

# THE SERAPH

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# EDITORIAL

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MARY

## MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES

Since the devils have been let loose from Hell to wreck havoc upon the people of the earth and all nature, there are two targets of their venomous hatred more than anything or anyone else: **Jesus Christ in His humanity and the Blessed Virgin Mary.**

In the first place, by the subtle changes in the ordination of priests and consecration of bishops, Satan has succeeded in gaining his goal: **The destruction of the sacrificing priesthood and the termination of apostolic succession.**

Next to follow as a necessary and logical consequence is the elimination of the Blessed Virgin Mary from her place in God's divine plan of salvation.

Following upon her position as CoRedemptrix, it is only fitting that all the merits gained by Our Lord's passion and death would be bestowed upon us through His Blessed Mother, whose "fiat" made it possible for the

Incarnation to take place.

Unfortunately, these more certain truths that come down to us through the centuries and are more sure than apparitions that may well be subject to human misinterpretation,. The most necessary, the most spiritually profitable attributes of Our Blessed Lady seem lost in the fuzzy mist of modern-day "devotees" of the Blessed Mother. We look to those great and saintly theologians and spiritual authorities for guidance in our devotions to the Blessed Mother.

We should never lose sight of Satan's endless warfare against the Blessed Mother.+ Among these attacks are those that have the appearance of piety, but are, in reality, ruses of the Devil.

St. Alphonsus de Liguori says: **"That it is not only lawful but useful to invoke and pray to the saints, and more especially to the Queen of saints, the most holy an ever blessed Virgin Mary, in order that they may obtain us the divine grace, is an article of faith, and has been defined by general Councils,**

**against heretics...”**

St. Bonaventure expressly calls her: **“Mary, the most faithful mediatrix of our salvation.”**

Consider the famous statement of St. Bernard: **“Such is God’s will, that we should have all through Mary.”**

The Blessed Mother’s intercession for the poor souls in Purgatory is deliberately hidden by the Modernist re-interpretation of the prayer requested by her at Fatima: The mention of purgatory is cunningly eliminated and replaced with a subtle heretical notion asking God to lead all souls to heaven. This is in complete contradiction of Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church. Such a prayer denies the existence of Hell and Purgatory.

The Blessed Mother revealed to St. Bridget the following: **“I am the Mother of all the souls in purgatory; for all the pains that they have deserved for their sins are every hour, as long as they remain there, in some way mitigated by my prayers.”**

There are many serious questions regarding the Fatima messages

that are cause for caution and careful evaluation. As with all visions and apparitions, when they are true they are true on the part of the message; but, as St. John of the Cross wisely points out: Very often the message is misunderstood by the one receiving it. And, it is especially true when the words are taken literally.

This is the greatest cause for error that leads souls away from God and not to Him. This is the error of every heretical sect: What is to be understood as a symbol of a higher spiritual reality, is taken literally; and, what is meant to be taken literally, is erroneously taken symbolically. The best example is the mystery of the Holy Eucharist: The heretical Jews wanted to take symbolically what Jesus meant to be taken literally. “This is My Body” means just that: It is the Body of Jesus Christ – body, soul and divinity.

Falsification of messages and twisting their meaning is not uncommon even in our day.

The words of St. Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians should serve as a “red flag” of caution:

There are three sources of error in matters of faith: spiritual revelations, mistaken words, or, forged letters. These are the three means that Satan uses to deceive and destroy souls. And, among his best instruments today is to sow in well-meaning souls a misguided devotion to the Blessed Mother. This is the reason the Church warns the faithful to avoid the many suspect apparitions; and to feed their souls with the genuine doctrines of the Church. If your spiritual “guide” has never read and meditated on *The Ascent of Mt. Carmel* by St. John of the Cross – WARNING! Your “guide” may sound pious and Catholic, but is not following the light of the Holy Spirit.

There are many “angels of light” sowing spiritual darkness.

Furthermore, St. Paul warns the faithful against idleness in the name of religion:

**“And we charge you, brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, to withdraw yourselves from every brother you lives irregularly, and not according to the teaching received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; for we were not unruly while with you, neither did we eat any man’s bread at his cost, but we worked night and day in labor and toil, so that we might not burden any of you.”**  
(2 Thess.)

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# The Bishop Speaks

*Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM D.D.*

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## John-Paul II- the Great... Actor

William Shakespeare’s profound  
observation of our existence is  
well-described in his play “As  
You Like It” when he says:

All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women  
                        merely players;  
They have their exits and their  
                        entrances;

And one man in his time plays  
                        many parts,

His acts being seven ages.

At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the  
                        nurse’s arms;

Then the whining school-boy,  
                        with his satchel

And shining morning face,  
                        creeping like snail

Unwillingly to school.

And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a  
                        woeful ballad

Made to his mistress’ eyebrow.

Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths, and  
                        bearded like the pard,

Jealous in honour, sudden and  
                        quick in quarrel,

Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon’s mouth.

And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good  
                        capon lin’d,

With eyes severe and beard of  
                        formal cut,

Full of wise saws and modern  
                        instances;

And so he plays his part.

The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper’d  
                        pantaloon,

With spectacles on nose and  
                        pouch on side;

His youthful hose, well sav’d, a  
                        world too wide

For his shrunk shank; and his  
                        big manly voice,

Turning again toward childish  
                        treble, pipes

And whistles in his sound.

Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful  
                        history,

Is second childishness and  
                        mere oblivion;

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sanstaste,  
                        sans everything.

When it comes to trivializing  
the sacred, Karol Wojtyla can  
be counted on to do this *par  
excellence*.

More profoundly, Shakespeare’s  
observation stops with death.

He does not say much about the other side of the portal of our human existence. He does not speak of the “second death” spoken of in the Apocalypse which refers to the supernatural death of the soul because of disobedience to God’s holy will.

Shakespeare might have reduced everything to the simple equation that starts out as a question: **Why did God make you?**

There are many opinions and philosophies that have tried to answer that question. The first being the very denial of a God above His work of creation. “Big bangs” and “Little bangs” are the favorite childish imagineering of atheists in their silly suggestions and quasi-dogmatic declarations as to how all things began. An atheist is really nothing more than a child whose mind never kept pace with his body. In other words, the atheist never grew up mentally.

But, the atheist is not much different from the “believer” in false gods dreamt up by a twisted imagination.

And this, too, is the lament of true religion. It is, in fact, the death of religion. Unfortunately, most are slow seek the true answer

to the question **Why did God make you?** and quick to follow false teachers whose credentials quality them more as metermaids or shoe-makers. Some even think themselves qualified to place themselves above even those whom the Holy Ghost has given them for their own good; to protect them against all error in matters of religion.

It is only the Roman Catholic Church that has the correct answer to the question **Why did God make you?**

The answer is simple, yet like the little seed, it grows on strong roots, extends its arms heavenwards and unless misfortune strikes, bears fruit.

**God made you to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him for all eternity.**

This is the message that Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Second Person of the Blessed Trinity came to remind all mankind.

Jesus taught the value of obedience. He was obedient to His Father’s holy will unto death – even unto death on the cross. He died, first of all, to be obedient to the divine will.

This included as a consequence, the redemption of every human being coming into this world – from the child conceived at the very moment of conception in the mother’s womb, to the oldest human being.

The entire process of redemption and salvation demands a response. God has extended His mercy through the redemption. God continues this mercy **on the condition that each human being responds to this mercy.** This response is what is known in theology as *salvation*.

The two are not the same thing. There is an axiom in sound Catholic theology that says: “God redeemed us without our help; He will not save us without our help”. The grace is given; it must be accepted and acted upon for salvation.

The Scriptures remind us: “**He who perseveres to the end, shall be saved.**” Furthermore, final perseverance is a great grace from God for which we must always humbly pray. Many begin well, but end badly; some begin badly, but end well.

St. John reminds us of the options we have regarding our salvation. The first is that we

remain faithful to the teachings of the Church even unto death. The second option is that we reject God’s grace and conform our lives to the spirit of the world which is ruled by Satan.

There is no middle term. We are either with Christ or we are against Him. He Himself has declared this.

This is very important to keep in mind because it is the sad duty of a successor of the Apostles to not only to teach, but to judge and guide the Catholic community. **No one else has been empowered with the complete three-fold powers of Jesus Christ.**

The Holy Spirit teaches us through the Gospel according to St. John the following truth which no one can escape: “**If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**” (St John 16, 18-19).

The whole world loves Wojtyla because he is of the world. Even during his lifetime, his image was



to be found displayed in many churches. There is something very sinister and uncanny in all this extreme “glorification” even greater than that of the former actor-President Ronald Reagan.

Pope Pius XII and genuine Popes before him were all hated by the world. The only ones “loved” by the world are those who have been hastily held up as “Blesseds”. But are they truly blessed in the eyes of God? One can only judge by their fruits.

Of all human beings, Satan hates a genuine Pope. And the reason is very simple: It is the supernatural strength of a Pope that keeps Satan at bay. We know this from the Holy Scriptures.

While writing to the Thessalonians regarding the Second Coming of Our Lord, St. Paul also mentions the most dangerous reality that will take place following the Great Apostasy.

For the sake of convenience to our readers, consider the what we are being taught by St. Paul concerning the last days.

The first thing he does is that he warns the Thessalonians and, of course, those of us who

are still living. What is he warning us about?

He warns us of the three kinds of sources of error concerning the last days.

He begins with the first warning: **“We beseech you brethren by the coming of Our Lord, Jesus Christ and our being gathered together unto him, not to be hastily shaken from your right mind, nor terrified, whether by spirit..”** Here St. Paul warns against false apparitions, visions and locutions. These are Satan’s weapons of choice. Why? Because they serve so well to appeal to the secret vanity of those whose faith is placed not so much on the word of God as found in Holy Scripture and the sound teachings of the Church on matters of spirituality, but rather on subjective illusions. Experience teaches us to beware of such things because they are more often the result of demonic deception.

They are like “puppy love”. Almost everyone knows what “puppy love” is. It is not real love. But, you can’t argue with the puppy because for the puppy it is real. Until the puppy grows up, of course.

The next warning is quoting St. Paul erroneously (If not maliciously): “**or by utterance**”. Most of us know from painful experience how often we ourselves are either misunderstood or misquoted by people of good will; and there are also those who do these things out of malice. Action to be taken: Don’t believe everything you hear no matter how good or how bad. The Cure of Ars said that more people go to Hell because of their tongue.

And thirdly,”...**or by letter attributed to us, as though the day of the Lord were near at hand.**” One of the most common ways to spread one’s own ideas is to attribute them to someone whose credibility cannot be doubted – or at least should not be doubted.

The forgery of documents is nothing new. People tried to promote their own ideas by forging letters or claiming to be the written statement of a reputable Doctor of the Church or some recognized saint. One particular example comes to mind: An opinion contrary to the teaching of the Church was publicly promoted by a certain pseudo-theologian. The

individual sought to strengthen his error by citing his source. As most people do not know their faith nor have the needed interest to verify a source, such deceivers count on this human failing for their success.

However, upon checking the reference for the false opinion, it was found that the source never said or wrote that which was attributed to him.

We meet with this source of deliberate deception very often in our days. And the only reason why such scoundrels succeed is because people are too lazy and gullible. They refuse to take heed from those who are competent in knowledge and authority.

One is reminded of the words of St. Augustine who said: **Among the tragedies of life is to mistake friends for enemies, and enemies for friends..**

This is probably the most common everyday experience of most people. Yet, they never seem to learn.

But let us continue with St. Paul.

After enumerating the three sources of error, he writes: **“Let no one deceive you in any way,**

**for the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God and gives himself out as if he were God...And now you know what restrains him that he may be revealed in his proper time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work; provided that who is at present restraining it, does still restrain, until he is gotten out of the way.” (@ Thess.2, 1-8).**

Note well that the pronoun of the person restraining Satan is masculine – not feminine.

Furthermore, the person who restrains all error originating ultimately from Satan is a **legitimate successor of St. Peter. In other words, a true Pope and not a false antipope.**

If we wonder with alarm at the degree of corruption all over the world, we must seek the cause at its proper source. Satan can do nothing without the permission of God. Since the establishment of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church by Jesus

Christ to continue His mission of salvation, it is the visible Vicar of Jesus Christ who has the supernatural power to restrain Satan.

If we have the courage to accept reality as it is, we would have to admit that there has not been a legitimate occupant of the Chair of Peter since the death of Pope Pius XII.

The term “Chair of Peter” does not refer to a physical chair made by a carpenter. It refers to the office of the Pope which includes not only all supernatural power, but also the natural power as head of the Papal State – the Vatican.

The first imposter of our times was “Pope John XXIII”. His first heresy was religious indifference. Also, there is a photograph of him kneeling before the Freemason worshipper of Lucifer, the President of France, from whom he received the cardinal’s hat! This symbolic declaration of Roncalli’s apostasy from the true Faith was superficially passed off as receiving this important event from a “friend”. This is an outrage and a mockery of the important position of a cardinal in the true Church.

Also, Roncalli publicly claimed that his idea to have a General Council came to him on the spur of the moment. Can you believe it? He certainly knew what was going on in the Vatican and all over the world where members of the clergy – priests, bishops and cardinals – were already members of the Lodge. It is we, the naïve, the pious, the faithful who lived in almost total ignorance of what was amiss.

Dealing with Karl Wojtyla is like dealing with one link in a long chain of subversive activities in high places. The calculated destruction of the Roman Catholic Church began on an open scale with John XXIII.

We do not know all the details; nor do we know whether Pope Pius XII did or did not die a

natural death. All is hidden behind a sinister curtain of deliberate deception.

The era of religious indifference was begun openly by John XXIII under the saccharine name “ecumenism” and “let us emphasize what unites us, rather than that which divides us.” A fine-sounding, chummy and cozy mentality that leads nowhere but into the camp of the Antichrist.

Paul VI was the next in line to promote the Satanic agenda enthusiastically embraced by John-Paul II, and after him, by the reigning antipope Benedict XVI.

(To be continued)

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## Franciscan Saints

### THE SERVANTS OF GOD PAULA AND GABRIELA MEZZAVACCHI

#### *Virgins, Second Order*

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

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

When Catharine transferred to Bologna in order to establish a new convent, she took with her Paula, the older of the sisters, whom she appointed mistress of novices because of her outstanding virtue.

In this capacity Paula directed the novices with zeal, prudence, and great charity. In a special way she devoted herself to her sick, tempted, and worried fellow sisters. To all she was a model of humility, meekness, and mortification. God adorned her with the gift of prophecy and revealed to her the secrets of hearts. She died in the odor of sanctity in 1492.

For a period of nine years after Paula's entrance into the convent, her sister Gabriela continued to be the object of love and tenderness in their paternal home. Yet, she felt interiorly impelled to follow the example of her sister. Generously she overcame the difficulties in the way, left all, and at Ferrara asked for the poor garb of the daughters of St. Clare. Her progress in perfection corresponded to the heroic beginning she had made until, rich in merits, she slept blessedly in the Lord in the year 1493.

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

1. Consider what the pious prayer of a mother can do for her children. Obviously it was the result of the sacrifice and prayers of the mother of our saintly virgins that her children became such

faithful servants of God. The mother of St. Bernard, who consecrated her six sons and one daughter to God immediately after their birth and begged that they might remain faithful in His service, experienced a similar effect of prayer. Three of the children are honored as saints, all died most edifying deaths. If Christ our Lord says: "All things whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, that I will do" (John 14:13), must not then above all the prayer of a mother for her children's salvation be heard? Christ Himself before His departure directed this prayer to His heavenly Father for all those who are His: "Sanctify them in truth" (John 17:17).

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

merciful even than a mother to the son of her womb?

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

#### PRAYER OF *THE* CHURCH

(*Feast of St. Monica*)

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

# Muhammad the Prophet of Blasphemy

Reverend William Claybourne

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## The Tragedy of Eden Repeats Itself

Thus far, you and I have begun to delve into the demonically deceitful origins of what is sadly viewed today as one of the world's greatest religions. The numbers of Islam's willing adherents are now at staggering levels: far more than a billion strong and growing by the day. As a Catholic priest, it would be a disgrace to remain silent in the face of what is a violent, dehumanizing, and morally objectionable false religion. This is in addition to what has already been stated about the blasphemies hurled against our holiest practices and devotions, including the life-giving Stations of the Cross.

It must be understood of this work, and at this stage especially, that the goal of this series is to illumine with truth those who are seeking it, and to hopefully lead those who are imbued with the terrors and errors of Islam, into the safe harbor that is the sheepfold of Jesus Christ. My intention is not to vilify a man who lamentably fell into a complex combination of spiritual darkness; the purpose here is to

refute heresy and give you a true picture of what the religion of Islam truly contains, starting with the founder himself. There are many positive things to say about Muhammad. Unfortunately, none of his glowing wordplay, sharp wit, or concern for his followers' welfare will ever overshadow the atrocities that were committed during his reign as the self-proclaimed great Apostle of the Almighty.

The fact is that the religion of Muhammad was nearly short-circuited before it ever had a chance to lead souls astray. There were two carefully crafted lies that ensured a future for the Muslims; and the success of these statements is attributed to the already superstitious and idolatrous minds of the Arabs and Jews. The first of these two great lies came in Medina, in the infant days of Muhammad's so-called mission. Muhammad was severely persecuted by the idol worshippers of Mecca, mainly because he demanded with unwavering conviction that his countrymen abandon their many gods in order to follow him to the one true God. After

all, he claimed, God Almighty admonished him to name this religion Islam, meaning "Surrender to the Will of God." This ominous name managed to win some members of his family to the cause; but the people of Mecca would not budge. These Meccans would have nothing to do with Muhammad's plan, and their hatred grew steadily stronger, until violent and persistent persecutions raged on a daily basis. Up to this period of his life, Muhammad is to be commended for his patient bearing of these insults and injuries. He would allow none of his followers to engage in any sort of violent retaliation whatsoever. This apparent virtue had a practical basis, though, since Muhammad possessed neither the wealth nor manpower required to launch an attack on these enemies. His fortune would soon change, and so would his peaceful attitude towards those who opposed him. In fact, cold-hearted violence became a character trait of his later life, as we will see in a moment.

This first of two great lies, then, is that Muhammad is a divine oracle, the very mouthpiece of Almighty God. It is proposed that every single message that he claimed to have received ought

to be taken as the unchangeable word of God. That is, unless Muhammad himself tells his listeners that the message of God has changed. His visions came in rapid-fire succession throughout these early stages. It was a painful sight for anyone to behold this man in a state of intense nervousness, with a distorted countenance and the anxiety of his mind plastered boldly upon his face. Eyewitnesses admitted that he would often fall down as if he was intoxicated, and would shortly be covered by a profusely-flowing sweat, even on chilly winter days. There are several factors that contribute to his reported revelations. One cause is his natural temperament, which was quite a nervous one to begin with. There was also the anxiety and pressure regarding the foundation of this religion which was violently persecuted. Then, there was Muhammad's asceticism, or religious discipline, that he learned from monks and pagans alike, and which led him to frequent and lengthy night watches. Above all of these contributing factors is one that has been buried in obscurity. It is a medical truth, confirmed by witnesses: **Muhammad suffered from fits of epileptic seizures since his early youth, and they**



**increased dramatically during this stressful period of failing apostolic labors.**

This natural infirmity, combined with the natural cunning of his wit, made a powerful opium-like concoction for many Arabs who had steeped themselves in the placation of demons. It was not difficult, then, for a clever man to use this spiritual potion to deceive many, very much like Simon Magus had done over five hundred years previously. These revelations of Muhammad's, which gradually developed into an entire system of religion and government, are referred to by those who know as hallucinations. How could it be thought otherwise? Surely some examples will clarify this matter.

After bearing years of rejection in Mecca, Muhammad one day sat down amidst the chief men of Mecca, near the sacred Kaaba, and recited the fifty-third chapter of his Qu'ran, including the account of the archangel Gabriel's first apparition to him. He then informed his powerful persecutors that there was a second revelation, which focused upon three of the demons whom they worshipped as goddesses. The following verse was reportedly revealed to

Muhammad: **“What think ye of Al Lat and Al Uzz and Manat the third goddess with them? These are the sublime females, whose intercession may be hoped for.”** These were words of compromise with the idolaters, which understandably led to a lessening of the persecution of Muhammad's followers. The Meccans became quite tolerable to these people who now recognized the divinity of their demons. Muhammad had long since declared himself to be God's instrument and true source of heavenly messages; but now Muhammad approved of the worship of idols, against the will of Allah. The prophet had sinned against his God, and he repented, saying that the evil spirit had caused him to make this concession. Fortunately for Islamists, Allah had permanently stricken this concession out of the Qu'ran, now declaring that these demons **“Are no more than empty names, which you and your fathers have invented.”** This retraction and careful adjustment of Allah's words solved Muhammad's crisis of conscience; although it served to rekindle the persecution against him waged with renewed hatred by his fellow Meccans.

After Muhammad was finally

forced to flee from Mecca, he determined to proselytize 250 miles to the north in Medina, where many Jews dwelt at that time. The Jews of this region were, at least by a starving Muslim's standards, quite wealthy. Mostly, the Jews here were engaged in farming, trading of many resources, and gold refinery. Being true children of their fathers, they rejected Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Promised Messiah. Instead of following the Truth, they were waiting, as they still wait today, for the Chosen One. When many had heard of Muhammad's energetic and famed preaching, they believed that this was the Great Prophet of which the Scripture had spoken. Naturally then, Muhammad's arrival in Medina was received by them as a gift from heaven. The prophet's triumphal entry into the city of Medina was the consummation of a solemn oath that twelve Jews made with Muhammad shortly before he left Mecca. They bound themselves to an oath to Muhammad to remain faithful to him and to renounce idolatry, and to obey the prophet in all things that were **reasonable**. These twelve Jewish apostles provided themselves with an important escape clause that was invoked almost instantly; for

Muhammad's newest revelation was to be the most ridiculous one yet, and hardly credible by even the most depraved pagan mind.

The religion of Muhammad was now beginning to develop after twelve long years of frustration. The prophet perceived the necessity of developing a more solid and firm authority over his followers. In order to do this, Muhammad, now aged 52, would once again resort to a sweat-soaked divine communication. When many of his followers had gathered together for the customary daily prayers, he solemnly and authoritatively announced his dream of a Lailat-al-miraj, or what we would call a Night Journey. This journey, spoken of with all seriousness, took Muhammad from Mecca to heaven, after passing through both Medina and Jerusalem, and being carried by his close confidant Gabriel the angel, together with him on a white-winged horse named Buraq. This magical horse transported the prophet from the holy place in Jerusalem upwards into heaven, to the very throne of Allah, where many new commands and precepts were given by Allah, to be delivered to the people immediately. When his freshly converted followers heard this utterly absurd nonsense,

they were dumbfounded and dismayed by what this man had now spoken. All were on the verge of abandoning him on the spot, when his lifelong bosom friend and right hand in the development of Islam, Abu Bekr, saved Muhammad from an embarrassment so great that his entire enterprise would have failed completely.

It is here where the Garden of Eden is revisited, for a cunningly injected lie poisoned the hearts of these stupefied people, and made certain that Islam would develop into the modern day threat that it is. Before the disaster could unfold, Abu Bekr, a well-educated noble Arab, persuaded the people by his own testimony, that this revelation was perfectly believable and as true as the words of Allah. It was only this intervention that prevented Islam's demise, and to this very day the lie has remained carefully intact. For in the magnificently constructed mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, yet another rock is the object of veneration. This rock is said to have upon it the footprint of Muhammad, which was impressed into the stone when the prophet leaped onto the winged horse Buraq. The bitter pill was swallowed entirely, and no one bothered to question why

he needed to leap upon the horse in Jerusalem if he was already flying though Mecca and many more mile of desert.

No one with the Spirit of Truth dwelling within could ever accept such lies. The true doctrines of Our Lord Jesus Christ are so beautifully simple and pure, that no such contrivances have ever been necessary. The testimony has always been true, because it is given by the Father, and by the workings of the Holy Spirit. "If you do not believe in Me," declared the Lord to the Jews, "then believe the works." The Jews of later centuries not only rejected Jesus Christ again, but fell even further into the deceptions of a false prophet. Consequently, in the year of Our Lord 621, Muhammad received from his father an almost limitless amount of credibility, stemming from one powerfully effective lie.

Having examined the lack of veracity in Muhammad's apostolate and divine revelations, we pass on to a second contradiction and sickness in the very root of the tree of Islam. This contradiction was not seen until this new religion had gained power through newly acquired wealth and military force. It suffices for now to relate just one

incident from the prophet's life to refute the idea that he is the mouthpiece of the Compassionate and All-Merciful God. Mercy and compassion were the very last things on Muhammad's mind when he clashed with the Jews in word and deed. He had relied upon them for years for his information concerning the lives of the prophets, the various revelations of God in the Old Testament, and the angels. He adopted their customs, theological opinions, and heretical doctrines in order to please them, and thereby draw them to follow him completely. These were the same rebellious and stiff-necked Jews who had seldom listened to God's own commands; and they were in no way willing to accept him as their great prophet, saying that the prophet must come from Syria. Not only did their theology mutually disintegrate, but their hatred for one another grew like a cancer. The Jews would now sneer when they saw Muhammad, and their stinging remarks were made without ceasing. Like the donkey of Balaam, Muhammad spoke the truth in retaliation, when he accused the Jews of rejecting their own Messiah, and of systematically concealing all of the passages of Scripture foretelling His advent.

Such condemnatory words could only serve to inflame the Jews with passionate hatred for Muhammad, and their desire for blood would come to fruition after both parties had resolved to destroy each other. Despite having no intelligent military leadership and very little valour among their ranks, the Jews united themselves with the sworn enemies of Muhammad, the Meccans, and engaged themselves in a siege that was to prove the true character of the prophet. Despite a force of 10,000 strong, the Jews and Meccans failed to make any progress at all in a month-long siege on Muhammad's stronghold. They also suffered terribly due to the bitterly cold nights in which they camped around the Muslim fortress. A retreat was sounded, and so was the death warrant issued by the prophet for these treacherous enemies that he deemed "hypocrites".

The chieftains of this military venture had been the Kuraizah Jews, who now faced the fierce wrath of 3,000 enraged Islamists besieging their city. With a force of 2,000 fighters of their own, the Jews put up a stubborn resistance to the invasion, and both sides fought with considerable loss of life sustained. Four weeks

of bloodshed ended with a conditional surrender. The condition was that their fate would be decided by a member of the apparently neutral Aus tribe. This man, named Sad-Muag, could not have been further from a mindset of mercy, and his judgment was one that rejoiced the bloodthirsty hearts of the Muslims. The annals of secular history read this way: "The men were to be killed; their goods to be seized, and the women and children to be enslaved; which of the lads were to count as men and which as children was to be determined by medical examination." This proclamation greatly pleased Muhammad, who ordered the newly enslaved to be kept by a strong guard force. The men became the victims of nearly incomparable savagery.

Despite his claim to have prayed constantly throughout the entire siege, Muhammad now rose from his prayer with a desire for vengeance. A large trench was dug across the market place for the execution of the 700 male captives. Six at a time, they were brought to the brink of the trench, beheaded, and their headless bodies thrown into the pit. This brutality was repeated until 700 men lay slaughtered in ice cold blood. One shudders at the

remembrance of this horrendous atrocity, and more especially when viewing the picture of this man Muhammad, the prophet of the most merciful God, witnessing every single moment of this terrible carnage! He was entirely unmoved to pity; in fact, he fiercely denounced those poor wretches who were brutalized to his delight. What is important here is not only the degree of violence in this atrocity, but the insight that we gain into the sanguinary principles which now ruled the prophet's life and which would grow increasingly intense as new disciples were made not with the grace of God, but the edge of the sword. The accursed slaughter that transpired on this most awful day is loudly applauded in the Qu'ran. Furthermore, to the amazement of every Christian, Muhammad's actions are pronounced as divinely inspired, and entirely harmonious with the love and compassion of the All-Merciful God!



**CONFERENCES ON THE  
BLESSED TRINITY.**

**BY  
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CONFERENCE II.

*ON THE DIVINE  
PERFECTIONS, ALL  
TOTALLY POSSESSED BY  
EACH PERSON OF THE  
MOST HOLY TRINITY.*

*(continued)*

II.

It is strictly true that because God, who created us, is eternal and immense He must be simultaneously in all places and at every point of time. We can form some idea of His ubiquity, or presence in every point of space, but to conceive how He can be present at every point of time baffles human understanding. Yet, being absolute, He must needs be present simultaneously at all points both of space and time. All past ages are present to Him. In His presence there is no past nor future, but an unsuccessive, unchanging now. Time and space are man's home temporarily. The past, the present, and the future are the knowledge of God, and are embraced by His infinity and in its

ineffable simplicity. All periods of time meet in Him as a unit, as all lines drawn from the circumference of a circle meet in the centre.

Unaided reason proves that the Necessary Being is eternal, without beginning, end, or succession; that He always was, for it is impossible to conceive how He could spring from nothing. "If ever," said a philosopher and a Christian, "there was an instant when there was nothing, nothing should last for ever." There would be nothing now. *I am the first and the last*, says the Lord (Isa. xli. 1). He is the ALPHA AND THE OMEGA of the Apocalypse.

Eternity is the simultaneous and perfect possession of an interminable life. The long and weary lapse of indefinite ages compared to it is less than the raindrop to the ocean. How ineffable the bliss that gathers into every moment, into every thought, the accumulated joys of infinite perfections and beatitudes!

The Holy Ghost frequently proclaims the immensity of God. He is whole and entire everywhere and in everything, in every being, not more in the angel than in the insect, not more in the orb of the firmament than in the grain of sand by the sea-shore. Yet He is no more confined or limited to space than is thought to the body. *In Him we*

*live and move and have our being* (Acts xvii. 28). *He fills the heavens and the earth* (Jer. xxiii. 24). “Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present; if I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also Thy hand shall lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me” (Ps. cxxxviii.) “He is all in heaven, He is all on earth, He is not limited by any place, He is all in Himself in every place,” says St. Augustine. If He could be absent from any place it would be possible for Him not to exist at all. But He is necessary. He could not have made Himself, nor could He have made any creature absolutely like Himself. He is immense, so that we cannot escape from Him; eternal, so that all things are nothing before Him; omniscient, so that we are laid open, without a secret, before Him.

Everything is penetrated by Him, yet His adorable purity remains untainted and His simplicity unmingled with that which it so intimately permeates. All we do, say, or think takes place in the being of the omnipresent God — a truth which, while it consoles on one hand, on the other gives a frightful character to acts of sin. We are in Him like fish in the sea. He is as intimately present in every being and in each atom as though that alone were the only

point in existence. He legislates for one as for all, and concentrates all creation on it.

The Almighty is also immutable. There is no change in Him. Change implies ignorance, decay, and imperfection. To change is to become what one was not, or to cease being that which one was. If one becomes that which he was not, he was separated from it and did not exist in this sense. If he loses what he was or had, he ceases to exist in that point and is separated from it. In either case he neither was nor is absolute or perfect being. When he creates he does not change; the act and its conceptions always existed immutably in the divine Mind.

*As there never was a time when the Lord was not in all the plenitude of His self-sufficient majesty, He is always the self-same. God is not as man that He should lie, or the son of man that He should change* (Num. xxiii. 13). *I change not* (Mal. iii. 6). *He is without the shadow of vicissitude* (James i. 17). “*He changes His works, but not His plans or counsels,*” said St. Augustine.

Then He is immutable. He is actually all that He is. Unlike us — part in act and part in potency — He is all act. To will and to do are the same with Him. He is all His infinite possibility, actually present

and living. HE IS A SIMPLE ACT, as He is justly styled both by Aristotle and St. Thomas.

*God is absolutely and infinitely simple, not complex or in any way composed of parts. God is spirit (John iv. 24). The Lord is a spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17). If composed He must have parts, material or spiritual; it makes no difference which. If material, as in bodies, one part must be at one point and another at a different place, like hand and foot. He would not be entire in any of them, nor simple and absolute in any one of them, nor absolute at all.*

If He be composed of spiritual or immaterial parts these parts would be distinct attributes, one of which would not be the other and none of them Himself totally. They would be limited in relation to each other and limited in relation to Himself. They would be circumscribed and limited attributes. He could only exist to the end of these limited attributes and not beyond them. He could not be infinite and absolute. The Necessary Being, therefore, cannot be composed in any manner. He is absolutely simple, and consequently all His attributes are identical with each other and with the divine essence.

Properly speaking, God has no perfections, which are our way of approaching to an honorable idea of

him. The ineffable simplicity of the divine nature renders it impossible to form a just conception of ONE TRUE GOD. He is His own perfection, and that embraces all. Simplicity is the whole of God. It must be laid down as a fact, established by reason and religion, that there is perfect equality between all God's attributes — Himself, His being, and His adorable essence.

The holy doctors prove and inculcate this profound mystery very forcibly. St. Thomas thus expresses it: "In God being and essence are identical; the understanding of God is His essence; God's will is His essence; God is His own life; God is His own beatitude." St. Irenæus, in refuting the Gnostics, who impiously imputed human affections to God, thus expresses himself: "The Father of all is infinitely remote from human passions and feelings. He is simple and not compound; He is Himself all like to Himself; He is all equal because He is all spirit and intellect; He is like-membered, or all His members are the same." The expression is wonderful and unique — Ὁμοιοῦ ἡὼλον. The same idea is found in Cicero, but the expression different (*Tusc.*, book i. chap. xxvii.)

God is absolutely simple, or one. *I am one* (Dent. xxxii. 39). He is unity itself; He only is oneness. The Infinite alone is absolutely one,



because He is absolutely total. No creature is total or absolutely full and complete. There is no absolute concrete unity outside of God. Our thoughts, ideas, and souls in comparison with matter are simple, yet in themselves they are complex. All the faculties of the soul are distinct, and one is not the other. An atom is one in its centre only, which is not itself entirely. All created unity is a mere shadow of the incomprehensible unity of the ever-blessed God. He alone is one; He alone is simplicity itself.

Although there can be no real distinction between the divine perfections, nevertheless they are justly distinguished in our thoughts and conceptions. Justice and mercy offer different ideas to our minds. In God they are one and the same. This is caused by the fact that God presents Himself in a different manner or degree of esseity or light to His creatures. He puts Himself in a great variety of attitudes, acts, and relationship with us, as the sun in the heavens does not always present the same appearance to the world which he rules and enlightens. Morning, noon, and evening, and throughout the entire day, his aspects vary. We know that the self-subsisting essence of God, is in each of the three Uncreated Persons of the Most Holy Trinity in its unity and simplicity, and we also know that the attributes are not synonyms. St. Bernard beautiful-

ly teaches the doctrine as follows: "Away with heretics who impiously assert that the greatness by which God is great, the goodness by which He is good, the wisdom by which He is wise, the justice by which He is just, and the divinity by which He is God, is not God!"

God is invisible. Although so intimately present in all His works, He was never seen by mortal, and thus gives room for faith, that we may win an eternal recompense by its exercise. *The King of ages, immortal and invisible, whom no man saw nor can see* (1 Tim. i. 17). It was an angel that conversed with Moses and gave the law, as the representative of the Most High. The Second Person was never seen until He became man and dwelt amongst us, the divine essence still remaining unseen.

He is incomprehensible, as defined by the Vatican Council. "The soul of Jesus Christ knows and sees God as plainly as He is seen and known" is a condemned proposition. He surpassed the combined understanding of all angels and saints. Not even the glory-strengthened eye of the Mother of God can see the plenitude of the divine nature. *Behold God is great beyond our knowledge* (Job xxxvi. 26). We are cautioned not to scrutinize His mysteries rashly. *He who is a searcher of majesty shall be oppressed with*

glory (Prov. xxv. 27).

The great First Cause is omnipotent; He can do all possible things, and His power is limited only by His perfections. He is the cause and the origin of all things besides Himself. All things else are contingent and imperfect, and could not have produced themselves. As there was a time when they were not, it follows as a necessary consequence that they were produced from nothing. But nothing short of infinite power could create a thing from nothing or preserve its existence when created. Therefore the Absolute Being is also omnipotent. This He assures by His own holy word: *O Lord, Lord, almighty King, there is none can resist Thy will* (Esther xiii. 9). *None can resist His will* (Isa. lv.) No words can express it. No ideas can conceive it properly. It costs Him no effort to call numberless possible worlds and creations out of nothing. Impossibility is no limit to him. To such terrific power nothing is impossible, nothing is great or small. Our free-will alone seems to be a limit to Him, and we dare to brave His might.

He desires our salvation and that none should perish. By an abuse of His grace and their own free-will many resist Him. Even: then He is not defeated, for He has provided an alternative. By primary and antecedent will He desires the salva-

tion of all. It is but conditional and is based on our free acceptance of the conditions. If we reject His mercy there is the secondary will by which He decrees that obstinate sinners shall perish, for He is just.

*Physical evils happen by His will, and they are good and necessary in the wise dispensations of His merciful providence. Shall there be an evil in the city which the Lord hath not done? (Amos iii. 6).*

*It is asked why God permits moral evils. Many heretics in former and recent times blasphemously assert that the all-holy God is the author of sin. Human lips could not utter a deeper impiety. The Holy Ghost declares that the sinner and his wickedness are both hateful to God (Wisdom). God tempteth no man, (James i. 13). This is the will of God — your sanctification.*

But He permits sin for wise and merciful purposes. The permission of evil implies grace. Without it neither angels nor men would be free; and freedom is necessary for merit. A heaven of saints ready made was not God's plan, nor could it be a source of glory any more than other external manifestations of His wisdom and power. The fortitude of the martyrs, the unbending perseverance of the confessors, the nobility of human efforts, and the heroism of the saints are

based on this grave permission, and all the varied glories of the seats of bliss in Sion. It was this flooded the world with grace and caused the astounding mystery of the Redemption. Were it not for this terrible truth little indeed would be known of the wonders of divine mercy. Power creates from nothing, but mercy brings good from evil.

God is infinite wisdom; He knows us and all things else, in their deepest and ultimate causes, in Himself. All human and angelic knowledge is but a ray of His light; all the various tongues of men a broken accent of the Eternal Word. He is the abyss of all possible worlds and creations in all their order, harmony, and variety of beings. *All things are naked and open to His eyes* (Heb. iv. 13), even our most secret actions and thoughts. How terrible, then, the agony of the lost one, to feel that he lies open and transparent before the gaze of God's infallible wisdom.

"God's foreknowledge has as many witnesses as there are prophets," says Tertullian. His all-seeing eye takes in at a single glance all things, past, present, and future — all possible things, all even that never will occur, but would occur if certain conditions were actuated. Had Tyre and Sidon but beheld the miracles done in Corozain and Bethsaida they would not have perished.

"Nothing," says St. Augustine, "is future to God. He fills all time, and His knowledge embraces all things; they are not future but present, and should be called knowledge and not foreknowledge." His knowledge does not destroy our freedom, determine our acts, nor impair our liberty. These are foreseen because they occur; they do not occur because they are foreseen. We are free as air, and we know this by experience. God's word confirms our innate conviction: *Thou hast made all things in wisdom* (Ps. ciii. 24). It is not in the extreme of possible excellence that this wisdom manifests itself, but in the harmony of creation, in the adaptation of means to their end, like light and the eye. It is possible for God to create differently and more perfectly, but His wisdom would then be no more conspicuous.

The moral attributes of God are distinguished from the metaphysical and have a relation to the duties and obligations of man. They are the plenitude of all virtues in God and in their infinite extent. They are justice, patience, mercy, etc., etc.

***To be continued***

# Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

*Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.*

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## ENTERING A CONVENT

The convent chapel had been beautiful in the warm glow of the summer sunshine and the ceremony of six Sisters taking the Religious habit had been most impressive. These young women had come to the altar-rail, dressed as brides for their spiritual marriage to Christ, their Spouse. After expressing their desire to belong to Christ alone, they left the chapel and then returned garbed in the simple robes of their Religious Congregation.

When the impressive ceremony was finished, I had come to the front porch of the convent which overlooked the silver like waters of the Hudson. I was greeted warmly by a group of parents and friends of the six young novices. Soon someone asked: "How long a time, Father, did these six young ladies spend as postulants?"

"The postulancy," I replied, "in a Religious Congregation of women lasts six months. As a Religious vocation consists of the desire and the necessary qualifications, both spiritual and physical, to carry out the desire, the postulancy is a probation before the aspirant is permitted to wear the distinctive dress or habit of the Congregation and to begin the training known as the noviceship.

"The noviceship is a period of special spiritual training preparatory to taking the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The noviceship must last at least one full and uninterrupted year; during this time the novice is taught a love of prayer, a close union with God, and to practice those special virtues which the

Religious life demands of its members. At the end of this training, the novice makes her temporary profession and takes her first vows, binding for a period of three years. The perpetual profession, or the taking of the vows for life, under the general law comes at the end of these three years, unless one is under twenty-one years of age. However, in some Institutes or Congregations, the Sisters do not take perpetual vows, but renew their temporary vows at prescribed periods."

"Just what are the vows, Father?" a young woman asked timidly.

"The simple vow of poverty is the promise made to God to abstain from the right of exercising independent proprietorship over material possessions. This means a Sister may not give, loan, receive, borrow, exchange, or destroy any object estimable in money value without lawful permission of superiors. The vow of chastity is a promise made to God not to marry and to abstain from all acts, even internal, that are contrary to this virtue. The vow of obedience is a promise made to God to obey the commands of Superiors, contained explicitly or implicitly in the constitutions."

The young woman asked rather quickly: "Does the Institute or Congregation acquire ownership of a girl's property when she enters?"

"No; the Institute does not acquire ownership of the property of its members. While a dowry is required for entrance, this varies from a small sum in the case of teaching and nursing

Sisters to a necessarily larger amount in the case of nuns who have no means of support. As to the property of nuns and Sisters, the laws of the Church are clear. A novice is forbidden under pain of invalidity to renounce any property or to make a gift of her possessions. Religious women of simple vows retain the ownership of what they possessed before they made their profession and are forbidden to deprive themselves of their property during their lifetime. The simple vow of poverty merely promises to abstain from exercising the right of ownership without the Superior's permission. In Institutes where all property must be renounced within two months before the solemn profession, the nun or Sister is perfectly free in the choice of a beneficiary."

"You say 'nun or Sister.' Is there any difference between a nun and a Sister?" the young lady inquired.

"While the words 'nun' and 'Sister' are generally used synonymously, yet, in the strict canonical sense there is a difference. A nun is one who has pronounced solemn vows, or whose Institute prescribes solemn vows, but by a dispensation of the Holy See, are simple in certain countries. Thus the Carmelites, Benedictines, Poor Clares, Visitandines, and others whose constitutions prescribe solemn vows are nuns. The term 'Sister' designates those having simple vows. They usually are engaged in active works, like teaching and nursing."

"Why do you distinguish between simple and solemn vows?"

"Because a solemn vow is one which is invested by the Church with special force and stability, together with certain

legal effects. Thus after taking the solemn vow of poverty, a Religious cannot own any property in his or her own personal right. Again, one who has taken a solemn vow of chastity is incapable of contracting a valid marriage by the law of the Church. A simple vow of chastity renders marriage unlawful but not invalid, except the simple vow made in the Society of Jesus. One who has taken simple vows may be dismissed more easily, and in this case, but not in that of the solemn vows, the obligation of the vows is removed by dismissal."

"May a married woman become a Religious?" a young bride laughingly asked, looking teasingly at her husband.

"No; a married person cannot be admitted without special permission of the Holy See. Marriage is one of the impediments to entrance. To prevent your asking what are the other impediments, I will tell you that no one can be admitted who, having been a Catholic, joined a non-Catholic sect; or who has not completed her fifteenth year; or who seeks entrance under compulsion, or through grave fear, or fraud; or is still bound by Religious profession or who was once bound by Religious vows. Those on whom a punishment is impending because of some grave crime, or who are liable to be accused of grave crime, may not be admitted. Likewise, superiors cannot accept any candidate burdened with debts which cannot be paid; or any young woman whose father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, is in sore need; or any one so involved in secular business that the Institute may fear future lawsuits and troubles. In all of which you will see the Church protects both the individual and the fair name of our Sisterhoods."

# The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

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## A TREATISE OF PRAYER

(Continued)

*Of the death of sinners, and of their pains in the hour of death.*

“Not so excellent, dearest daughter, is the end of these other poor wretches who are in great misery as I have related to you. How terrible and dark is their death! Because in the moment of death, as I told you, the Devil accuses them with great terror and darkness, showing his face, which you know is so horrible that the creature would rather choose any pain that can be suffered in this world than see it; and so greatly does he freshen the sting of conscience that it gnaws him horribly. The disordinate delights and sensuality of which he made lords over his reason, accuse him miserably, because then he knows the truth of that which at first he knew not, and his error brings him to great confusion.

“In his life he lived unfaithfully to Me — self-love having veiled the pupil of the most holy faith — wherefore the Devil torments him with infidelity in order to bring him to despair. Oh! how hard for them is this battle, because it finds them disarmed, without the armor of affection and charity; because, as members of the Devil, they have

been deprived of it all. Wherefore they have not the supernatural light, neither the light of science, because they did not understand it, the horns of their pride not letting them understand the sweetness of its marrow. Wherefore now in the great battle they know not what to do. They are not nourished in hope, because they have not hoped in Me, neither in the Blood of which I made them ministers, but in themselves alone, and in the dignities and delights of the world. And the incarnate wretch did not see that all was counted to him with interest, and that as a debtor he would have to render an account to Me; now he finds himself denuded and without any virtue, and on whichever side he turns he hears nothing but reproaches with great confusion. His injustice which he practiced in his life accuses him to his conscience, wherefore he dares not ask other than justice.

“And I tell you that so great is that shame and confusion that unless in their life they have taken the habit of hoping in My mercy, that is, have taken the milk of mercy (although on account of their sins this is great presumption, for you cannot truly say that he who strikes Me with the arm of My mercy has a hope in mercy, but rather has presumption), there is not one who would not de-

spair, and with despair they would arrive with the Devil in eternal damnation.

“But arriving at the extremity of death, and recognizing his sin, his conscience unloaded by holy confession, and presumption taken away, so that he offends no more, there remains mercy, and with this mercy he can, if he will, take hold on hope. This is the effect of Mercy, to cause them to hope therein during their life, although I do not grant them this, so that they should offend Me by means of My mercy, but rather that they should dilate themselves in charity, and in the consideration of My goodness. But they act in a contrary way, because they offend Me in the hope which they have in My mercy. And nevertheless, I keep them in this hope so that at the last moment they may have something which they may lay hold of, and by so doing not faint away with the condemnation which they receive, and thus arrive at despair; for this final sin of despair is much more displeasing to Me and injures them much more than all the other sins which they have committed. And this is the reason why this sin is more dangerous to them and displeasing to Me, because they commit other sins through some delight of their own sensuality, and they sometimes grieve for them, and if they grieve in the right way their grief will procure them mercy. But it is no fragility of your

nature which moves you to despair, for there is no pleasure and nothing but intolerable suffering in it. One who despairs despises My mercy, making his sin to be greater than mercy and goodness. Wherefore, if a man fall into this sin, he does not repent, and does not truly grieve for his offense against Me as he should, grieving indeed for his own loss, but not for the offense done to Me, and therefore he receives eternal damnation. See, therefore, that this sin alone leads him to hell, where he is punished for this and all the other sins which he has committed; whereas had he grieved and repented for the offense done to Me, and hoped in My mercy, he would have found mercy, for, as I have said to you, My mercy is greater without any comparison than all the sins which any creature can commit; wherefore it greatly displeases Me that they should consider their sins to be greater.

“Despair is that sin which is pardoned neither here nor hereafter, and it is because despair displeases Me so much that I wish them to hope in My mercy at the point of death, even if their life have been disordered and wicked. This is why during their life I use this sweet trick with them, making them hope greatly in My mercy, for when, having fed themselves with this hope, they arrive at death, they are not so inclined to abandon it, on account of the severe condemnation they

receive, as if they had not so nourished themselves.

“All this is given them by the fire and abyss of My inestimable love, but because they have used it in the darkness of self-love, from which has proceeded their every sin, they have not known it in truth, but in so far as they have turned their affections towards the sweetness of My mercy they have thought of it with great presumption. And this is another cause of reproof which their conscience gives them in the likeness of the Devil, reproving them in that they should have used the time and the breadth of My mercy in which they hoped, in charity and love of virtue, and that time which I gave them through love should have been spent in holiness, whereas with all their time and great hope of My mercy they did nothing but offend Me miserably. Oh! blinder than the blind! You have hidden your pearl and your talent which I placed in your hands in order that you might gain more with it, but you in your presumption would not do My will, rather you hid it under the ground of disordinate self-love, which now renders you the fruit of death.

“Your miseries are not hid from you now, for the worm of conscience sleeps no longer, but is gnawing you, the devils shout and render to you the reward which they are accustomed to give their servants, that is to say, confusion and con-

demnation; they wish to bring you to despair, so that at the moment of death you may not escape from their hands, and therefore they try to confuse you, so that afterwards when you are with them they may render to you of the part which is theirs. Oh, wretch! the dignity in which I placed you, you now see shining as it really is, and you know to your shame that you have held and used in such guilty darkness the substance of the holy Church, that you see yourself to be a thief, a debtor, who ought to pay his debt to the poor and the holy Church. Then your conscience represents to you that you have spent the money on public harlots, and have brought up your children and enriched your relations, and have thrown it away on gluttony and on many silver vessels and other adornments for your house. Whereas you should have lived in voluntary poverty.

“Your conscience represents to you the divine office which you neglected, by which you fell into the guilt of mortal sin, and how even when you recited it with your mouth your heart was far from Me. Conscience also shows you your subjects, that is to say, the love and hunger which you should have felt towards nourishing them in virtue, giving them the example of your life and striking them with the hand of mercy and the rod of justice, and because you did the contrary your conscience and the horrible likeness of the Devil



reproves you.

“And if as a prelate you have given prelacies or any charge of souls unjustly to one of your subjects, that is, that you have not considered to whom and how you were giving it, the Devil puts this also before your conscience, because you ought to have given it, not on account of pleasant words, nor in order to please creatures, nor for the sake of gifts, but solely with regard to virtue, My honor and the salvation of souls. And since you have not done so you are reproved, and for your greater pain and confusion you have before your conscience and the light of your intellect that which you have done and ought not to have done, and that which you ought to have done and have not done.

“I wish you to know, dearest daughter, that whiteness is better seen when placed on a black ground, and blackness on a white, than when they are separated. So it happens to these wretches, to these in particular and to all others in general, for at death when the soul begins to see its woes, and the just man his beatitude, his evil life is represented to a wicked man, and there is no reason that any one should remind him of the sins that he has committed, for his conscience places them before him, together with the virtues which he ought to have practiced. Why the virtues? For his greater shame. For vice being placed on a

ground of virtue is known better on account of the virtue, and the better he knows his sin, the greater his shame, and by comparison with his sin he knows better the perfection of virtue, wherefore he grieves the more, for he sees that his own life was devoid of any; and I wish you to know that in this knowledge which dying sinners have of virtue and vice they see only too clearly the good which follows the virtue of a just man, and the pain that comes on him who has lain in the darkness of mortal sin. I do not give him this knowledge so that he may despair, but so that he may come to a perfect self-knowledge and shame for his sins, with hope, so that with that pain and knowledge he may pay for his sins, and appease My anger, humbly begging My mercy. The virtuous woman increases thereby in joy and in knowledge of My love, for he attributes the grace of having followed virtue in the doctrine of My truth to Me and not to himself, wherefore he exalts in Me, with this truly illuminated knowledge, and tastes and receives the sweet end of his being in the way which I have related to you in another place. So that the one, that is to say, the just man, who has lived in ardent charity, exults in joy, while the wicked man is darkened and confounded in sorrow.

“To the just man the appearance and vision of the Devil causes no harm or fear, for fear and harm can only

be caused to him by sin; but those who have passed their lives lasciviously and in many sins, receive both harm and fear from the appearance of the devils, not indeed the harm of despair if they do not wish it, but the suffering of condemnation, of the refreshing of the worm of conscience, and of fear and terror at their horrible aspect. See now, dearest daughter, how different are the sufferings and the battle of death to a just man and to a sinner, and how different is their end.

“I have shown to the eye of your intellect a very small part of what happens, and so small is what I have shown you with regard to what it really is, to the suffering, that is, of the one, and the happiness of the other, that it is but a trifle. See how great is the blindness of man, and in particular of these ministers, for the more they have received of Me, and the more they are enlightened by the Holy Scripture, the greater are their obligations and more intolerable confusion do they receive for not fulfilling them; the more they knew of Holy Scripture during their life, the better do they know at their death the great sins they have committed, and their torments are greater than those of others, just as good men are placed in a higher degree of excellence. Theirs is the fate of the false Christian, who is placed in Hell in greater torment than a pagan, because he had the light of faith and renounced it, while the pa-

gan never had it.

“So these wretches will be punished more than other Christians for the same sin, on account of the ministry which I entrusted to them, appointing them to administer the sun of the holy Sacrament, and because they had the light of science, in order to discern the truth both for themselves and others had they wished to; wherefore they justly receive the greater pains. But the wretches do not know this, for did they consider their state at all, they would not come to such misery, but would be that which they ought to be and are not. For the whole world has thus become corrupt, they being much more guilty than seculars, according to their state; for with their stench they defile the face of their soul, and corrupt their subjects, and suck the blood from My spouse, that is, the holy Church, wherefore through these sins they make her grow pale, because they divert to themselves the love and charity which they should have to this divine spouse, and think of nothing but stripping her for their own advantage, seizing prelacies, and great properties, when they ought to be seeking souls. Wherefore through their evil life, seculars become irreverent and disobedient to the holy Church, not that they ought on that account to do so, or that their sins are excused through the sins of My ministers.”

**To be continued:**

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