

# THE SERAPH

December 2011

Vol. XXXII No. 4



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

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

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

USA: Free upon request.

Suggested donation \$20.00.

FOREIGN: Air Mail: \$40.00 per year

ALL CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE SENT TO:

**The SERAPH**  
**3376 MOUNT READ BLVD**  
**ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14616**  
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### Publishers

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

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# EDITORIAL

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**“..and the Word was made  
Flesh”**

There is a reason why the last Gospel of the Mass was among the first victims of Modernist manipulation of the Sacrifice of the Mass. That small portion of the Gospel according to St. John was a powerful, metaphysical as well as supernatural revelation of the Divinity.

How appropriate to ponder those poignant words of Holy Scripture. From the very heights of Heaven to the lowly obscurity of a small town in Judea, Divinity emptied Itself and took upon Itself the form of a creature.

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men: and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.**

**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.**

**This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through Him might believe. He was not the light, but was to bear witness concerning the light.**

**That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world, was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God: to them that believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us and we saw His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

**“The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us..”**

A “word” is the expression of a spiritual idea. When we speak of “the Word,” we mean the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. By “the Word was made

flesh and dwelt among us” we mean that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, took on human nature and entered our created world as a human being like unto the rest of us except for sin. There was no sin in Him nor could there be for the simple reason that He was the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity and had now two natures: divine and human.

According to God’s wisdom, God chose to enter our human existence that is governed by time and space. Herein lies the great mystery of the Incarnation.

It is at this specific point in time and place that Jesus Christ became man. This is definitely an historical event.

The purpose for which Jesus Christ became like us in all that belongs to our human nature – except the disorder that followed upon Eve’s act of disobedience was to restore right order as originally created by God.

The fallen angels led by Lucifer (Satan) had already been cast down to earth where they destroyed the original right order established by the Creator.

His next target was the man

created by God who was to be master over all the rest of creation.

The first act of human disobedience to God’s commands was by Eve. Instead of being the savior of all demonically corrupted creation by means of a life of sanctifying grace, Adam chose to obey the woman rather than God. Thus, Adam lost all supernatural grace and control over the rest of creation.

It is here that the promise of a Redeemer entered the history of man. The time had come. The long centuries of waiting for the advent of a promised Redeemer were over. Before this, mankind was plunged into the darkness of idolatry and all that was and is the negation of truth and goodness.

Christmas is that moment in time and space when the promised Redeemer entered human history. It is also the time when Lucifer hurled his attacks upon the Christ Child. All Lucifer’s attacks would be especially against Jesus Christ in His humanity. Lucifer’s goal was and continues to be the elimination from human history of the longed-for path to man’s

return to God.

Because there is no other Redeemer or Savior than Jesus Christ, and because Lucifer and his disciples are unable to harm Christ Himself, they labor furiously to erase from the memory of man the reality of redemption by heaping distractions and distortion upon the Christmas event.

Thus, all the frenzied dissipations during Advent which is a time of interior reflection upon reality. What “reality”? The reality of the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Dissipation and dissolution are the marks of Lucifer’s efforts to turn souls away from God and plunge them into the three-fold concupiscence of the world, the flesh and the devil.

The calling of Christians is to react positively against all these demonic disorientations and to return mankind to the right order originally established by our Creator.

Let us rejoice at the remembrance of this historic event when the Creator deigned to enter our human existence.

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## The Sunday Sermon

The Sunday Sermon is a biweekly paper that offers a few spiritual thoughts for each Sunday throughout the year.

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# The Bishop Speaks

*Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM D.D.*

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## THE CAIN PRINCIPLE

### How It Shows Itself in the World Today

What is the “Cain Principle”? It is two-fold. It is the beginning of self-serving worship; it is the beginning of fratricide – the killing of one’s brother. This extends itself to war where brothers kill and maim brothers. For, we are all brothers under the Fatherhood of God.

We find this principle operating in the most fundamental act of God’s intelligent creature, man, in offering sacrifice to God. It begins with a distortion of true religion. It turns the ritual of sacrifice from a pure offering to God into an insult to God.

Like so many originally meritorious practices of Religion, so much that is done today in the name of Religion is odious to God.

Following the “Cain Principle” man does not give the firstfruits as commanded by God, but rather that which is of little or no use to him. This he gives to God.

Cain was the firstborn of Adam and Eve: **“The man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying. ‘I have given birth to a manchild with the help of the Lord.’”** (Gen. 4, 1).

Eventually, Eve gave birth to Abel. As the Scriptures tell us, Abel was a shepherd and Cain was the farmer. We know that both sacrificed to God from what they owned: **“In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. Abel also brought some of the firstlings of his flock with their fat portions. The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offerings; but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. Cain was very angry and down cast.**

**The Lord said to Cain: ‘Why are you angry and why are you downcast? If you do well, will you not be accepted; but if you do not do well, will not sin encroach at the door! Its desire is for you, but you must master it.’** (Ibid. 4, 3-7).

Notice the unfounded envy on

the part of Cain. Truly, why would Cain be angry at his brother's accepted sacrifice while he himself knew well the secret greed that consumed him? It is God Himself who tells Cain the truth and the truth was not pleasing to the hypocrite, Cain.

There is an indication that this kind of "sacrifice" on the part of Cain was not the first time. Rather, one might easily suspect that this was a habitual manifestation of Cain's insults to God. As if God were blind to the heart of Cain, one might say.

God tells Cain that he, too, would be acceptable to God if he gave an offering to God like that of Abel.

There are many Catholics like Cain. They are angry because they cannot deceive God. How foolish and silly are such souls with their superficial religiosity. Yet, they have the audacity to fancy themselves as equal to Abel, who gave from the top while they, like Cain, gave from the bottom – if at all.

The Lord tells Cain that he, too, can make an acceptable offering but to do this he must master the selfish greed that consumes him. This may well be addressed

to all those who labor under the illusion that tossing a farthing in the face of God will somehow be pleasing and meritorious in His eyes.

Cain envied his brother, Abel, because Abel was good and Cain was evil.

There are people like that, to be sure. Rather than rejoice in the good done by others, they seek with painstaking precision to tear down what others work to build up.

Ah! If only Christians would read the Scriptures that were written for their consolation, education and guidance. Perhaps they would then be able to give God the kind of offering worthy of Him. But, let us see modern man in the following scenario that serves as a type:

**“Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let us go out into the field.’ Now when they were in the field, Cain turned against his brother and slew him. Then the Lord said to Cain: ‘Where is your brother Abel?’**

**He answered: ‘I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?’ And the Lord said: ‘What have you done? The voice**

**of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground. And now, cursed are you in the soil which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the soil, it shall not give its fruit to you; a fugitive and a wanderer shall you be on the earth.”** (Ibid. 4, 8-12).

We are instructed by the word of God in the Apocalypse to be sober and watchful for we will have to render an account for every thought, word and deed on the day of judgment. How many take these words of the Holy Spirit seriously?

A voice from heaven spoke to St. John as he attests: **“And I heard a voice from heaven saying: ‘Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth. Yes, says the Spirit, let them rest from their labors, for their works follow them.”** (Apoc. 14, 13).

What are these “works that follow” each one of us? What have we done that is meritorious of grace except squander the material and spiritual blessings God has given everyone in different proportions? To the widow was given the ability to

make an acceptable offering to God with merely two mites; to another a substantially larger sum. Yet, the offering of the widow was more acceptable than that of the rich man.

Our Lord accepted the sacrifice of the widow. He did not reject it because of its small size. The material substance of the offering was not the concern; it was the spirit with which it was given.

On this point, we may refer to a short letter of St. Francis to those who do not do penance. Among the greatest penances could easily be considered almsgiving. In this letter, St. Francis points out the sad end of those who do nothing but the works of their father, the Devil. He writes: **“These are blind because they do not see the light, Our Lord, Jesus Christ; they do not have spiritual wisdom because they do not have the Son of God who is the true wisdom of the Father. Concerning them, it is said: ‘Their skill was swallowed up’ (Ps. 17, 27) and ‘cursed are they who turn away from your commands’ (Ps. 119, 21). They see and acknowledge, they know and do bad things and knowingly**

**destroy their own souls.”**

And the saint continues: **“See, you are blind, deceived by your enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil, for it is pleasant to the body to commit sin and it is bitter to make it serve God because all vices and sins come out and ‘proceed from the heart of man’ as the Lord says in the Gospel: ‘Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven shall enter the kingdom of heaven.’ (Matt. 7, 21).**

**And you have nothing in this world and in the next, and you thought you would possess the vanities of this world for a long time.**

**But you have been deceived, for the day and the hour will come to which you give no thought and which you do not know and of which you are ignorant. The body grows infirm, death approaches, and so it dies a bitter death, and no matter where or when or how man dies, in the guilt of sin, without penance or satisfaction, though he can make satisfaction but does not do so.**

**The devil snatches the soul from the body with such anguish and tribulation that no one can know it except he who endures it, and all the talents and power and ‘knowledge and wisdom’ which they thought they had will be taken away from them: ‘Take heed, therefore, how you hear; for to him who has shall be given; and from him who does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away.’ (Luke, 8, 18), and they leave their goods to relatives and friends who take and divide and say afterwards: ‘Cursed be his soul because he could have given us more, he could have acquired more than he did’. The worms eat up the body so they have lost body and soul during this short earthly life and will go into the inferno where they will suffer torture without end.”**

Without a doubt, the majority of readers of this letter of St. Francis to those who do no penance nor make any kind of adequate restitution will seem very harsh. But, observe the saint’s gentle attitude: **“All those into whose hands this letter shall have come we ask in the charity that is God to accept**

**kindly and with divine love the fragrant words of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, quoted above. And let those who do not know how to read have them read to them.**

**And those who will not do this will have to render “an account on the day of judgment.”** Consider the words of Our Lord in this regard: **“But I tell you, of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment. For by thy words thou wilt be justified, and by thy words thou wilt be condemned. (Matt. 12, 36-37).**

We find this same thought expressed by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans: **“But, thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou despise thy brother? For we shall all stand at the judgment seat of God.” (Romans, 14, 10).** The Holy Scriptures are filled with allusions to that which is essential for the forgiveness of sins: Not only sorrow, but also **restitution.**

Liars and detractors have in particular a tremendous obligation to make restitution for their calumnies as well as all those usurpers of the teaching

authority of the Church. These last are most despicable of all who use religion to enrich themselves.

Finally, let us take the serious warnings of Holy Scripture and St. Francis. We will be held in account for how we administered the material blessings entrusted to us.

Remember: There are not many who will be free of guilt for the way they provided for their relatives and friends. Our works follow us into eternity: Either an eternity of hellfire, or an eternity of heavenly bliss united to our heavenly Father.



## THE TRIALS OF A MIND IN THE PROGRESS TO CATHOLICISM

In this treatise by Silliman Ives, we are given an insight into the trials and tribulations of his mind as he found his way back to the true Church of his fathers – The Roman Catholic Church.

This letter of his to his friends and relatives pours out his heart and mind in the hope that they too will find the consolation of the true Faith. In the introduction he begins with these words:

“Dear Brethren and Friends, It is due both to you and myself, as it is more especially to the cause of God, that I yield, without loss of time, to the promptings of my heart and conscience, and lay before you, as best I can, the reasons which have constrained me to take so serious, and to many dear ones, as well as to myself, so trying a step as that of abandoning the position in which I had acted as a Minister of Protestant Episcopal Church for more than twenty years, and of seeking, at my time of life, admission, as a mere layman, into “the Holy Catholic Church,” and with no prospect before me but simply peace of conscience,

and the salvation of my soul.”

He gives us insights into the difficulties inherent in the Protestant religion. Things that can not be reconciled with historical facts, sound reason, and the Faith espoused in the early Church. We are given an insight into the temptations that Protestants must overcome if they are to come to the true faith. An understanding of their prejudices and the obstacles that they must overcome may prove to be just what we need to help those who have had the misfortune to be raised in a false religion. There is not only much that is of use to the traditional Protestant sects but even those who have been raised in the Modernist Novus Ordo will, if they are humble and honest, find grounds for them too to return to the Church of their fathers.

This book is available for a small donation of \$15. If you would like a copy write to:

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Rochester NY 14616.

## Franciscan Saints

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### THE SERVANT OF GOD MARY CRUCIFIXA

*Virgin, Third Order* (DECEMBER 16)

Before the birth of this child, a saintly Franciscan brother prophesied her future sanctity to her mother. He also said that as the child grew older, it would be crippled, and would later receive the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis. All these events were fulfilled.

Little Mary was born in Naples on February 19, 1782. She received the name of Mary Josephine in Baptism. She was educated in a convent, and at a very early age displayed an unusual love of prayer. She was even favored with divine revelations, and she entertained no desire but to serve God all her life in the convent.

At the age of thirteen, however, she was called home by her parents in order to help with the household and the rearing of the younger children. Mary cheerfully obeyed their call and assisted her parents to the best of her ability. Sometime later, however, when she realized

that her parents were making plans to have her marry, she prayed God amid many tears to send her an illness that would make her unfit for marriage. She was then afflicted with arthritis, which so contracted her body that she became a cripple and could move about only with the help of crutches.

Despite her affliction, she continued in her pious practices and even in the performance of many heavy household duties. She did it all in so cheerful a manner that the rest of the family were in admiration at it and esteemed her more and more highly. They even joined in her devout exercises so that their home soon resembled a convent rather than a family residence.

In 1802 Mary was received into the Third Order of St. Francis, and thereafter wore the garb publicly. At her reception she received the name of Mary Crucifixa, and there was never a lack of proof that she was really to be crucified with Jesus. Her

corporal sufferings increased steadily as she grew older; to this were added unbelievable torments of soul and the most horrible temptations of the evil spirit. But the sufferings of Christ and the sorrows of our Lady were a consolation to her, and the tender devotion she fostered to the Infant Jesus helped her persevere in her sweet disposition.

As Mary was unable to leave the house, she was permitted to have a private oratory at home in which holy Mass could be said. She found the sweetest delight in decorating this little sanctuary for the Infant Jesus. One must, says her biographer, go to this oratory personally to get an idea of the care she took in adorning this room. The altar and the walls are covered with artistic tapestries and laces which she herself made despite her great affliction. Only God knows how many hours of the night she sacrificed in the work.

Finally the day arrived that was to conduct her to the sanctuary of heaven. She died on the first day of her accustomed novena to the Infant Jesus

before the feast of Christmas, December 16, 1826. Her body reposes in the church of St. Lucy in Naples, and the steady stream of answers to prayer and the miracles that have been wrought, have caused the process of her beatification to be introduced.

## ON LOVE FOR THE INFANT JESUS

1. Consider with what fervor and perseverance Mary Crucifixa proved her love of the Infant Jesus. She is truly a model for us all. "If anyone love me," says the Lord, "he will keep my word" (John 14:23). Mary gave evidence of such love already in her childhood. When her parents called her home from the convent to assist with the household, much as she wished to remain there, she obeyed at once. She had no definite assurance of her vocation to the religious state, and therefore felt bound to sacrifice her pious designs to the certain dictates of the Fourth Commandment. — Have you been willing to sacrifice your inclinations, even your pious ones, to the observance of the commandments? Without that

willingness, the true love of God does not dwell in your heart. “He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words” (John 14:24).

2. Consider how Mary Crucifixa stood the test of her love of Jesus. In order to belong to Christ alone as His virginal spouse, she asked to be afflicted with illness. The prayer was granted. Not only her body, but also her soul was tortured with the most painful sufferings for many years. All these waters of tribulation could not quench her love for the Divine Bridegroom; rather, like a holy oil, they inflamed it more and more, so that those about her were kindled with it. “Many,” says Thomas a Kempis (2:11), “praise and bless Jesus as long as they receive consolations from Him. But if Jesus hide Himself and leave them for a little while, they either murmur or fall into excessive dejection.” — How have you stood the test of your love for Jesus in the past?

3. Consider how the tenderness of Mary’s love of Jesus manifested itself. All the sufferings she had to endure

did not keep her from carefully adorning the altar of her little chapel where He was to appear to her at holy Mass. Souls that truly love God can also say with the Psalmist: “I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth” (Ps. 25:8). — Can you say as much? But remember that also your heart is a place where God wishes to dwell. If you love Him, adorn it with virtues that are pleasing to Him. Endeavor during the novena of Christmas which begins today, to make it a pleasing abode for His arrival.

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(Second Sunday in Advent)

Arouse our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for Thine only-begotten Son, that we may be found worthy upon His arrival to serve Thee with a clean heart. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



# Which Holidays Are Happy Anyway?

Reverend William Claybourne

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It never ceases to amaze me how many different types of greetings people give to each other when December rolls around each year. For Catholics, and for those who are simply fed up with the secularization of our atheistic society, the appropriate greeting is “Merry Christmas”. Some are even fortunate enough, by God’s marvelous dispensation, to have a clergyman who will wish them a “Blessed Christmas”, which is truly edifying when pondered. Much to our dismay, however, the most common greeting that scratches with fingernails the invisible chalkboard of our minds is “Happy Holidays.”

Does this thoughtless greeting really upset me so much as to cause me to take up the arms of Holy Scripture to overthrow it? Yes, it does, and I am not the only one who has had it up to the eyeballs with the hellacious Happy Holidays. What is the problem? It begins with our elementary school education. Yes, that’s the time when we learn this fantastic little lesson about nouns, and how to distinguish between singular and plural nouns. The word “holidays” is

a plural noun (surely most 2<sup>nd</sup> graders would agree), and it denotes more than one holiday to be enjoyed. Putting aside for a moment the fact that this word is already a corruption of the once sacred “Holy Days”, have you ever wondered why we are always hearing these greetings in early and mid December? Just what “holidays” are you wishing me to be happy about? The Holy Scriptures are not at all silent on this account. The Word of God will remind us once again what this season is all about.

To give you a clear answer to this puzzling conundrum, notice that Hanukkah conveniently begins on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, and that Kwanzaa is celebrated one day after the Solemn Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. This is no coincidence at all: Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and Satan has never ceased trying to snuff it out. He could not murder the Christ Child through Herod, and neither can he destroy the true spirit of Christmas, no matter how many menorah candles are lit at the White House. Just as the Divinity of Jesus Christ remains intact in the face of numberless

outrages against His holiness, so also the exalted position of the Mother of God remains fixed in the heavens in spite of all of the venom of vicious tongues. The intention of emphasizing a joint celebration of all the “Happy Holidays” is to minimize and undercut the sacred truths of our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic faith in Almighty God, Who has redeemed the world through the long awaited and prophesied arrival of His Divine Son in the flesh.

Part of the reason why the Vatican loves to emphasize the Jews as our “elder brothers in the faith” is so that we will readily listen to their faulty interpretations of the Holy Scripture. After all, they are still awaiting their Messiah, even though we – the “younger brothers” have been worshipping Him in deed and in truth for centuries, making Him present daily upon the altars of obedience. It is foreign to Truth Itself, Jesus Christ, to undermine the faith with such submission to those who have rejected the Redeemer long ago. There are relics of St. Athanasius in the Vatican, are there not? Why should we honor his remains, and yet despise the words that

the Holy Spirit gave to the Church through him? There is not a single trace of this bleeding of all religions into one, in the solemn decree of true faith that bears his name: The Athanasian Creed. For the sake of all of those who are being swallowed up by the false concepts of unified religious people, such as that catastrophe perpetrated at Assisi recently, I encourage (not to say urge) all who have been given the light of reason to ponder carefully the words that the Church approved, blessed, and put into practice so many centuries ago.

The Catholic Church teaches in the Athanasian Creed: **“It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also believe with firm faith in the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Right faith, consequently, demands that we believe and confess that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.”** How can it be spelled out any clearer than this? Actually, we can spell it out even more clearly with the light of the Holy Scripture. The modernist mentality of accept all creeds with no responsibility for upholding dogmas, is shredded

to pieces by the Scriptural accounting of the real and true Holy Day of this season, the only one that brings the light of Truth to the world : Christmas Day.

One of our fathers in the faith is King David, from whom has sprung the Redeemer of all mankind, the King of Kings. Psalm 131 declares : **“The Lord has sworn truth to David, and He will not make it void: Of the fruit of thy womb, I will set upon thy throne.”** This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ, not of Solomon. Since the world really doesn’t care anymore for the true meaning of the word “Christian”, here it necessary to insert that the Catholic Church is the only true interpreter of Holy Scripture, because the Church is **Infallible**. She is the only Church who teaches the Scriptures correctly, since the Holy Spirit only abides in her. This same Spirit is the One who guides the Church to declare the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Tabernacle of God, with the words of the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of the Apocalypse: **“Behold the Tabernacle of God!”** The Blessed Mother is further known as the Gate of Heaven and the Tower of David. She is the Gate of Heaven! You

may only enter there if you go through her! And yet billions listen with passive permission while the false prophets drone on about our sameness of faith, regardless of Creed.

Before getting sidetracked, let us emphasize the importance of the dogma of the Catholic Church’s Infallibility. If we look to the Catechism of Pope Saint Pius the Tenth, we find a clear teaching in a simple question and answer format. **“Question 33: Can the Church err in what she proposes for our belief? The answer: NO, the Church cannot err in what she proposes for our belief, since according to the promise of Jesus Christ she is unfailingly assisted by the Holy Ghost.”** As if that would not be enough to strengthen our faith, the Holy Father goes on to ask: **“Is the Catholic Church Infallible, then? YES, the Catholic Church is infallible, and hence those who reject her definitions lose the faith and become heretics.”** This powerful statement of objective truth applies as much to the Athanasian Creed as it does to the Sacred Scriptures. If anyone in the Vatican today can claim

ignorance in such matters of grave importance, perhaps they could pray for illumination from St. Pius X. They could do so in a most edifying manner, particularly since the Saint is entombed right there in St. Peter's. What I am trying to say perhaps too delicately is that there is no such thing as an evolution of truth. The Catholic Church has always reechoed the same message in all of her holy Fathers and Doctors: **God never changes.**

The true joy and spiritual renewal of this most holy season of Christmastide comes to us only through the Blessed Virgin Mary, who delivered her Divine Son in the world's first and only Virgin Birth. Let the worldlings gnash their teeth, but no one can object to the prophecy of Isaias, in Chapter 66: **"Before she was in labor, she brought forth. Before her time came to be delivered, she brought forth a Man-Child."** Before she was in labor! Already in time of Isaias, whom Our Lord used on so many occasions to refute the Pharisees, it was preordained that the Son of God would be brought forth in a miraculous way. How many women have ever given birth

without the terrible pains of going into labor? The answer is one, the Queen of the Universe, Mary, whom we do not worship, but to whom we pay the due honor for the singular dignities and blessings bestowed upon her through the Holy Spirit.

There has never been another birth at which a multitude of angels cried, as we read in the Gospel of St. Luke, chapter 2, verses 13-14: **"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of goodwill."** This is why our hearts are warmed with a spiritual joy during this season: there is nothing ordinary about the life of Jesus Christ, neither in the foretelling of His arrival, nor in His Holy Nativity, nor in His wondrous works. Many mothers have been told whether their child will be a male or female, and approximately when the child will be born. Yet, only One Child has ever had a prophet go before Him to foretell His birth several hundred years in advance, such as when Micheas told us the place of the Savior's birth in the fifth chapter of his prophecy:

**“And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule my people Israel.”**

It is almost laughable to witness the depth of the corruption of the hypocritical hearts of the Pharisees. They pretended to know the Scriptures, and ridiculed the people’s acclaim of Jesus, by asserting that He was a Galilean. They said that no prophet would arise out of Galilee. What foolish hearts! If only they had the grace to see clearly the design of God through the prophets, they would have acted more like Gamaliel, when he cautioned them not to persecute the Apostles blindly. In Acts Chapter 5, verse 39, he warns them: **“If it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God. And they consented to him.”** They consented to the counsel, but they still scourged the Apostles and commanded them never to preach in the name of Jesus Christ. The same madness continues today, when we are threatened with subtlety not to speak of the Truth as revealed by

God, lest we hurt or insult those who are widely becoming known as our “brothers”. The Apostate Capuchin of EWTN fame has repeatedly made reference even to Jews and Muslims as believers in the Holy Spirit, and therefore being offered the same eternal salvation that we attempt to purchase with great agony and trembling at the sight of the holiness and perfection of Jesus Christ. Dear old man, will you really insult Saint Francis, who loved the mystery of the Nativity so deeply, in such a mockery as to equate the sworn enemies of the Catholic Church with those who stand against the world for sake of Christ Crucified? God is One, and the Holy Spirit, Who is also One, can NEVER abide in any other church, or with any other religion.

We are alive in the Spirit with great hope this Christmas. Our Lord revealed himself in the fullness of truth to a small handful of humble souls. He offers us the very same gift: Himself. Jesus Christ is the key to obtaining all happiness, the only source for the fountain of living waters, and the One and Only Prince of Peace. So while the world is wishing you “good

tidings” or “a peaceful New Year”, know for certain that true peace will never come to any life or into any soul without the indwelling of that same Jesus Christ who has ransomed us from the captivity of evil by His humble and sacrificial life of suffering. May He grant us all His blessings this Christmas season, which incidentally lasts until January the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Commemoration of the Baptism of Our Lord, in whose Holy Name we have all life and all hope. Amen.

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**CONFERENCES ON THE  
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BY  
THE REV. DR. J. J:  
O'CONNELL, O.S.B.,  
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE,  
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**CONFERENCE IV.**

**ON THE DIVINITY OF OUR  
LORD JESUS CHRIST  
THE SECOND PERSON OF  
THE BLESSED TRINITY**

(CONTINUED).

The moral Teaching of our Lord harmonizes with Man's three great Relations — Its Establishment proves its Author to be God — Paul and Barnabas taken for Gods — Precepts, Maxims, Counsels Parables of our Lord are all divine — The true Portrait of Virtue — Benevolence of our Lord — His absolute Holiness of Life — He weeps — Judas and Pilate — His heroic Virtue — His Miracles, certain, public, and numerous, confirmed by His Enemies — Perpetuated — One sufficient — Prove all Catholic Faith — His Favors, Promises, Gifts, all divine — He sends the divine Paraclete — Gives Power to remit Sins, to work Miracles — Promises the conversion of Nations, the Perpetuity of the Church, the Infallibility of the Pope — Apologists gloried when charged with adoring a crucified God — Christ's second Coming — The last Day — Moral Reflections — The Sacred Humanity — Hypostatic Union the

Wonder of Eternity — Worthy of supreme Worship — Excellence of the sacred Humanity — The Temple of God — Perfect Work of the Holy Ghost — Sanctuary of the Blessed Trinity — His Soul a perfect Mirror of God — Always saw the divine Essence — Knowledge infused and acquired — All pertaining to God belongs to Jesus Christ — God is born, suffers, and dies — Jesus Christ is infinite — He is God.

*There hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not.— John i. 26.*

**MY BRETHREN:**

When I last addressed you I proved how splendidly the divinity of our Lord is established by His external glories of His ministry. Today let us dwell on that spirit of His divinity which embraces His doctrines, His favors, and His promises, and on the miracles by which these are confirmed; all and each equally prove that Jesus Christ is true God.

Our Lord's moral teachings and the manner in which these teachings were announced and confirmed unquestionably prove His divinity. They regulate man's relations to his Maker, to himself, and to his fellow-

beings. And His precepts are so perfectly in harmony with these relations that their superhuman adaptation proves their author to be the Creator and Sovereign Lord of man and of all things.

Man is bound to love God, his neighbor, and himself in a reasonable manner. The moral code of Jesus Christ inculcates and regulates these loves in the most perfect way. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.* This love accords with the idea which both reason and faith give of the great First Cause. He must be loved for His own sake as God, and then on account of the excellence of His being. He is the absolute good, whom we are destined to possess forever, and He has lavished upon us all that, He possesses. Our love for Him must be a loyal love, firm and true, and superior to the most rude and violent assaults.

*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* We are instructed by our Lord to love not only our parents, friends, and benefactors, but every human being as we

love ourselves; because all are made to the image and likeness of God, or have been redeemed by the precious Blood, and are our brothers. For this reason our Lord wills that we should pray for all and in the name of all. Our *father who art in heaven* — thus shall you pray. We must do our neighbor no injury, inflict no pain, and, in short, we must do unto him as we would be done by; and we must pardon the greatest injuries.

We must love ourselves — not with a disorderly self-love, which is the greatest enemy of God and man. To know how to govern this love is essentially necessary for our present and future happiness; this important lesson our Lord has taught us.

We are commanded to love the soul more than the body, *because* it is more excellent and more like God. The body is to be loved for the end for which it was bestowed, as an instrument to practice virtue and obtain merit. Man must despise the life of the body when he can preserve it at the loss only of the soul.

We are made for society, and each has the same relation to the community that one member has to his body, while society has the same relation to the individual that the body has to each member. Every individual is commanded by our Lord to prefer the general good to his own private interests. *Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.* We are also united among ourselves by the bonds of religion. Man is bound to sacrifice, when necessary, all his temporal goods, and even his life, for the preservation of society and the salvation of any one of his fellow-beings. *This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.* Our Lord loved all men in general, and each in particular, so far as to die for the salvation of each. He has, therefore, set us the example, which we are under the obligation of imitating when necessary.

Such are a few of the sublime teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have won the admiration of adversaries. "I confess," says one, "that the simplicity of the Scriptures

amazes me and that the sanctity of the Gospel speaks to my heart." How paltry all the wisdom and learning of the philosophers when compared with them! We must conclude that the moral code of Jesus Christ places man in his true relation to his Creator, to himself, and to his fellow-man. It is in harmony with the designs of God in forming us. It is divine, and its author must be God.

In the Gospel all is adapted to the wants and high destiny of man, worthy of sound philosophy and reason, inspiring a contempt for perishable things and a love for those that are eternal. All contribute to the peace and happiness of society. He places the reward of virtue in the honor of obeying God, who will be its future recompense. He recommends the approbation of a good conscience to all human applause. He prefers God before man, eternity before time, and the soul before the body. He teaches that prosperity is mostly an evil, elevation a giddy precipice, glory a vain bubble, afflictions real blessings, the earth an exile, and all that ends with time a vain dream.

Language like this revolutionized the world, astounded philosophy, and caused an entire people to believe the disciples gods for having used it in their preaching.

All our Lord's precepts bespeak His divinity. The commandment of loving our neighbor goes no higher than that of loving Him as ourselves; but, *the obligation of loving Jesus Christ goes immensely farther, for it requires us to love Him as God and above all things. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son, or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me* (Matt. x. 37).

Rather than sacrifice the love we owe Jesus Christ we must be willing to give up all that we hold most dear in this world, and even life itself. Now, could our Lord ask so absolute a sacrifice if He were not the source and cause of the same and greater goods? Could He claim our life if He was not the author and disposer of it? No; it is the prerogative of God alone, from whom we have

received our being and every other good. Jesus Christ is, therefore, God. It would be impious to sacrifice to a mere creature our whole being, life itself, destined to confess the power and dominion of the Supreme Architect who called it from nothing.

Jesus Christ requires, as a last mark of His love, that we should die for His sake and shed the last drop of blood in the heart rather than abandon Him. *Fear ye not them, that kill the body. He that shall lose his life for me, shall find it.* If he is not God, can there be among civilized nations a being so stupid as to be seduced by such impiety? Could a doctrine so monstrous have confounded all pagan philosophy, subdued all sects, prevailed over all human wisdom and learning, and triumphed over the universe?

Human sacrifices are an abomination. We justly deem all the nations barbarous that immolate themselves and their offspring to impious idols. But can any higher distinction be claimed for the millions of Christian martyrs, who died

for the sake of our Lord under every excess and variety of torture? The Stephens, the Vincents, the Sebastians, and indeed the legions of martyrs who washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb rather than bend the knee before an impious idol, only exchanged one species of idolatry for another! The generous confessors of the faith, who braved tyrants and rushed into torments rather than deny the Holy name of Jesus, were but brainless fanatics! And the tyrants themselves who shed the blood of the saints, instead of having been the enemies were

the benefactors of our race and the true saints! In that case Christianity is but an impious sect, the world is deceived, and the blood of the martyrs, instead of being the seed of virtue, has deluged the world with idolatry, superstition, and vice! If not consumed by the worm and moth, the old bones of Herod, Tiberius, and Nero would rattle in their graves, if they knew the honors conferred on them by the philosophers of these latter ages. Nothing can more effectually check impiety than to exhibit it to its own gaze in all its native absurdity.

*(To be continued)*

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# Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

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

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## CELIBACY OF CLERGY

Every well-informed Catholic knows that there are the Western and Eastern jurisdictions of the Catholic Church. The discipline, however, varies much in the Western from that of the Eastern. One point of difference is in the celibacy of the clergy.

In our Western Church, the clergy from the rank of subdeacon upward are prohibited by Church law from marrying. Those who are ordained subdeacon, by that very fact, take a solemn vow of chastity. This is purely a matter of Church discipline and it does not follow from this that the Church is bound to impose celibacy on all her clergy, for, as a matter of fact, she has not always done so and even today she allows in the Eastern Church married men to be ordained and to have a family.

Celibacy has always been held in high esteem in the Church. St. Paul led a life of celibacy and recommended it strongly

to others. "But I say to the unmarried and widows: It is good that they so continue, even as I" (1 Cor. vii, 8). The Church gradually imposed celibacy on the clergy that they might more freely serve God and labor for souls unhindered by family ties. "He who is without wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he who is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; he is divided" (1 Cor. vii, 32, 33). While we know that celibacy was widely practiced among the clergy of the early Church, the Council of Elvira in Spain, about the year 300, was the first to impose it on all Bishops, priests, and deacons. By the time of Pope Leo the Great (440-461) celibacy of the clergy was obligatory in the Western Church.

In the Eastern churches, in submission to the Holy See, it is permitted to ordain a married man and he may keep his wife. The Bishops are generally chosen from the unmarried clergy, and priests

may not marry again if the wife dies. Thus we find, even in the United States, certain parishes of the Eastern rites in charge of married priests who are Catholic as we are Catholic but come under the Church's discipline for the Eastern rites. The celibacy of the clergy is not

one of Divine command and, hence, the Church can permit a variance in its disciplinary law, just as it allows a variation in its disciplinary laws of fasting and abstinence for various parts of the world.



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# The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

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## A TREATISE OF OBEDIENCE

*How the truly obedient receive a hundredfold for one, and also eternal life; and what is meant by this one, and this hundredfold.*

“In them is fulfilled the saying of the sweet and amorous Word, My only-begotten Son, in the gospel when He replied to Peter’s demand, ‘Master, we have left everything for your love’s sake, and have followed You, what will you give us?’ My Truth replied, ‘I will give you a hundredfold for one, and you shall possess eternal life.’ As if My Truth had wished to say, ‘You have done well, Peter, for in no other way could you follow Me. And I, in this life, will give you a hundredfold for one.’ And what is this hundredfold, beloved daughter, besides which the apostle obtained eternal life? To what did My Truth refer? To temporal substance?

“Properly speaking, no. Do I not, however, often cause one who gives alms to multiply in temporal goods? In return for what do I this? In return for the gift of his own will. This is the one for which I repay him a hundredfold. What is the meaning of the number a hundred? A hundred is a perfect number, and cannot be added to except by recommencing from the first. So charity is the most perfect of all the virtues, so perfect that no higher virtue can be attained except by recommencing at the beginning

of self-knowledge, and thus increasing many hundredfold in merit; but you always necessarily arrive at the number one hundred. This is that hundredfold which is given to those who have given Me the unit of their own will, both in general obedience, and in the particular obedience of the religious life. And in addition to this hundred you also possess eternal life, for charity alone enters into eternal life, like a mistress bringing with her the fruit of all the other virtues, while they remain outside, bringing their fruit, I say, into Me, the eternal life, in whom the obedient taste eternal life. It is not by faith that they taste eternal life, for they experience in its essence that which they have believed through faith; nor by hope, for they possess that for which they had hoped, and so with all the other virtues, Queen Charity alone enters and possesses Me, her possessor. See, therefore, that these little ones receive a hundredfold for one, and also eternal life, for here they receive the fire of divine charity figured by the number of a hundred (as has been said). And because they have received this hundredfold from Me, they possess a wonderful and hearty joy, for there is no sadness in charity, but the joy of it makes the heart large and generous, not narrow or double. A soul wounded by this sweet arrow does not appear one thing in face and tongue while her heart is different. She does not serve, or act towards her

neighbor with dissembling and ambition, because charity is an open book to be read by all. Wherefore the soul who possesses charity never falls into trouble, or the affliction of sadness, or jars with obedience, remains obedient until death.”

*Of the perversities, miseries, and labors of the disobedient man; and of the miserable fruits which proceed from disobedience.*

“Contrariwise, a wicked disobedient man dwells in the ship of a religious order with so much pain to himself and others, that in this life he tastes the earnest of hell, he remains always in sadness and confusion of mind, tormented by the sting of conscience, with hatred of his order and superior, insupportable to himself. What a terrible thing it is, My daughter, to see one who has once taken the key of obedience of a religious order, living in disobedience, to which he has made himself a slave, for of disobedience he has made his mistress with her companion impatience, nourished by pride, and his own pleasure, which pride (as has been said) issues from self-love. For him everything is the contrary to what it would be for the obedient man. For how can this wretch be in any other state than suffering, for he is deprived of charity, he is obliged by force to incline the neck of his own will, and pride keeps it erect, all his desires are in discord with the will of the order. The order commands obedience, and he loves disobedience; the order commands voluntary poverty, and he avoids it,

possessing and acquiring riches; the order commands continence and purity, and he desires lewdness. By transgressing these three vows, My daughter, a religious comes to ruin, and falls into so many miseries, that his aspect is no longer that of a religious but of an incarnate devil, as in another place I related to you at greater length. I will, however, tell you something now of their delusion, and of the fruit which they obtained by disobedience to the commendation and exhortation of obedience. This wretched man is deluded by his self-love, because the eye of his intellect is fixed, with a dead faith, on pleasing his self-will, and on things of the world. He left the world in body, but remained there in his affections, and because obedience seems wearisome to him he wishes to disobey in order to avoid weariness; whereby he arrives at the greatest weariness of all, for he is obliged to obey either by force or by love, and it would have been better and less wearisome to have obeyed by love than without it. Oh! how deluded he is, and no one else deceives him but himself. Wishing to please himself he only gives himself displeasure, for the actions which he will have to do, through the obedience imposed on him, do not please him. He wishes to enjoy delights and make this life his eternity, but the order wishes him to be a pilgrim, and continually proves it to him; for when he is in a nice pleasant resting place, where he would like to remain for the pleasures and delights he finds there, he is transferred elsewhere, and the

change gives him pain, for his will was active against his obedience, and yet he is obliged to endure the discipline and labors of the order, and thus remains in continual torment. See, therefore, how he deludes himself; for, wishing to fly pain, he on the contrary falls into it, for his blindness does not let him know the road of true obedience, which is a road of truth founded by the obedient Lamb, My only-begotten Son, who removed pain from it, so that he walks by the road of lies, believing that he will find delight there, but finding on the contrary pain and bitterness. Who is his guide? Self-love, that is his own passion for disobedience. Such a man thinks like a fool to navigate this tempestuous sea, with the strength of his own arms, trusting in his own miserable knowledge, and will not navigate it in the arms of his order, and of his superior. Such a one is indeed in the ship of the order in body, and not in mind; he has quitted it in desire, not observing the regulations or customs of the order, nor the three vows which he promised to observe at the time of his profession; he swims in the tempestuous sea, tossed to and fro by contrary winds, fastened only to the ship by his clothes, wearing the religious habit on his body but not on his heart. Such a one is no friar, but a masquerader, a man only in appearance. His life is lower than an animal's, and he does not see that he labors more swimming with his arms, than the good religious in the ship, or that he is in danger of eternal death; for if his clothes should be suddenly torn from the ship, which will hap-

pen at the moment of death, he will have no remedy. No, he does not see, for he has darkened his light with the cloud of self-love, whence has come his disobedience, which prevents him seeing his misery, wherefore he miserably deceives himself. What fruit is produced by this wretched tree?

“The fruit of death, because the root of his affection is planted in pride, which he has drawn from self-love. Wherefore everything that issues from this root — flowers, leaves, and fruit — is corrupt, and the three boughs of this tree, which are obedience, poverty, and continence, which spring from the foot of the tree; that is, his affections are corrupted. The leaves produced by this tree, which are his words, are so corrupt that they would be out of place in the mouth of a ribald secular; and if he have to preach My doctrine, he does so in polished terms, not simply, as one who should feed souls with the seed of My Word, but with eloquent language. Look at the stinking flowers of this tree, which are his diverse and various thoughts, which he voluntarily welcomes with delight and pleasure, not flying the occasions of them, but rather seeking them in order to be able to accomplish a sinful act, the which is the fruit which kills him, depriving him of the light of grace, and giving him eternal death. And what stench comes from this fruit, sprung from the flowers of the tree? The stench of disobedience, for, in the secret of his heart, he wishes to examine and judge unfaithfully his superior's will; a stench of impurity,

for he takes delight in many foul conversations, wretchedly tempting his penitents.

“Wretch that you are, do you not see that under the color of devotion you conceal a troop of children? This comes from your disobedience. You have not chosen the virtues for your children as does the truly obedient religious; you strive to deceive your superior when you see that he denies you something which your perverse will desires, using the leaves of smooth or rough words, speaking irreverently and reproving him. You can not endure your brother, nor even the smallest word and reproof which he may make to you, but in such a case you immediately bring forth the poisoned fruit of anger and hatred against him, judging that to be done to your hurt which was done for your good, and thus taking scandal, your soul and body living in pain. Why has your brother displeased you? Because you live for your own sensual pleasure, you fly your cell as if it were a prison, for you have abandoned the cell of self-knowledge, and thus fallen into disobedience, wherefore you can not remain in your material cell. You will not appear in the refectory against your will whilst you have anything to spend; when you have nothing left necessity takes you there.

“Therefore the obedient have done well, who have chosen to observe their vow of poverty, so that they have nothing to spend, and therefore are not led away from the sweet

table of the refectory, where obedience nourishes both body and soul in peace and quiet. The obedient religious does not think of laying a table, or of providing food for himself like this wretched man, to whose taste it is painful to eat in the refectory, wherefore he avoids it; he is always the last to enter the choir, and the first to leave it; with his lips he approaches Me, with his heart he is far from Me. He gladly escapes from the chapter-house when he can through fear of penance. When he is obliged to be there, he is covered with shame and confusion for the faults which he felt it no shame to commit. What is the cause of this? Disobedience. He does not watch in prayer, and not only does he omit mental prayer, but even the Divine office to which he is obliged. He has no fraternal charity, because he loves no one but himself, and that not with a reasonable but with a bestial love. So great are the evils which fall on the disobedient; so many are the fruits of sorrow which he produces, that your tongue could not relate them. Oh! disobedience, which deprives the soul of the light of obedience, destroying peace, and giving war! Disobedience destroys life and gives death, drawing the religious out of the ship of the observance of his order, to drown him in the sea, making him swim in the strength of his own arms, and not repose on those of the order. Disobedience clothes him with every misery, causes him to die of hunger, taking away from him the food of the merit of obedience, it gives him continual bitterness, depriving him of every

sweetness and good, causing him to dwell with every evil in life it gives him the earnest of cruel torments to endure, and if he do not amend before his clothes are loosened from the ship at death, disobedience will lead the soul to eternal damnation, together with the devils who fell from heaven, because they rebelled against Me. In the same way have you, oh! disobedient man, having rebelled against obedience and cast from you the key which would have opened the door of heaven, opened instead the door of hell with the key of disobedience.”

*How God does not reward merit according to the labor of the obedient, nor according to the length of time which it takes, but according to the love and promptitude of the truly obedient; and of the miracles which God has performed by means of this virtue; and of discretion in obedience, and of the works and reward of the truly obedient man.*

“I have appointed you all to labor in the vineyard of obedience in different ways, and every man will receive a price, according to the measure of his love, and not according to the work he does, or the length of time for which he works, that is to say, that he who comes early will not have more than he who comes late, as My Truth told you in the holy gospel by the example of those who were standing idle and were sent by the lord of the vineyard to labor; for he gave as much to those who went at dawn, as to those who went at prime or at tierce, and those who went at

sext, at none, and even at vespers, received as much as the first: My Truth showing you in this way that you are rewarded not according to time or work, but according to the measure of your love. Many are placed in their childhood to work in the vineyard; some enter later in life, and others in old age; sometimes these latter labor with such fire of love, seeing the shortness of the time, that they rejoin those who entered in their childhood, because they have advanced but slowly. By love of obedience, then, does the soul receive her merit, filling the vessel of her heart in Me, the Sea Pacific. There are many whose obedience is so prompt, and has become, as it were, so incarnate in them, that not only do they wish to see reason in what is ordered them by their superior, but they hardly wait until the word is out of his mouth, for with the light of faith they understand his intention. Wherefore the truly obedient man obeys rather the intention than the word, judging that the will of his superior is fixed in My will, and that therefore his command comes from My dispensation, and from My will, wherefore I say to you that he rather obeys the intention than the word. He also obeys the word, having first spiritually obeyed in affection his superior’s will, seeing and judging it by the light of faith to be Mine. This is well shown in the lives of the fathers, where you read of a religious, who at once obeyed in his affection the command of his superior, commencing to write the letter o, though he had not space to finish it; wherefore to show how pleasing his prompt obedience

was to Me, My clemency gave him a proof by writing the other half of the letter in gold. This glorious virtue is so pleasing to Me, that to no other have I given so many miraculous signs and testimonies, for it proceeds from the height of faith.

“In order to show how pleasing it is to Me, the earth obeys this virtue, the animals obey it — water grows solid under the feet of the obedient man. And as for the obedience of the earth, you remember having read of that disciple who, being given a dry stick by his abbot, and being ordered by obedience to plant it in the earth and water it every day, did not proceed to ask how could it possibly do any good, but, without inquiring about possibilities, he fulfilled his obedience in such virtue of faith that the dry wood brought forth leaves and fruits, as a sign that that soul had risen from the dryness of disobedience, and, covered by the green leaves of virtue, had brought forth the fruit of obedience, wherefore the fruit of this tree was called by the holy fathers the fruit of obedience. You will also find that animals obey the obedient man; for a certain disciple, commanded by obedience, through his purity and virtue caught a dragon and brought it to his abbot, but the abbot, like a true physician of the soul, in order that he might not be tossed about by the wind of vainglory, and to prove his patience, sent him away with harsh words, saying: ‘Beast that you are, you have brought along another beast with yourself.’ And as to fire, you have read in the holy scripture

that many were placed in the fire, rather than transgress My obedience, and, at My command were not hurt by it. This was the case of the three children, who remained happily in the furnace — and of many others of whom I could tell you. The water bore up Maurus who had been sent by obedience to save a drowning disciple; he did not think of himself, but thought only with the light of faith of how to fulfill the command of his superior, and so walked upon the water as if he had been on dry land, and so saved the disciple. In everything, if you open the eye of the intellect, you will find shown forth the excellence of this virtue. Everything else should be abandoned for the sake of obedience. If you were lifted up in such contemplation and union of mind with Me, that your body was raised from the earth, and an obedience were imposed on you (speaking generally, and not in a particular case, which cannot give a law), you ought, if possible, to force yourself to arise, to fulfill the obedience imposed on you, though you should never leave prayer, except for necessity, charity, or obedience. I say this in order that you may see how prompt I wish the obedience of My servants to be, and how pleasing it is to Me. Everything that the obedient man does is a source of merit to him. If he eats, obedience is his food; if he sleeps, his dreams are obedience; if he walks, if he remains still, if he fasts, if he watches — everything that he does is obedience; if he serve his neighbor, it is obedience that he serves. How is he guided in the choir, in the refectory, or his cell?

By obedience, with the light of the most holy faith, with which light he has slain and cast from him his humbled self-will, and abandoned himself with self-hatred to the arms of his order and superior. Reposing with obedience in the ship, allowing himself to be guided by his superior, he has navigated the tempestuous sea of this life, with calm and serene mind and tranquillity of heart, because obedience and faith have taken all darkness from him; he remains strong and firm, having lost all weakness and fear, having destroyed his own will, from which comes all feebleness and disordinate fear. And what is the food of this spouse obedience? She eats knowledge of self, and of Me, knowing her own non-existence and sinfulness, and knowing that I am He who is, thus eating and knowing My Truth in the Incarnate Word. What does she drink? The Blood, in which the Word has shown her, My Truth, and the ineffable love which I have for her, and the obedience imposed on Him by Me, His Eternal Father, so she becomes inebriated with the love and obedience of the Word, losing herself and her own opinions and knowledge, and possessing Me by grace, tasting Me by love, with the light of faith in holy obedience.

“The obedient man speaks words of peace all his life, and at his death receives that which was promised him at his death by his superior, that is to say, eternal life, the vision of peace, and of supreme and eternal tranquillity and rest, the inestimable good which no one can value or under-

stand, for, being the infinite good, it cannot be understood by anything smaller than itself, like a vessel, which, dipped into the sea, does not comprehend the whole sea, but only that quantity which it contains. The sea alone contains itself. So I, the Sea Pacific, am He who alone can comprehend and value Myself truly. And in My own estimate and comprehension of Myself I rejoice, and this joy, the good which I have in Myself, I share with you, and with all, according to the measure of each. I do not leave you empty, but fill you, giving you perfect beatitude; each man comprehends and knows My goodness in the measure in which it is given to him. Thus, then, the obedient man, with the light of faith in the truth burning in the furnace of charity, anointed with humility, inebriated with the Blood, in company with his sister patience, and with self-contempt, fortitude, and enduring perseverance, and all the other virtues (that is, with the fruit of the virtues), receives his end from Me, his Creator.”

***(To be continued)***



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