to which none but the initiated were admitted, soon made them appear as political conspirators and social revolutionists. Some renegades, maliciously misinterpreting the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrament of the Eucharistic Feast, noised it abroad that these secret observances were the scenes of human sacrifice in which the Christians murdered an innocent babe, and then consummated the horrible crime by drinking its blood. Moreover, the frequent miracles wrought by the Christians were ascribed to them as the results of witchcraft and necromancy. So that at the very beginning of the reign of Nero, the Roman people had learned to consider them as a dangerous association which plotted in secret places and in the darkness of the night against the welfare of the government and the life of the Emperor.

As the new religion continued to grow with marvelous rapidity, extending from Rome throughout all the provinces of the empire, the

temples were deserted, the priests of paganism were roused to a sense of their waning influence; and so to the suspicion was soon added the jealousy of the priests. Only a match was needed to turn all this smoldering mass of antipathy into a fearful conflagration. That match was the burning of Rome.

The early part of Nero's reign was distinguished by justice and prosperity, but this was due rather to the wisdom and honesty of Seneca and Burns, to whom at that time was entrusted the management of affairs. But soon matters changed, and the Roman people became fully conscious of the real character of the imperial profligate. Crime after crime had succeeded in bringing upon him the contempt of the Roman people. The climax of his mad excesses was reached in the setting fire to the city. This would have been also the sudden close of his reign were it not for the ingenious subtlety with which he diverted from himself the accusations arrayed against him by his subjects who, tired of the infamous actions of this monster, at last determined to rid themselves of a ruler who showed absolute disregard for his subjects.

His wife was a Jewess, and among his most influential advisers were to

be reckoned many rich Jews. These courtiers advised him to avert suspicion from himself by laying the charge of incendiarism at the door of the Christians. Nobody believed the calumny, not even the Romans themselves, as Tacitus plainly writes, and the Christians, hurried before the magistrates, interrogated and examined juridically, proved beyond doubt, that they were utterly innocent, but they were nevertheless convicted, not of the burning of the city, it is true, but, forsooth, of hatred to the human race. This pretext sufficed to turn the minds of the angry Romans from the Emperor himself, and so, instead of the cry, "Bread and circuses," arose the shout, "The Christians to the beasts."

The first legal persecution dates its origin from the greatest monster of inhumanity and crime that ever sat upon a throne; the worthy prototype of all who, in times succeeding, up to our day, have molested the Church of God. Well may we repeat with Tertullian: "We glory in a persecution inaugurated by such a tyrant." This persecution may be taken as a type of all those that followed up to the peace of Constantine. The causes alleged were the same, the accusations against the Christians the same, the

manner of torment and character of the punishments inflicted were alike.

Whether this persecution under Nero was confined to Rome, or extended to the provinces, cannot be determined with perfect historical accuracy, though Sulpicius, Severus, and Orosius inform us that it raged throughout the whole empire. Tacitus is our authority for affirming that during this persecution an enormous multitude (*multitudo ingens*) of Christians suffered death.

As to the characters of these punishments allotted to the victims of this unjust malice, the mere mention of them makes us shudder, and on reading the authentic accounts given us of these awful scenes of cruelty, we wonder how men with any vestige of feeling left in them could measure out such brutal tortures for even beasts. To enumerate a few, we have only to repeat a description left us by Tacitus. Some were nailed to the cross, some were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and the dogs of the streets set upon them, and, most horrible of all, others covered with pitch and tar were bound to stakes in the arena and set on fire to illuminate the circus at night, while Nero himself, dressed as a charioteer, drove among these

human torches.

Among those first to give their lives for the faith in this reign of terror were St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and St. Paul, his co-laborer Rome. The conversion by St. Peter, of one of the concubines of Nero, brought upon him the wrath of the tyrant. He was arrested and thrown into the dungeon of the Mamertine Prison, whence he was led forth to crucifixion in the very gardens of Nero, on the Vatican Mount, on June 7, of the year 67. About the same time St. Paul met his glorious death by decapitation near the Fulvian waters in a place now called the Three Fountains, still venerated at the present day. It was a common form of death to which the Christians were sentenced, to be condemned to wild beasts in the arena. Those condemned to this death were called “*bestiarii*”. At first, they were stripped naked and flogged by the *venatores* or hunters, who stood all around the arena brandishing great whips in their hands. Before these flagellators, the Martyrs were driven, compelled to run through this frightful gauntlet till the blood streamed from their bodies. They were then dressed in the garments of the priests of Saturn, and so like human sacrifices to this cruel god, they were led forth to

meet the lions and death.

In reading the accounts of these persecutions, one cannot fail to recognize that the evil spirit himself had entered into the minds of the persecutors, so that no means were left untried to make the Christians waver in the faith and renounce Christ. Let me repeat here a few of the tortures, of which we have authentic accounts in the best accredited writers of that time. It is not a pleasant scene to review, but as a mere matter of history, confirming the proposition we have set out to prove, we cannot pass it by in silence. One of these refinements of cruelty, according to Ruinart, was the extraction of the tongue and all the teeth. Some were cut open and filled with grain and thrown to the swine to be devoured; some were dragged upon a pavement of sharp stones; some were buried alive, as we learn from St. Gregory of Tours; some, like St. Lawrence, were broiled alive. Sometimes the martyrs were burned "according to law," that is, as Lactantius observes, condemned to die by slow fire; the ashes were ground to dust and thrown into the river or to the winds.

Horrible as is the mere mention of such deaths as these here narrated,

they are but a few specimens of the almost endless varieties of cruelties to which the Confessors of the Faith were subjected. It is enough for our purpose to indicate these.

Now, if we go down through the long weary period of three hundred years, the history of the Church at this period seems, with but a few brief intervals, simply a catalogue of these heart-rending scenes. Surely, this was for the infant Church a very baptism of blood; and if in later times Christianity rose to its true position as a powerful, influential, and magnificent organization, reflecting, in a measure, the glory of the Church triumphant, it can always look back to these three first centuries as the proof of its indefectibility and the price of its future prosperity.

To Nero succeeded Vespasian and Titus. During their reigns the Church enjoyed a short respite; then came Domitian, whom Juvenal calls another Nero. Clement the Roman, who lived at this very time, was an eye-witness of many a bloody scene enacted by the cruelty of this tyrant. In his letter to the Corinthians, he speaks of the multitudes that suffered the most terrible tortures during these years of trial. It is significant of the high position, socially and politically,

which distinguished many members of the Church of this time, that among those whom Domitian put to death were Flavius Clemens, the consul, and Flavia Domitilla, his own niece. We have this on the authority of Dion Cassius, Eusebius, and Brusus, a pagan author of the same period. The most distinguished martyr of this time was St. John the Evangelist, who was condemned to be thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil before the Latin Gate. It has been attempted to impugn the veracity of this statement, but on the authority of St. Jerome, and Eusebius, the most learned students and critics of history universally admit it. It is more than likely that towards the end of his reign, perhaps weary of the fight which proved utterly useless against Christianity, Domitian, by private orders, mitigated the cruelties of his early reign, for Tertullian assures us that he allowed many of those whom he had banished for the Faith to return to their homes.

Nerva succeeded Domitian, and his policy was an entirely peaceful one, but he reigned only two years. Then suddenly the fire blazed out afresh, when Trajan renewed the severest edicts of Nero and Domitian. It is a singular fact that men, otherwise noted for their clemency and wisdom, when it is a question of the

Church become most narrow, ignorant, and heartless. This was the case with Trajan. By the pagan authors of his time, he is described as one of the very best of the Roman Emperors; in fact the senate conferred upon him the title Optimus. Yet from the Acts of the Martyrs, and the letters of St. Ignatius, we learn that though he was kind and just to the rest of his subjects, he was implacable in his hatred of the Christians. It seems that he had a superstitious dread that unless he propitiated the gods by ridding his kingdom of these atheists, the pagan divinities would wreak their vengeance upon his empire and himself. From the letters of Pliny the Younger, who was the governor of Bithynia, we may gather the harshness of the edicts published by command of the Emperor.

(To be continued)



Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.

Every Catholic should be able intelligently to explain not only the doctrines of the Church but even the ceremonies. The Catholic service is beautiful in its symbolism. The correct understanding of this symbolism will bring an appreciation of the ceremonies, and help to raise the heart to God. Could you explain the use of incense during many of our ceremonies?

In chapter thirty of the Book of Exodus we find that God instructed Moses how to make incense and to “set it before the tabernacle of the testimony, in the place where I will appear to thee.” It was to be reserved “as holy to the Lord,” and was not to be used for other purposes.

Incense in religious worship is symbolic of prayer. This is clearly shown both in the Old and in the New Testament. In Psalm cxl, verse 2, we find the inspired author begging God “Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight,” while St. John in the eighth chapter of the Apocalypse speaks of the Angel coming and standing before the altar, “having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all Saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God.”

Incense is also used as a sign of respect. The Magi presented it as such to the Infant Babe in Bethlehem. As a mark of our respect and adoration it is used at the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. At Holy Mass the crucifix, the altar, and the bread and wine are incensed because each has a symbolic meaning and refers to Christ: the Passion of our Savior, Christ as the altar or foundation of our Faith, and as the food of our souls by His great gift of the Holy Eucharist.

The priest and the people are incensed at the Holy Sacrifice as a mark of respect and as an invitation that their prayers and love of God may ascend like sweet incense. At a Catholic funeral, the body of the deceased receives the same honor because it was the dwelling place of an immortal soul and is destined to rise again from the dead.

Incense is made from granulated aromatic resin obtained from two trees: the *Boswellia sacra* of Arabia and the *Boswellia papyrifera* of India. Various spices are sometimes mixed with the resin in order to enhance the fragrance and to produce a thicker smoke.

The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

(Continued)

How they who are imperfect desire to follow the Father alone, but they who are perfect desire to follow the Son. And of a vision, which this holy soul had, concerning diverse baptisms, and of many other beautiful and useful things.

“As I have told you, these latter have issued forth from the house, which is a sign that they have arisen from imperfection and arrived at perfection. Open the eye of your intellect and see them running by the Bridge of the doctrine of Christ crucified, which was their rule, way, and doctrine. They place none other before the eye of their intellect than Christ crucified, not the Father, as they do who are in imperfect love and do not wish to suffer pain, but only to have the delight which they find in Me. But they, as if drunken with love and burning with it, have gathered together and ascended the three steps, which I figured to you as the three powers of the soul, and also the three actual steps, figured to you as in the Body of My only Son, Christ crucified, by which steps the soul, as I told you, ascended, first climbing to the Feet, with the feet of

the soul’s affection, from thence arriving at the Side, where she found the secret of the Heart and knew the baptism of water, which has virtue through the Blood, and where I dispose the soul to receive grace, uniting and kneading her together in the Blood. Where did the soul know of this her dignity, in being kneaded and united with the Blood of the Lamb, receiving the grace in Holy Baptism, in virtue of the Blood? In the Side, where she knew the fire of divine Charity, and so, if you remember well, My Truth manifested to you, when you asked, saying: ‘Sweet and Immaculate Lamb, You were dead when Your side was opened. Why then did You want to be struck and have Your heart divided?’ And He replied to you, telling you that there was occasion enough for it; but the principal part of what He said I will tell you. He said: Because My desire towards the human generation was ended, and I had finished the actual work of bearing pain and torment, and yet I had not been able to show, by finite things, because My love was infinite, how much more love I had, I wished you to see the secret of the Heart, showing it to you open, so that you might see how much more I loved than I could show you by finite pain. I poured from it Blood and Water, to

show you the baptism of water, which is received in virtue of the Blood. I also showed the baptism of love in two ways, first in those who are baptized in their blood, shed for Me, which has virtue through My Blood, even if they have not been able to have Holy Baptism, and also in those who are baptized in fire, not being able to have Holy Baptism, but desiring it with the affection of love. There is no baptism of fire without the Blood, because the Blood is steeped in and kneaded with the fire of Divine charity, because, through love was It shed. There is yet another way by which the soul receives the baptism of Blood, speaking, as it were, under a figure, and this way the Divine charity provided, knowing the infirmity and fragility of man, through which he offends, not that he is obliged, through his fragility and infirmity, to commit sin unless he wish to do so; but, falling, as he will, into the guilt of mortal sin, by which he loses the grace which he drew from Holy Baptism in virtue of the Blood, it was necessary to leave a continual baptism of Blood. This the Divine charity provided in the Sacrament of Holy Confession, the soul receiving the Baptism of Blood, with contrition of heart, confessing, when able, to My ministers, who hold the keys of the Blood, sprinkling It, in absolution, upon the face of the soul. But, if the soul be unable to confess, contrition of heart is sufficient for this baptism, the hand of My clemency giving you

the fruit of this precious Blood. But if you are able to confess, I wish you to do so, and if you are able to, and do not, you will be deprived of the fruit of the Blood. It is true that, in the last extremity, a man, desiring to confess and not being able to, will receive the fruit of this baptism, of which I have been speaking. But let no one be so mad as so to arrange his deeds, that, in the hope of receiving it, he puts off confessing until the last extremity of death, when he may not be able to do so. In which case, it is not at all certain that I shall not say to him, in My Divine Justice: ‘You did not remember Me in the time of your life, when you could, now will I not remember you in your death.’

“You see then that these Baptisms, which you should all receive until the last moment, are continual, and though My works, that is the pains of the Cross were finite, the fruit of them which you receive in Baptism, through Me, are infinite. This is in virtue of the infinite Divine nature, united with the finite human nature, which human nature endures pain in Me, the Word, clothed with your humanity. But because the one nature is steeped in and united with the other, the Eternal Deity drew to Himself the pain, which I suffered with so much fire and love. And therefore can this operation be called infinite, not that My pain, neither the actuality of the body be infinite, nor

the pain of the desire that I had to complete your redemption, because it was terminated and finished on the Cross, when the Soul was separated from the Body; but the fruit, which came out of the pain and desire for your salvation, is infinite, and therefore you receive it infinitely. Had it not been infinite, the whole human generation could not have been restored to grace, neither the past, the present, nor the future. This I manifested in the opening of My Side, where is found the secret of the Heart, showing that I loved more than I could show, with finite pain. I showed to you that My love was infinite. How? By the Baptism of Blood, united with the fire of My charity, and by the general baptism, given to Christians, and to whomsoever will receive it, and by the baptism of water, united with the Blood and the fire, wherein the soul is steeped. And, in order to show this, it was necessary for the Blood to come out of My Side. Now I have shown you (said My Truth to you) what you asked of Me.”

How worldly people render glory and praise to GOD, whether they will or no.

“And so perfect is her vision that she sees the glory and praise of My Name, not so much in the angelic nature as in the human, for, whether worldly people will or no, they render glory and praise to My Name, not

that they do so in the way they should, loving Me above everything, but that My mercy shines in them, in that, in the abundance of My charity, I give them time, and do not order the earth to open and swallow them up on account of their sins. I even wait for them, and command the earth to give them of her fruits, the sun to give them light and warmth, and the sky to move above them. And in all things created and made for them, I use My charity and mercy, withdrawing neither on account of their sins. I even give equally to the sinner and the righteous man, and often more to the sinner than to the righteous man, because the righteous man is able to endure privation, and I take from him the goods of the world that he may the more abundantly enjoy the goods of heaven. So that in worldly men My mercy and charity shine, and they render praise and glory to My Name, even when they persecute My servants; for they prove in them the virtues of patience and charity, causing them to suffer humbly and offer to Me their persecutions and injuries, thus turning them into My praise and glory.

“So that, whether they will or no, worldly people render to My Name praise and glory, even when they intend to do Me infamy and wrong.”

How even the devils render glory and praise to GOD.

“Sinners, such as those of whom I have just spoken, are placed in this life in order to augment virtues in My servants, as the devils are in Hell as My justiciars and augmenters of My Glory; that is, My instruments of justice towards the damned, and the augmenters of My Glory in My creatures, who are wayfarers and pilgrims on their journey to reach Me, their End. They augment in them the virtues in diverse ways, exercising them with many temptations and vexations, causing them to injure one another and take one another’s property, and not for the motive of making them receive injury or be deprived of their property, but only to deprive them of charity. But in thinking to deprive My servants, they fortify them, proving in them the virtues of patience, fortitude, and perseverance. Thus they render praise and glory to My Name, and My Truth is fulfilled in them, which Truth created them for the praise and glory of Me, Eternal Father, and that they might participate in My beauty. But, rebelling against Me in their pride, they fell and lost their vision of Me, wherefore they rendered not to Me glory through the affection of love, and I, Eternal Truth, have placed them as instruments to exercise My servants in virtue in this life and as justiciars to those who go, for their sins, to the pains of Purgatory. So you see that My Truth is fulfilled in them, that is, that they

render Me glory, not as citizens of life eternal, of which they are deprived by their sins, but as My justiciars, manifesting justice upon the damned, and upon those in Purgatory.”

How the soul, after she has passed through this life, sees fully the praise and glory of My Name in everything, and, though, in her the pain of desire is ended, the desire is not.

“Thus in all things created, in all rational creatures, and in the devils is seen the glory and praise of My Name. Who can see it? The soul who is denuded of the body and has reached Me, her End, sees it clearly, and, in seeing, knows the truth. Seeing Me, the Eternal Father, she loves, and loving, she is satisfied. Satisfied, she knows the Truth, and her will is stayed in My Will, bound and made stable, so that in nothing can it suffer pain, because it has that which it desired to have, before the soul saw Me, namely, the glory and praise of My Name. She now, in truth, sees it completely in My saints, in the blessed spirits, and in all creatures and things, even in the devils, as I told you. And although she also sees the injury done to Me, which before caused her sorrow, it no longer now can give her pain, but only compassion, because she loves without pain, and prays to Me continually with affection of love,

that I will have mercy on the world. Pain in her is ended, but not love, as the tortured desire, which My Word, the Son, had borne from the beginning when I sent Him into the world, terminated on the Cross in His painful death, but His love — no. For had the affection of My charity, which I showed you by means of Him, been terminated and ended then, you would not be, because by love you are made, and had My love been drawn back, that is, had I not loved your being, you could not be, but My love created you, and My love possesses you, because I am one thing with My Truth, and He, the Word Incarnate with Me. You see then, that the saints and every soul in Eternal Life have desire for the salvation of souls without pain, because pain ended in their death, but not so the affection of love.

“Thus, as if drunk with the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, and clothed in the love of the neighbor, they pass through the Narrow Gate, bathed in the Blood of Christ crucified, and they find themselves in Me, the Sea Pacific, raised from imperfection, far from satiety, and arrived at perfection, satisfied by every good.”

How after Saint Paul was drawn to the glory of the blessed, he desired to be loosened from the body, as they do, who have reached the aforesaid third and fourth states.

“Paul, then, had seen and tasted this good, when I drew him up into the third heaven, that is into the height of the Trinity, where he tasted and knew My Truth, receiving fully the Holy Spirit, and learning the doctrine of My Truth, the Word Incarnate. The soul of Paul was clothed, through feeling and union, in Me, Eternal Father, like the blessed ones in Eternal Life, except that his soul was not separated from his body, except through this feeling and union. But it being pleasing to My Goodness to make of him a vessel of election in the abyss of Me, Eternal Trinity, I dispossessed him of Myself, because on Me can no pain fall, and I wished him to suffer for My name; therefore I placed before him, as an object for the eyes of his intellect, Christ crucified, clothing him with the garment of His doctrine, binding and fettering him with the clemency of the Holy Spirit and inflaming him with the fire of charity. He became a vessel, disposed and reformed by My Goodness, and, on being struck, made no resistance, but said: ‘My Lord, what do You wish me to do? Show me that which it is Your pleasure for me to do, and I will do it.’ Which I answered when I placed before him Christ crucified, clothing him with the doctrine of My charity. I illuminated him perfectly with the light of true contrition, by which he extirpated his defects, and founded him in My charity.”

How the soul who finds herself in the unitive state desires infinitely to have the barren earthly state and unite herself to GOD.

“And when I depart from the soul in the aforesaid way that the body may return a little to its corporal sentiment, the soul, on account of the union which she had made with Me, is impatient in her life, being deprived of union with Me, and the conversation of the Immortals, who render glory to Me, and finding herself, amid the conversation of mortals, and seeing them so miserably offending Me. This vision of My offense is the torture which such souls always have, and which, with the desire to see Me, renders their life insupportable to them. Nevertheless, as their will is not their own, but becomes one with Mine, they cannot desire other than what I desire, and though they desire to come and be with Me, they are contented to remain, if I desire them to remain, with their pain, for the greater praise and glory of My Name and the salvation of souls. So that in nothing are they in discord with My Will; but they run their course with ecstatic desire, clothed in Christ crucified, and keeping by the Bridge of His doctrine, glorying in His shame and pains. Inasmuch as they appear to be suffering they are rejoicing, because the enduring of many tribulations is to them a relief

in the desire which they have for death, for oftentimes the desire and the will to suffer pain mitigates the pain caused them by their desire to quit the body. These not only endure with patience, as I told you they did, who are in the third state, but they glory, through My Name, in bearing much tribulation. In bearing tribulation they find pleasure, and not having it they suffer pain, fearing that I reward not their well-doing or that the sacrifice of their desires is not pleasing to Me; but when I permit to them many tribulations they rejoice, seeing themselves clothed with the suffering and shame of Christ crucified. Wherefore were it possible for them to have virtue without toil they would not want it. They would rather delight in the Cross, with Christ, acquiring it with pain, than in any other way obtain Eternal Life. Why? Because they are inflamed and steeped in the Blood, where they find the blaze of My charity, which charity is a fire proceeding from Me, ravishing their heart and mind and making their sacrifices acceptable. Wherefore, the eye of the intellect is lifted up and gazes into My Deity, when the affection behind the intellect is nourished and united with Me. This is a sight which I grant to the soul, infused with grace, who, in truth, loves and serves Me.”

(To be continued)

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