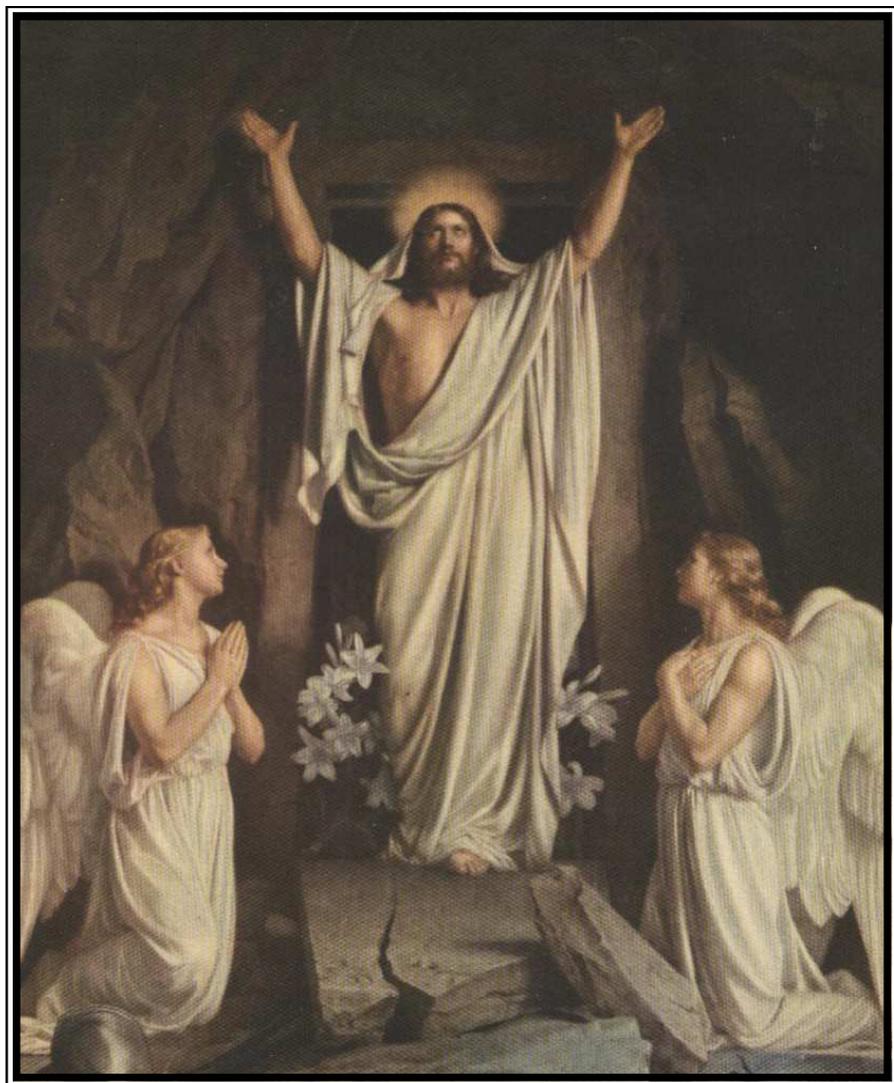


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Non Habemus Papam!

Before his “election” to the pontificate Jorge Mario Bergoglio “Pope Francis” made the following statement.

EVANGELIZING THE PERIPHERIES

by Jorge Mario Bergoglio

Reference has been made to evangelization. This is the Church’s reason for being. “The sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing” (Paul VI). It is Jesus Christ himself who, from within, impels us.

1) *Evangelizing implies apostolic zeal. Evangelizing presupposes in the Church the “parresia” of coming out from itself. The Church is called to come out from itself and to go to the peripheries, not only geographical, but also existential: those of the mystery of sin, of suffering, of injustice, those of ignorance and of the absence of faith, those of thought, those of every form of misery.*

2) *When the Church does not come out from itself to evangelize it becomes self-referential and gets sick (one thinks of the woman hunched over upon herself in the Gospel). The evils that, in the passing of time, afflict the ecclesiastical institutions have a root in self-referentiality, in a sort of theological narcissism.*

In Revelation, Jesus says that he is standing at the threshold and calling. Evidently the text refers to the fact that he stands outside the door and knocks to enter. . .

But at times I think that Jesus may be knocking from the inside, that we may let him out. The self-referential Church presumes to keep Jesus Christ within itself and not let him out.

3) *The Church, when it is self-referential, without realizing it thinks that it has its own light; it stops being the “mysterium lunae” and gives rise to that evil which is so grave, that of spiritual worldliness (according to De Lubac, the worst evil into which the Church can fall): that of living to give glory to one another. To simplify, there are two images of the Church: the evangelizing Church that goes out from itself; that of the “*Dei Verbum religiose audiens et fidenter proclamans*” [the Church that devoutly listens to and faithfully proclaims the Word of God - editor’s note], or the worldly Church that lives in itself, of itself, for itself. This should illuminate the possible changes and reforms to be realized for the salvation of souls.*

4) *Thinking of the next Pope: a man who, through the contemplation of Jesus Christ and the adoration of Jesus Christ, may*

help the Church to go out from itself toward the existential peripheries, that may help it to be the fecund mother who lives “by the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.”

Rome, March 9, 2013

English translation by Matthew Sherry, Ballwin, Missouri, U.S.A.

There are many things to consider concerning this alleged “pope.” First we must ask, “Is he Catholic?” If we are to believe the many images of him on the internet, he has shown himself the friend of just about every false religion, and thereby the enemy of the true Roman Catholic Church. This is not something new in the Modernist *Novus Ordo*; we saw his anti-pope predecessors doing the same thing. “John Paul II”: Kissing the “sacred” books of false (anti-Christ) religions; receiving anointing from pagan priestesses; praying with heretics; etcetera. If pictures are worth a thousand words then nothing more really needs to be said. Bergoglio is definitely a cut from the same cloth as the others. We do not expect apes to give birth to a human, nor should we expect Modernists to give birth to a true Catholic.

Bergoglio, as the others, in embracing false religions has denied the one true religion. His taking the name of Francis is perhaps the satanic icing on the

cake of Wojtyla and Ratzinger’s demonic insult in Assisi. In Assisi these anti-popes called together the world religions (all false and therefore anti-Christian) to “pray for peace.” This touchy feely window dressing only slightly camouflaged the insulting apostasy from the true Church and therefore from God. Apparently those who allege to be followers of Jesus Christ have never read or have forgotten St. Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians (II Corinthians 6, 14-17) **“Bear not the yoke together with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God: as God said: I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, go out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.”** Or, perhaps, they are truly one with: injustice, darkness, Belial, unbelievers, idols, and the unclean.

It seems clear enough that this Modernist Church (*Novus Ordo*) is not only happy to associate with

evil religions, but also to participate in their evil false worship (or more precisely demonic worship). The obvious penalty for associating with and participating in demonic worship (all non-Catholic worship is false worship and therefore demonic worship) is that such a person ceases to be a Catholic and must be considered an apostate. To answer our question, it seems obvious that Bergoglio is not a Catholic (Despite whatever he may say – his actions speak louder than words.) Having established this, there is really no need to show that he is not a priest (having been “ordained” with the Modernist invalid rite), nor is he a bishop as he was never even a Catholic or a priest first, nor was he a true Cardinal, so it only follows that he is not a true pope, but is rather an anti-pope.

As we read Bergoglio’s words we must remind ourselves that when he uses words like “the Church” or “Catholic” he is speaking of the Modernist (Novus Ordo) Church and religion and not the True Catholic Church established by Jesus Christ. His words are Orwellian double-speak at its best. With this in mind we begin to understand quite clearly his intent. The demonic evangelization is not inspired by the Holy Ghost and therefore truly lacks courage and boldness that the Church possesses

from God. The devils must inspire their dupes to reach out to all the periphery (not to convert them, but to unite with them). For all of Hell must be united against God and His Church. The Modernists are being encouraged to do this strongly and boldly without hesitation or reservation.

We make a grave mistake if we give a Catholic interpretation to these words. This has been and continues to be their tactic. The words used are so broad and empty that everyone and anyone will fill in the voids with their own convictions. Catholics will give it a Catholic interpretation and be led down the proverbial “primrose path,” while the heretics will espouse the same words only giving them their distinct heretical interpretation, etcetera. Only the Modernists at the top, guided by a most unholy spirit, see and read between the lines and know exactly what is being said and inculcated.

This “evangelization” therefore is not for the conversion of pagans, Jews, and heretics to the true religion. On the contrary, the Modernist “evangelization” is a Masonic acceptance of every false religion and a welcoming together under one big umbrella. Each sect continues in its own peculiar false worship but accepts all the others as equal and valid as itself. This

idea was honestly put into words by Sister Theresa of Calcutta when she said that she did not wish to convert anyone but only wished to make them better. She wanted to make the Hindu a better Hindu, the Muslim a better Muslim, etc. This is the demonic evangelization that is being promoted by this latest anti-Christ.

When they speak of Jesus Christ we must understand that they are not speaking of the same Person as Catholics worship. The Modernist Christ inspires them to false worship and unity with evil and sin. Heretics do not believe in the Same God as Catholics. They call the worship of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist idolatry. So if our God is an idol to them, then it logically follows that their god must be the real idol. We obviously do not worship the same God. The Jews and Pagans do not believe in Jesus so they do not believe in the Same God as Catholics. The Modernists want to accept them all and claim to worship the same god as they do. And in this they are honest: The god of heretics, Jews, pagans, Modernists, etc is the same god – Lucifer!

So if you will reread Bergoglio's words above and really any writings of this Modernist sect understanding that: where they write "Jesus Christ" they actually

mean "Lucifer"; where they write "Catholic Church" they actually mean "Masonic One World Devil Church"; where they speak of "evangelization" they do not mean conversion but acceptance of every false belief; etc., then you will understand exactly what they are talking about.

If is noteworthy that Bergoglio turns scripture inside out. Instead of Christ knocking to come into our hearts, Bergoglio suggests that He is knocking to get out. He wants to open the door and let Him out. It is not God coming to men but going out from men. How demonically cleaver in this twisting of scripture and logic. If we think of the true Christ this is true, He wants to be as far away from the Modernists as possible. If there are any valid consecrations left somewhere within the Modernist Novus Ordo, I am certain Jesus wants to get out from there ASAP. On the other hand if we realize that Bergoglio's "Christ" is Lucifer then we see also that Lucifer wants out so that he can work his "evangelization" upon the rest of the world.

If our readers are wise they will heed the admonition of St. Paul and not yoke themselves to any of these, but come out from among them and worship only the one true God in the One true Church that He established.

Mary, the Virgin Most Faithful

Bishop Bonaventure Strandt, OFM

There are so many benefits in drawing closer to the Blessed Virgin that it would be impossible to enumerate them all in one place. We would end up like St. John, declaring that if everything was written about the glories of the beloved, the whole world would not be able to contain the volumes.

It is critical in this time of faithlessness and indifference to stir our minds up to lively sentiments of faith. It is easy to become discouraged when we see practically the entire world on the path to Hell. This is where Our Mother and Our Refuge comes to our aid. She is the Virgin Most Faithful, possessing a perfect degree of the virtue of Faith. Actually, to call her most faithful means other things also. She is most faithful in hearing all of our pleadings. She is most faithful in distributing powerful graces for the tiniest of good works. She is directly responsible for giving us an increase in the efficacy of that all-important theological virtue implanted at Baptism: supernatural faith.

The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity are in fact among the only things in this life that we can properly call “supernatural”. They raise us up to an elevated state of sanctifying grace, a state which is far above our ordinary and corrupted nature. They do, however,

need a real jumpstart from time to time, as we clearly see through our experiences in the valley of tears.

Mary helps us to keep the Catholic Faith by reminding us of her own obedience to the Church. Despite having the exalted position of Co-Redemptrix, she willingly obeyed the Apostolic teachings, knowing full well that the Apostles are divinely appointed to teach.

We cannot deny the importance of holding to all of our beliefs, and herein lies the focal point of this title granted to Mary of Virgin Most Faithful. When the Church was ravaged by heresies in the fourth century, Christ’s divinity was constantly brought into question. His equality with the Father was equally an embattled topic. It was simply not enough for some churchmen to read and understand simply the Lord’s own words: “I and the Father are One.” Subsequent refutations of errors made it necessary to draw up, once and for all, a creed that would define every single point that was to be held by ALL Catholics, from bishops to catechumens.

There is a creed of far greater importance for us today than even the Nicene Creed. It is called the Athanasian Creed, bearing the name of one of the most zealous defenders of Catholic truths who has ever lived.

Now, the Nicene Creed is a daily re-affirmation of simple and serious truths that must be preserved and defended. The Athanasian Creed, a now carefully concealed document of holy origin, warns us about what will happen if we do not subscribe to the one true Faith.

The unanimous voice of the Roman Catholic Church has approved of these words, which will remain in effect until the end time. From this powerful Athanasian Creed, we read: **“Whosoever wills to be saved must before all else hold true to the Catholic Faith. And unless everyone keeps this Faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he will perish forever.”** Do you grasp the importance of such a statement? It is a complete contradiction of every sentiment of so called ecumenism. There is no room for blending religions. Most especially, there is no such thing as a Catholic praying within the demonic temples of false religions.

Truly, the prophecy of the Blessed Virgin at La Sallette has come true. Her words to the little shepherdess Melanie are also carefully concealed by Satan and his friends in the Vatican. **“Rome will lose the Faith, and will become the seat of the Antichrist.”**

Mary, the divinely appointed Mother of Truth Itself, could never tell a lie, or even come close to deceiving us. The question remains:

How can anyone who rejects even one doctrine be considered among the faithful of God? The Athanasian Creed goes on to explain the attributes of the Blessed Trinity, which is rejected among many other things by the Muslims. It describes in great detail the qualities of the Hypostatic Union of Our Lord Jesus Christ, explaining admirably the Divinity that the Jews will never accept. It also mentions the punitive everlasting fires of Hell, a reality which is frowned upon by many who consider themselves Christians.

The universal Church declared 17 centuries ago: **“Right faith, consequently, demands that we believe and confess that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.”** Once again, here are words which will either unite us to Our Lord more closely; or else they will drive a wedge between us and God. The Lord made no exceptions when He Proclaimed: **“Either you are with Me, or you are against Me.”**

Truth Itself teaches us these profound truths, and they must be learned by all, especially since we live in an age of such nauseating lies. The Father of Lies is busy trying to claw away every last appearance of Christianity from the earth. We must now summon up that great supernatural virtue of hope in reminding ourselves of the words of everlasting life: **“The Truth shall set you free.”**

Right Order vs Demonic Anarchy

(Part7)

As we draw this examination to a close, and have been forced to humbly and regrettably declare so many outside of the True Church, an even greater sense of humility overwhelms us.

The Great Apostasy so often spoken of by the late Bishop Louis Vezelis, O.F.M. D.D. is obviously in full force and is progressing closer and closer, day by day, to the end of this world as we know it. The material and spiritual devastation is apparent to us as we hope that it is to all of our readers by now.

In this spiritual (and material) devastation that we see, there is also seen the once great physical body or tree of the Church now mercilessly severed from its roots lying dead on the ground. There are many souls still attached to or trying to attach themselves to it, thinking that the life blood of Christ is still coursing through its capillaries. Our once great Churches, Cathedrals, etc., even our once Catholic Vatican City is now nothing but a corpse self-severed from the forever living, True Catholic Roots of Christ, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Anti-popes,

anti-cardinals, and anti-bishops, etc. fill this corpse and give the illusion of life, but that is all it is – an illusion. Many are deceived by this great illusion and so will be lost.

This image that I have so poorly tried to reveal is for those who are unaware, none other than a literary license of a revelation that is well known within the Franciscan Order. The upper portion of the tree that was once the Church has been severed, but from the life giving roots springs a new shoot and that new shoot is none-other than the Franciscan Order to fulfill that original command to St. Francis to rebuild My Church.

Having examined the terrain around us, we are forced to declare that the Modernist Novus Ordo is but the corpse of what was once the Church; The various “Religious Communities” united and one with this corpse are likewise dead; The various anarchistic Traditionalists of every variety and kind are likewise disassociated from the roots either attempting to unite to the dead body or simply “independent” of every and all

vestiges of the Church.

In all humility we are therefore forced to boldly declare that the continuation of the Church to the best of our knowledge is found in this small and simple humble Franciscan shoot rising from the massive roots of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; and that we and all those united with us are that shoot. That shoot outside of which salvation is not to be found. The rest of the world may ridicule and laugh, and may declare us insane, or conspiracy theorists, and even attempt to persecute us into silence or death, but they cannot change the reality of the situation.

We however, as much as we regret seeing all those souls heaping coals of fire upon their own heads in their attempts to destroy us, welcome the opportunity to be found worthy to suffer all of this for the love of Jesus Christ. If the world has hated Him, it is an honor for us to be hated by that same world that is forever excluded from the beatitudes of Heaven.

We might ask, how do we know that we are this remnant solitary shoot? First, by way of exclusion, which I have hopefully manifested clearly

in the previous installments of this work; there are not many left standing after observing all those who have fallen in one way or another. This might be seen as the negative proof. As for the positive, we must look for a continuous uninterrupted and uncorrupted succession from before the great tree was severed right up to the present day.

In the case of the Franciscan Order we see this preservation in none-other than the late Bishop Louis Vezelis, O.F.M. D.D. He entered the order truly (validly and licitly) before the great severing from the Root that took place with the culmination of the false "Vatican II Council". He fulfilled his canonical novitiate continued in his studies and temporary vows and progressed to and through his Solemn or Final Vows and as such is forever a son of St. Francis. He suffered much for his adherence to the customs and rules of the Order and temporarily escaped the persecution from his own community by a special grace from God that came from the last true Minister General of the Order in Rome. The Minister General sent him under holy obedience to work for the establishment of the Order in

South Korea.

He worked for eighteen years in this missionary land for the salvation of souls and the continuation of the Franciscan Order. But, sadly even here in all the poverty and misery surrounding them the Modernists came to undermine, persecute and attempt to destroy. Circumstances forced him to return to the United States to work for the South Koreans that were losing their faith to the Protestants here in the States. Due to his continual and persevering adherence to the Franciscan life and therefore Catholic life, the Modernists began their attempt to ostracize and alienate him. Little did they realize that it was not Bishop Louis that was being alienated but it was themselves that they were alienating from the Order and the Church. Even a once trusted confrère of Bishop Louis told him that the Order that he joined is now dead. Another told him that he should establish a friary and continue his labors to establish the Order here in the United States in faithfulness to the obedience he received from the Minister General. What he was inhibited from doing in South Korea he was now by divine grace able to

accomplish in the United States. There are now a few but true Solemnly professed Franciscan religious thanks to the mercy and goodness of God that has worked through the humble human instrument we know as Bishop Louis Vezelis, O.F.M., D.D.

Much of the details of his life can be found in various previous issues of THE SERAPH.

So much for the preservation of the true Order of St. Francis of Assisi; we must now consider the continual and uninterrupted succession of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church how it has been and is continuing still. For this we must look to none-other than the late Bishop Ngo Dinh Thuc.

I would like to repeat here the public statement made by Archbishop Ngo Dinh Thuc in Munich, Germany on February 25, 1982:

“How does the Catholic Church appear in our days? In Rome there rules ‘Pope’ John Paul II, assisted by a college of Cardinals, as well as by a large number of Bishops and Prelates. Outside of Rome, the Catholic Church appears to be flourishing

with Her Bishops and Priests. Catholics are numerically important. Each day, the Mass is celebrated in many churches, and on the Lord's Day the churches welcome many of the faithful to hear Mass and to receive Holy Communion.

But, in the eyes of God, how does the Church actually appear?

These Masses, daily and Sunday, at which the faithful assist, are they not pleasing to God? In no way, because this Mass is the same for Catholics and Protestants. For this reason, it is not pleasing to God and is INVALID. The only Mass pleasing to God is the Mass of Saint Pius V which is celebrated by a small number of priests and bishops, of which I make up a part.

For this reason, and in the measure possible, I will open a seminary for candidates to a priesthood pleasing to God.

Over and above this "Mass" which offends God, there are a number of elements that constitute an object of reproach to God. For example, in priestly ordination, in episcopal consecration, in the Sacraments of Confirmation and Extreme

Unction.

Besides these things, these "priests" mentioned above profess:

1. Modernism
2. A false ecumenism
3. The Cult of Man
4. Religious indifference
5. The refusal to condemn and excommunicate heretics.

For these reasons, in my capacity as a Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, I judge that the Apostolic See of the Church is vacant, and that it is my duty as a Bishop to do all in my power to assure the continuation of the Roman Catholic Church for the eternal salvation of souls."

Munich, 25 February 1982

+ Peter-Martin Ngo-Dinh-Thuc

ARCHBISHOP

This truly humble but great man, had the courage to stand up and condemn the severed tree and all its adherents, and possessing within himself true Apostolic Succession set out in his limited but effectual manner to preserve and pass on to the next generation the life blood of true Apostolic succession as well

as consistency in the doctrine and laws of the Church. He did later denounce some who he was deceived in laying hands upon, but undeterred he tried again. He eventually consecrated Bishops Carmona and Zamora in his private residence with two Catholic laymen as witnesses. These in turn consecrated Bishop Musey and then the three of them in union consecrated Bishop Louis Vezelis, O.F.M.

These three bishops (perhaps at the inspiration of Bishop Louis) met and solemnly vowed before the Blessed Sacrament to recognize Bishop Ngo as their true and legitimate superior and to not ordain or consecrate anyone else without the unanimous consent of him and the other bishops. Circumstances arranged that Bishop Ngo would reside with Bishop Louis in Rochester NY. At this time Bishop Louis was given power of attorney for Bishop Ngo, but regardless of his best efforts Bishop Ngo was abducted by the Novus Ordo and eventually died in the hands of the enemy, just as Our Lord had done. The Novus Ordo may have struck the head of this remnant but little did they know that the shoot was already breaking forth.

It is true that Bishops Musey, Carmona, and Bravo created a schism by breaking their solemn promises before God in the Holy Eucharist, but the Church still survived in Bishops Louis, Martinez and Zamora. Briefly, Bishop Musey wanted to establish himself as some kind of patriarch in the United States and eager to accomplish this began to attempt to consecrate everyone and anyone who would accept him. This tragically involved some who were known to be heretical or of questionable orthodoxy and worthiness. Bishop Louis warned Musey and the others of the dangers they were exposing themselves to; they continued none-the-less and subsequently were cut off from the Church as schismatics.

These various “bishops” now schismatic/heretical continued on their various “lines” all claiming to descend from the line of Bishop Ngo. Bishop Ngo if he were able would have denounced these just as he did those others that deceived him and stole orders from him previously. Bishop Louis as his legal representative both (civilly and clerically) denounced them and declared to all the world what they were guilty of and

how this has cut them off from the Mystical Body of Christ. (See THE SERAPH Vol 15 No 6 February 1995.)

So we see how it is that both the preservation of the Franciscan Order and the True Church fell upon this humble but determinedly faithful friar. He held within himself both the future of the Church as well as of the Franciscan Order.

Neither of these have died with him. Bishop Louis preserved the laws and doctrines of the Church in those he prepared and ordained to the priesthood. He preserved Apostolic succession in those he has consecrated: Bishop Giles Butler, O.F.M. D.D., Bishop Madrigal D.D., and Bishop Bonaventure Strandt, O.F.M. D.D.

Bishop Louis has likewise preserved the Franciscan Order in those who have been trained and formed by his hand and have made their solemn Profession in the Order to God: Father Joseph

Noonan, O.F.M; Father Bernard Colussy, O.F.M.; Bishop Giles Butler, O.F.M. D.D.; Bishop Bonaventure, O.F.M. D.D. and Brother Dominic Brueggemann, O.F.M. all forming the First Order. He has also formed and accepted many into the Third Order of St. Francis. In the future, God willing, there will also continue from this shoot a vital Second Order of St. Francis.

I make bold to state once again (even at the risk of mockery , ridicule, and great suffering) that as far as is known, outside of these Franciscans the other Catholic Religious Orders have died, and no longer exist. I further make bold to state that to the best of our knowledge outside of these three remaining Bishops the Catholic Church is dead. Only in this tender shoot rising from the great roots of the One, True, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church can we find the means to save our souls as it is all that remains of the Mystical Body of Christ here on earth.

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Franciscan Saints

APRIL 16

ST. BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE. Confessor
ST. MARY BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS Virgin
Cordbearers of St. Francis

In St. Benedict Joseph Labre there was realized the full meaning contained in the words of God: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject” (I Cor. 1:19). His entrance into the world took place at Amettes, France. He was the first-born of parents who were favored by God with fifteen children.

It appears that the spirit of God, which moved him strangely throughout life, came over him at the age of sixteen, for, from that time forward, he lost all inclination to continue his studies. For that reason, too, his training for the priesthood, which his reverend uncle so earnestly desired, came to naught.

Because of poor health and lack of knowledge he was refused admission also among the Carthusians and the Cistercians. Then it was that he was interiorly instructed to imitate the life of St. Alexis, leave his native town and his parents, live on alms, and visit the great shrines as a pilgrim. From that day on

his soul was flooded with great peace.

His food was composed of the leavings that fell from the tables of others. Alms that had been given to him he gave to the poor. The rags of this beggar of the Lord covered a heart that glowed with love of God and neighbor, and the tenderest devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Mother of God. At Assisi he was received into the Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis. He has been the pride of that pious society ever since.

His repulsive exterior caused him more pain than it did others; indeed, his sensitiveness on the subject was the most poignant suffering with which God afflicted him. He used to say: “Our comfort is not in this world.” In Rome he was called the poor man of the Forty Hours’ Devotion. On the day of his death, April 16, 1783, he dragged himself to a church in Rome and prayed there for two hours until he collapsed. He was carried into a near-by house, where he

died that night most peacefully.

Immediately after his death the people proclaimed him a saint. The guardians of Christian morals, Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII have set the beggar Benedict as an example before a generation steeped in materialism. The former beatified him, the latter proclaimed him a saint of the Church.

Like St. Benedict Joseph Labre, St. Mary Bernadette Soubirous, who is familiar to us because of the visions the Immaculate Mother of God vouchsafed her at Lourdes, was also a member of the Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis, having been received into this pious society after her entrance into religion. Both saints are commemorated in the Franciscan Order on this day.

ON THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE CORD

1. How did this confraternity originate? It is well known that St. Francis of *Assisi* girded himself with a coarse cord in remembrance of the cord with which our dear Lord was girded. St. Dominic, the very close friend of our holy Father St. Francis, requested and obtained from the latter his cord and thereafter wore it steadfastly.

This custom was soon imitated by many of the faithful. So it was that the Franciscan Pope Sixtus V established the Archconfraternity of the Cordbearers of St. Francis in the Franciscan basilica at *Assisi* in 1585. He, and other popes as well, enriched the confraternity with privileges and indulgences. — This confraternity is well deserving of your consideration.

2. What obligations do the members of the confraternity assume? They are supposed to recite daily six Paters, Aves, and Glories (five in *honor* of the Five Wounds of Jesus, one for the intention of the Holy Father, to gain the indulgences). Then, too, they should wear the blessed cord. Moreover, on the feasts of -St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Anthony, and the Stigmata of St. Francis, they receive the General Absolution, or the so-called indulgenced blessing, and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Papal Benediction. — There are therefore only a few obligations imposed upon the members of the Confraternity of the Cord, but the favors conferred are great.

(*Cont. p. 18*)

Reflections on a Courageous Soul

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part III

Life is filled with conflicts regardless of who we are or where we live. It is in how we deal with the conflicts that quite often decides the direction or difficulty of life itself. It has been my observation that most conflicts which people endure are the result of their wrong decisions and bad judgments.

The exceptions to this rule are those conflicts which we must suffer because of the actions or words of others. Quite often, they are more painful because they are not of our own doing and, therefore, out of our control.

The conflicts which Fr. Louis suffered caused him to move from one parish to another, and then choosing to live as a hermit as the Franciscan Rule does allow. They were certainly not of his doing. The Modernists among his community and the secular clergy caused the greater part of these conflicts. Like so many clergy of that time, difficult, sometimes life-changing decisions needed to be made without a complete

understanding of what was taking place. It was very much a situation of bending without breaking.

The Friars were told many years later by Bp. Louis that he would be very slow to condemn any clergymen who had to live through the difficult years of the 1960's. He was clearly emphasizing the painful decisions that had to be made by men who never thought they would be put into such a position. For clarity's sake it must be understood we are referring to those clergy who wished to remain Catholic, not those who were clearly Modernists and were promoting those errors.

It must be understood that until the Modernist Revolution of the 1960's, the world of the Catholic clergy was as immutable as the teachings of the Church. The daily life could be photocopied from a master seven days a week. All of that was literally turned upside down, with the priest who wanted to remain Catholic being left bewildered and confused.

One is here reminded of the

“traditionalist” who is less willing to bend than the Church Herself. This writer has heard these people condemn every clergyman who in any way “blinked” or hesitated during these tumultuous years. In their unbending mind, the priest should have had the wisdom and knowledge of God! Their vision should have better than Superman’s!

Little do they realize that hindsight is indeed 20/20. It is quite easy to make determinations after-the-fact with books of information to aid you, especially when some of these traitors to the Faith were more than willing to explain their treachery in clear terms when they knew Montini and the “Gang” would do nothing to stop them.

During the infamous period of the “liturgical option,” Bp. Louis had conveyed to us how he repeatedly “opted” not to enforce endless innovations. He soon learned the effects of his decisions among the laity and clergy, but was not willing to compromise with those who were destroying the Mass.

There is one more area of

concern which I wish to discuss about Fr. Louis’ time in Korea; it is that of legitimate authority. It was quite a lesson for him – one which is so pertinent for today.

The average Catholic is not versed in the subtleties of legitimate and illegitimate authority. It is, though, not a new problem. How many antipopes have there been and how many centuries ago did they live? Prior to the Modernists popes, there were about thirty-one antipopes spread out over the past millennium.

In addition, St. Francis of Assisi wrote these words in Chapter One of the Rule, “*The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without property and in chastity. Friar Francis promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Honorius and to his successors **canonically** elected and to the Roman Church. And the other friars are bound to obey Friar Francis and his successors.*” Emphasis ours.

Carefully note the word *canonically* in this quote. If St. Francis thought it was necessary

to include this word (he told the friars in the Rule that he wrote the Rule as it was dictated to him by Our Lord) as it was told to him, this must mean that it is possible to have an illegitimate pope. The antipopes are proof of this, but who knows this Catholic history today?

The point in all of this is, that Fr. Louis was subjected to illegitimate authority while in Korea. The unusual situation he was providentially placed in (his obedience was given to him by the Minister General) was extremely rare. In normal situations, the Provincial would issue an obedience. As a result, no one could supersede the obedience except the Minister General.

I don't wish to go into all of the details at this time, but the Superior of the Korean Custody, Fr. Apollinaris van Leeuwen was the friar who assumed legitimate authority where he did not possess it. The explanation is that of the previous paragraph. It didn't keep Fr. Apollinaris from acting as though he had the authority! How many of you have ever had to deal with a "want-to-be?" It certainly is not a pleasant situation.

The question of legitimate authority would come up again a few years later when Fr. George Gailiusis of the Lithuanian Province pretended to expel Fr. Louis from the Order when he did not have the authority to do so because his own election was illegal. One can readily see how important the Rule is when it comes to unscrupulous religious.

It should be noted here, though, the unusual situation of Fr. Louis regarding the obedience from the Minister General made it possible for him to return to the United States.

Upon returning, Fr. Louis desired to establish a Korean Mission in the United States for Korean immigrants. This he did with the assistance of a few loyal Koreans who had come with him from Korea. Fr. Louis returned from Korea in 1975, after eighteen years in the foreign missions.

Besides working with the Koreans, he began to read about the Modernist changes in the Church. This was not possible in the Far East because the necessary information was not available. As a result, Fr. Louis was still in the Novus Ordo, assisting the Diocese of

Rochester, NY. It was clear that when a decision was made, it would be an informed one.

It took two years (1977) for Fr. Louis to come to a decision which would change the course of his life. He could no longer be a part of the Modernist Church (although it still called itself Catholic) or his religious community. The struggles he had endured over many years would now end, for it was realized that he could no longer be a party to those who were destroying the Faith and the Franciscan Order.

Perhaps by this time in his life he may have realized when one door is closed, another opens. With the hindsight of thirty-five years it can be seen that Fr. Louis would enter into a number of “new doors.” These doors would lead him to many new places and meet new people. He would enter upon a strange new world, for now it would be required for the priest who desired to remain a True Roman Catholic priest not to say Mass and preach the Gospel in the local parish church.

To be Continued

Franciscan Saints

(Continued)

3. What is the spirit of the Confraternity of the Cordbearers? At their reception the members are admonished to be mindful of the bonds of our Lord Jesus Christ. The cord should be for them a reminder of the fear of God, of temperance, and of purity. Finally, they should consider themselves as joyfully bound to the commandments of God. Love of Christ and virtue and fidelity to God, that is the spirit of the confraternity which the members should foster in imitation of St. Francis and under his guidance. — Consider whether you should not join this preparatory school of the Third Order.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Thou, O Lord, didst permit St. Benedict Joseph, Thy confessor, to attach himself to Thee alone by zeal in humility and love for poverty; grant us, through his intercession and merits, to despise all that is material and ever to aspire to what is heavenly. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**CONFERENCES ON THE
BLESSED TRINITY.**

**BY
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CONFERENCE VIII.

*ON THE BLESSED
EUCCHARIST, THE GREATEST
GIFT OF THE BLESSED
'TRINITY.*

The Blessed Trinity and the Real Presence the deepest Mysteries — Four Proofs from Holy Writ — The, sixth Chapter of St. John; its true Meaning — Figurative and literal Senses — The Jews understood Him literally — He confirms their Impression — Abandoned by many of the Disciples — Types and Figures — The Institution — Transubstantiation — I am the Vine, not a parallel Passage — Objections solved — Laws Of Nature and the Senses — Philosophical Difficulties no Difficulties — Concessions to the Infidel — The Test of true and false Disciples — Unworthy Communicants guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord — Taught by all the Fathers — Liturgies — Systematizes Religion — Impossible if Christ was but Man — Redemption satisfied Justice, but not Love — Merits Supreme Worship — The Blessed Eucharist is God and Man — Christ present for ever on Earth — Wonders of the Mystery — Silence — Considerations — The hidden God — Manna — The Bread of Elias, etc. etc.

I.

This is my body ... this is my blood.—ST. MATT.. xxvi. 20, 28.

My Brethren:

Creation, the Incarnation, the Blessed Eucharist, and the Catholic Church are the greatest works of God in time, His most precious gifts to man, and the most profound mysteries. They are all in *the safe keeping* of the Church, are part of the sacred deposit of faith, and are taught by her to all nations and in all times, otherwise their knowledge had perished from the mind of man or had resembled some of the broken traditions of pagan mythology. I connect the Blessed Trinity and the Blessed Eucharist, not only because the latter is one of the highest manifestations of God's mercy and love for man, but because both are allied as the most unfathomable mysteries of faith, and are truths, not of abstract reasoning, but of pure evidence, based on the same ground of conviction — *the authority of the Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth* (1 Tim. iii. 15).

The Blessed Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, the Real Presence, the Holy Communion, and Transubstantiation are terms expressive of the same doctrine. This doctrine does not mean that the priest has power to make and eat his God, as is very foolishly asserted even by nominal Christians

who should know better. The Blessed Trinity is whole and entire in every particle of creation. Not so the sacred humanity of Christ, which is at the right hand of God in heaven and in the Blessed Eucharist. He is everywhere as God, but not everywhere as man. It is an article of faith, by which we firmly believe, that when the words of consecration are pronounced, by a lawfully ordained priest, over the elements of bread and wine, a change takes place which converts the invisible substance of the bread into the Body and of the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ, which are really, truly, and substantially present, not in their natural condition, but in their risen, spiritualized, and glorified state, in a manner suited to the nature of a sacrament. The whole substance of the bread is Changed into the whole person of Jesus Christ, nothing at all remaining of the bread and Wine but their outward appearances or accidents. The Blessed Eucharist contains the Body and Blood, the soul and divinity, of Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost by concomitance; because the undivided Trinity can never be separated, and all external works are the production of the three adorable Persons combined.

Holy Writ affords us a threefold proof in favor of this ineffable mystery: first, the words of institution; recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew, fourteenth of St. Mark, and in the twenty-second of

St. Luke; second, the clarification of St. Paul regarding its acceptance (1 Cor. x. 11); and, thirdly, the words of promise recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John. Before entering on any of these powerful and conclusive arguments let me premise a few general observations.

The divine simplicity is exhibited in a striking manner in the Blessed Eucharist, the greatest work and best gift of the Blessed Trinity, Revelation; the sacrifices and worship of former dispensations; all the mysteries of man's redemption; all graces, all merits of the life, sufferings, and death of Christ; His body and soul in their glorified and immortal state; His divinity; the Father and the Holy Ghost, for they never can be separated from the Son; the august Trinity in ineffable unity — all are compressed into a single point, into the smallest consecrated particle, placed by the priest on the tongue of the humblest Catholic at the communion-rails.

This was foretold by the prophet: *God hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works. . . He hath given bread to them, that fear Him* (Psalm cx. 4). Millions of created worlds do not contain the importance nor wonders of that simple act. Because of His infinite simplicity the more openly God shows Himself in this world the more hidden and the stronger is the faith necessary to see Him. Creation, the Incarnation, and the Holy Eucharist are God's

great manifestations of Himself and His greatest gifts to man. The two latter contain Himself strictly.

The GREAT I Am is never more palpably exhibited to the world than at the elevation of the Host, and formerly at the elevation of the cross; the mystery of His presence only becomes more unfathomable, and it is *written: Blessed is he who will not be scandalized in Me.* The Jews were scandalized at the cross, and the disciples at the Real Presence: both *walked no more with Him.*

If Jesus Christ were but a mere man the Blessed Eucharist could not be at all, or at most could be but a figure; because He is God it is therefore a reality. The end of all love is unity, identity, oneness of all existence, bodily and spiritual, and intolerance of duality. Human love in its wildest flights never has and never can attain its end. The distance between one soul and another is so vast that only the Creator can fill it. In the common acceptance of the term there is such a thing as a union of hearts, but in a strict sense it is impossible among creatures. Interpenetration requires omnipotence; it can be accomplished only by Almighty God.

In our Lord love is omnipotent, and therefore it attains its end — oneness or identity of being; not indeed, deification, but a wonderful participation of it, according to St. Peter: *Divinae naturae consortes.* Our Lord styles the union a oneness

with the Father and Him. St. Cyril compares it very boldly “to the union of two pieces of liquefied wax melted into one.” We must stop short of deification, which exists only in the humanity of Christ. He alone of all men could accomplish the end of love, and was necessitated to do so — *to love to the end.* The law of love achieved the Eucharist. Where is the true love that would not accomplish the miracle, if it could reach its highest perfection and attain its end? *Come, my beloved,* said the Spouse in the sacred canticle, *eat, drink, be inebriated. This is my Body, this is my Blood. He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood abideth in me, and I in him.* Redemption satisfied God’s justice, but it was not enough for love, which required the Blessed Eucharist.

Already familiar with the proofs of this heavenly doctrine — proofs which are generally met in the range of ordinary controversy — I present them in a concise form and different arrangement in vindicating the truth of this stupendous institution of the Holy Trinity. The promise is recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, which contains seventy-two verses: the first twenty-six contain the history of the feeding of a Large multitude with a few loaves of bread; from this to the fifty-first verse Christ inculcates the necessity of believing in Him; thence to the end He teaches the necessity of eating His Body and drinking His Blood sacramentally in order to be saved.

Our Blessed Lord foretold the Passion, Resurrection, Baptism, and all his mysteries and institutions; these He promised them, and also the Eucharist. Nothing was more familiar with Him than to take occasion of some miracle to remove an objection or to inculcate a doctrine that had a connection with it. Thus in the fifth chapter of St. John we read that, having restored a sick man who was in a languishing condition from having lost the use of his limbs, He inculcates the doctrine of the resurrection, disbelieved by the Sadducees. If He ever meant to teach the doctrine of the Real Presence, this was the most suitable moment for doing so. By blessing the bread He imparted to it such an efficacy as to make it sufficient to feed many thousands, not by creating a new substance, but by extending that which already existed; He removed the objection that naturally offers itself against the simultaneous existence of a body in several places at the one time. Nor *can* we conceive anything more parallel to this divine institution, in which he multiplies his glorified Body to such an extent as to make it the food of all the faithful in every part of the world.

That our Lord's discourse in the first part of the chapter regards faith is evident from the context and His language. It is a maxim in Biblical interpretation that whenever a difficulty occurs we must find a key for its solution in other and

clearer passages where it exists. Our Lord speaks of Himself as the object of faith under the figurative language of food or bread — a mode of expression familiar to the Jews: *Come eat my bread and drink the wine which I have mingled for you* (Proverbs ix.) They offer no objection; they understood Him as inculcating the necessity of believing in Him under the figure of receiving food.

The meaning attached by his hearers to the words of a speaker is their true sense and that which he intended to convey. The Jews, the true interpreters of our Lord's words, were convinced that there was a transition in our Lord's discourse, and that He no longer taught the necessity of believing in Him, but of eating His Body and drinking His Blood, in order to be saved. The phraseology is so strong, the terms so forcible, that comment seems idle. The language is so expressive of the doctrine of the Eucharist that one who believes in Holy Writ can scarcely doubt of its being taught: *And the bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world... Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. . . He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh, my Blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live*

by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me (John vi. 52 et seq.)

It is asserted by Protestants, contrary to every true canon of Scriptural interpretation — gratuitously asserted, it must be said — that by eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ nothing more is meant than believing in Him, believing in His Body and Blood. Flesh and blood are not objects of faith; no rational man can be persuaded that our Lord, palpably standing before the people in the flesh, would take such unusual pains to convince them of His corporal existence, which no man there doubted. They, indeed, believed too literally that He was no more than flesh and blood, and this was their sin.

Protestants are of opinion that our Lord's words must be taken, figuratively; the Catholic Church and all the Eastern denominations maintain that the words are to be understood in their natural, literal sense — that we must partake of the Holy Eucharist in order to obtain salvation.

In order to solve this difficulty satisfactorily it becomes necessary to ascertain if the phrase "to eat and drink" had a figurative meaning. Because, if we depart from the literal, plain meaning we must adopt the figurative sense according to the usage of language. If we examine

the Scriptures and all Eastern languages we will find that the figurative meaning was to persecute a man to death, to inflict a grievous injury by calumny. It was unique and settled. Thus the Psalmist says: *While the wicked draw near against me to eat up my flesh (xxvi.) Why do you persecute me . . . and glut yourselves with my flesh?* (Job xix. 22). Then there was no alternative between the partaking of our Lord's Body and Blood and an odious, sinful signification which no sane man could think of adopting.

Every prudent speaker and writer will express himself in the plainest manner, so as to be easily understood, and to avoid the use of any odious terms or harsh expressions calculated to raise unfavorable prejudices in the minds of his hearers or readers against his doctrine. If Jesus Christ did not teach transubstantiation He not only erred against this axiom of common sense, but He led the Jews astray and buried the world in idolatry; for the Christian world generally adores the Blessed Eucharist as the ever-living God, as Christ. He insists on the necessity of *drinking His Blood*.

The drinking of the blood of even clean animals was prohibited by the

(To be Continued)

Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

(Continued from March)

We also live at a time in which the words of Christ are verified: "And because iniquity will abound, the charity of the many will grow cold" (Mt. 24: 12). In this loveless, selfish, old world, our divine Saviour allows the warmth of the love of His divine heart to shine forth in order to thaw the ice that incrusts the hearts of men, and thus to produce a new spiritual spring of vigorous love of God and neighbor. What St. John the Evangelist told St. Gertrude at the end of the thirteenth century, our Saviour Himself repeats in other words to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque at the end of the seventeenth. He tells her that the revelation of the devotion to His Sacred Heart is one of the final effects and efforts of His love; that He intends, by means of this devotion, to give the Christians living at the end of the last epoch of time a special dower by giving them an object and a means to animate once more their love for Him.

Despite the cooling of love among Christians, our Saviour has, then, not ceased to be our Friend. On the contrary, He wishes to give a new proof of His love, especially in

these our times, by the revelation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. "Behold I stand at the gate and knock." Shall we turn our Saviour away, our best Friend, our noblest Friend, our omnipotent Friend, who is ever ready to help us? He desires our love, our poor, weak, small heart in order to give us in exchange His own so rich with all the treasures of the divinity. Is this not an advantageous exchange? In other matters we are quick to seize on anything which makes for our advantage. Why not in this?

3. *What is it that prevents us from complying with the wish of our best Friend, and cultivating the devotion to His Sacred Heart?* If our Lord were to appear to us visibly, and captivate us with the charm of His personality, we would be impressed and drawn to Him as were the thousands who followed Him into the desert, and, despite hardships and hunger, remained with Him for days. But we do not see our Saviour, we do not hear His voice; for us He is only a rather vague picture reflected from the distant past. Ah, if we could but once see Him with all the fascinating attractiveness which He displayed when He walked among men!

Our Saviour, however, thinks otherwise. He terms especially blessed those who do not see and yet believe (cf. Jn. 20:29). He tells His apostles that it is expedient for them that He go, and that they see Him no more (cf. Jn. 16:7). The reason was that they were too much preoccupied with His external charm; while it was His intention that they should penetrate to the sentiments of His heart, and that they should make these sentiments their own. St. Paul, the apostle, designates the fact that he has ceased to know Christ according to the flesh as a great advance (cf. 2 Cor. 5:16). The thing that matters, then, is to understand and make one's own the sentiments of Christ. We must cultivate the mind of Christ Jesus (cf. Phil. 2:5). Similarity of sentiments is of the essence of friendship.

Or is it true that friendship is based on attractive features and a beautiful figure? No! Friendship is an affair of the heart. Duplicity may lurk beneath a captivating exterior, and an elegant body does not always house a noble soul. That which makes a friend a friend is faithful, generous love. Such love is by its very nature invisible. We can come to a knowledge of its existence only from outward signs; frequently we merely surmise or conjecture its presence. But these conclusions, conjectures, and surmises are at times deceitful, and later cause

bitter sorrow to one who has relied on them. Such a contingency is excluded in friendship with our Saviour. We do not see Him with the eyes of our body, but we know Him with the eyes of faith. Stronger than the universe is His love. His infallible revelation manifests this love to us, His immutability vouches for its unshaken firmness, His omnipotence guarantees its unfailing efficacy. The love of Jesus has never yet permitted one who remained faithful to be put to shame. Hence, St. Peter says so joyously: "This is your joy, your unutterable and glorified happiness, that you love Jesus Christ, whom you have never seen; that you believe in Him, whom you have never beheld. Your reward will be the salvation of your souls, the eternal inheritance of heaven" (cf. I Pet. 1:8). We do not see our Saviour; yet the certainty we have of His love is greater than any certainty based on the testimony of our senses.

Let us honor His heart, and give Him our hearts. Then between our heart and His a communion of life will result that will effect inner experiences, which are indeed invisible, but which will, if we prove faithful and the love of God continually grows within us, nevertheless disclose a higher, more glorious world than the world of sense round about us; a spiritual world, which, however, is no less real than the invisible air we breathe. A

new, vital atmosphere will envelop us, and impart new energies to our souls and to our minds a freshness as of youth, which age cannot dim, so that they will spread their wings as the eagle and soar to the heights where is God. For what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? ... Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever" (Ps. 72:25, 26).

Let us renew our heart at the heart of our Saviour. Let us be devoted to Him as to our best Friend. Let us become one heart with Him. No one can be near a fire and not be warmed. The heart of Jesus is a furnace of the purest, holiest love. The more intimately we unite ourselves to Him, the more intensely this love will burn in our hearts and consume all impurities. The purer our hearts become, the more the friendship of Jesus will make us happy as only the love of God can make one happy. Heart of Jesus, burning with love for me, enkindle my heart with love for Thee.

CHAPTER II

Our Noblest Friend

"But to me Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable" (Ps. 138:17).

We speak at times of a noble heart, a true heart, a generous heart. What

meaning do we attach to the word "heart"? Obviously, we do not mean the physical heart, for nobility, fidelity, generosity are properties of the soul. They are manifested in the soul's higher spiritual life. The heart, therefore, of which we predicate spiritual properties, is the life of the soul. But in modern phraseology the word "heart" signifies the interior life insofar as it consists not merely of cold processes of reasoning, but also insofar as it includes desires, wishes, love; that is, those acts influenced by the will. We often say: "This person is an intellectualist without a heart," for we predicate a heart only of one who has warmth, and the warmth of the soul is love. It is love, then, both the love of desire and the love of benevolence, with all its various activities and tendencies, which constitutes that heart to which we assign good or bad, laudable or blamable properties.

This figurative language is in entire conformity with Holy Writ. There we read of a hardened heart that has become as hard as stone (cf. Job 41: 15), of a bad and deceitful heart (cf. Eccus. 3:29; 36:22), of a blinded heart (cf. Mk. 6:52); also of a wise heart (cf. Prov. 18:15), of a good and perfect heart (cf. Lk. 8:15), of a pure heart (cf. Ps. 50:12), of a happy heart (cf. Eccus. 51:20). Of the first Christians we read: "They were of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). Even God, who is a

pure spirit, speaks of His heart (cf. 3 Kings 9:3).

Man, of course, is not a pure spirit. His body participates in all his vital activities. It is a fact of experience that there is an intimate relation between the physical heart of man and strong spiritual emotions. Great joy, deep grief, love, hate, and anger affect his heart so that its pulsations are strengthened and accelerated or weakened and retarded. A strong, healthy heart makes for determination, character, cheerfulness; while an ailing heart may be the cause of discouragement and excessive sensitiveness. This intimate interaction between the physical heart and the spiritual life of man is the reason why we apply the word "heart" to the spiritual realm and represent love, of its nature invisible, by a physical heart. This is also true of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, in which we venerate the love of our Lord under the symbol of His human heart; in a word, it is friendship with our Lord. When God says to us: "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. 23:26), He is demanding our love. When Jesus points to His heart and says: "Behold this heart, which has loved man so much," and demands our hearts in return, the meaning is simply this: "I wish that you would love Me, as I love you; I beg you, let us be true, faithful friends." Devotion to the Sacred Heart, therefore, is essentially a very

perfect friendship between the soul and its Savior.

How many friendships there are in the world which are of little or no profit and whose one purpose seems to be to implant and foster the low ideals, the evil passions of one in the other. Evil company corrupts good morals. If evil is the bond of union that joins two human hearts, it may be called friendship by the same token that theft may be called work. The outer shell is there, but in place of a sound kernel we find mold. Friendship, therefore, stands for something noble and ennobling. Consequently, we must proceed with great caution in choosing our friend, for if the proverb: "Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are," is true of ordinary association, how much truer it must be when applied to one's friends. For through friendship two hearts become to a certain extent but one heart in their views and aims. We have here not only a certain conformity, the product of all human relationship, but a real unification of thoughts and desires. The prophet's condemnation of the Israelites when they began to love false gods is applicable to a man who takes an evil person for his confidant and gives him his friendship: "They became abominable, as those things were, which they loved" (Osee 9: 10). Those, however, who love God, the Apostle says, are one spirit

with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).

This explains at once the great significance of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The heart of Jesus symbolizes the innermost life of the soul of Jesus; hence, to practice devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to participate in the sentiments of Jesus; is to become identified with the heart, the wishes, the intentions of Jesus; is to cultivate a lender friendship for Jesus. Ah, if we could only grasp what it means to rest on the heart of Jesus, to enter the sanctuary of this Sacred Heart, to drink of the fountains of grace ever streaming from it, to become intoxicated with this holy love, to be able to say with the Apostle: "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

2. All creatures, be they men or angels, are good only insofar as they participate in the goodness of God. "No one is good but God only" (Lk. 18:19), are the words of Christ Himself. God only is good in Himself; He only is essentially good just as He alone has being in Himself. Everything that exists besides God is of itself nothing. Nothing, however, cannot be good. God, indeed, calls all creation good, but only insofar as He has made it so. "And God saw all things that He had made, and they were very good" (Gen. 1:31). Compared with God, heaven and earth and all they contain are as nothing. "And they

are counted to Him as nothing and vanity" (Isa. 40:17).

But if we consider moral excellence or holiness, then God is the thrice holy, while man is deceitful (cf. Ps. 115:11), untrustworthy, inconstant. Of course, we admire many men for their exceptional moral qualities, but none of them have these of themselves, they have all received them from their Creator, "all wisdom is from the Lord God" (Ecclus. 1:1); "He is the guide of wisdom and the director of the wise" (Wild. 7:15) who gives power and strength (cf. Ps. 67:36); those that presume of themselves He humbles (cf. Jth. 6:15).

All our moral strength and goodness come to us from God through our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who has become for us God-given wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). This is why our Savior tells us: "He who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit" (Jn. 15:5), fruit of holiness and of eternal life. The purpose and aim of the devotion to the Sacred Heart is to unite us ever more intimately with Jesus so that we may draw from Him in ever-increasing measure the strength to bring forth good fruit. One who cultivates this devotion according to the intention of our Lord does not rest with a consideration of the external words and deeds of Jesus, but penetrates to the root of

them all, namely, the sentiments and intentions of His Sacred Heart. He strives to become an intimate friend of Jesus, a friend from whom no mysteries of love are hidden, a friend with whom Jesus speaks heart to heart.

To rest at the heart of Jesus means to rest at the fountain of all holiness, and to drink from it at pleasure deep draughts. Then if the old proverb is verified in us: "Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are," how happy we shall be! Since all created holiness comes from God, what shall we think and say of the holiness of this Sacred Heart? Because of the hypostatic union, the relation of this Sacred Heart to the Divinity unspeakably surpasses the union with God of even the greatest saints, of the Blessed Virgin herself. In the whole realm of creation there is not another heart so truly the noble heart of a friend as the heart of Jesus; indeed, there is not one that even remotely approximates His. This is the reason why the friendship of Jesus exerts an ennobling influence such as no other friendship can.

In order that we may call a heart truly noble, it is necessary above all else that it be not an abomination in the sight of God because of serious moral deficiencies. What is hateful to God cannot be truly noble, no matter how attractive external appearances may be. God's

judgments are trite; appearances, deceptive. The greater the purity of heart, singleness of will, intentions, desires, the nobler such a heart appears in the eyes of God, who sees in it a masterpiece of His grace, a work that immeasurably surpasses all the grandeur and beauty of the sensible creation.

How pure is the heart of Jesus? So pure that a more exalted purity is inconceivable in a created being. The humanity of Jesus is united in one person to the Divinity. There are not two persons, God and a man, but only one divine Person, who has both the divine and human nature, who operates divine works through His divine nature and human works through His human nature. Because of His divine nature Jesus does all that His heavenly Father does (cf. Jn. 5:17); because of His human nature He performs external and internal acts like other men. He became like unto us in thought, desire, and act, sin alone excepted (cf. Heb. 4:15). The Divinity excludes sin as something absolutely contradictory. Sin is rebellion against God, enmity with God, separation from God. But God cannot rebel against Himself, be at enmity with Himself, separate Himself from Himself. Hence, there can be no sin in a divine Person. Yet if the humanity of Christ were capable of sin, there would be sin in a divine Person. This is impossible. Therefore the hypostatic union

brings about such an opposition to sin that sin itself becomes an impossibility. This is why the Apostle says of Jesus: “(He is) holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). Jesus Himself demanded of His enemies: “Which of you can convict Me of sin?” (Jn. 8:46.)

‘We must not imagine, however, that the holiness of Jesus is a static condition like the holiness of a baptized child. Between the heart of Jesus and the Person of the Divine Word, there is uninterrupted communication. The divine and the human perceptions of Jesus are in perfect harmony; the human and divine wills will one and the same thing. A tide of love continually pours forth from the Divinity into the human heart of Jesus and from there surges back again with all its force to the Divinity. Between the heart of Jesus and the divine personality there is never for a moment the slightest discontinuity or interruption in the continual thought about, the eternal love of, and the constant living for one another. True, the same may be affirmed of the blessed in heaven but in a far lower degree. No saint becomes one person with God. Christ alone is both truly man and the Second Person of the Trinity. Each of the blessed receives a definite measure of beatific knowledge and love according to his works. Only the heart of Jesus

receives the gifts of God without measure; God gives Him all that a mere creature as creature is capable of receiving (cf. Jn. 3:34, 35), the purest holiness, the most profound comprehension of God, the most ardent love of God.

Does the Sacred Heart possess these treasures of grace for Itself alone? No, for of His fullness we have all received grace for grace (cf. Jn. 1:16). Jesus invites us, saying: “If any man thirst for holiness, let him come to Me and drink. . . . Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (Jn. 7:37, 38), “water that springeth forth unto everlasting life” (cf. Jn. 4:14). No human friendship on earth has such power to ennoble as the friendship of Jesus. In the heart of Jesus we find the personal love of God which communicates its holiness and graces to our hearts; it lifts our hearts above all unworthy ambitions and draws our desires to eternal, infinite treasures; it makes saints of us if we submit to its guidance. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque says: “My loving Master has informed me that He greatly desires to be loved by men. Moved by this desire, He has determined to manifest His Sacred Heart and to open unto men this treasure house of love and mercy, this treasure house of all the graces which lead to salvation and perfection. He has determined to enrich beyond calculation all those who love and honor Him with all their strength and strive that He be loved and honored by others.” Are we perhaps

so abundantly blessed with spiritual treasures that we do not need the treasures of this divine heart? Remember, the self-sufficient rich will go empty away; but those that hunger, who are sensible of their misery, and who seek relief for their spiritual wants in the heart of Jesus, will have their fill.

Let us seek the friendship which Jesus offers us. Without love no human heart can be happy. We certainly can find no more worthy or more salutary object of love than Jesus Christ. Let us enter this heart open for all those who truly wish to love. Let us love Jesus with the love which we draw from His divine heart, and we shall be re-created into a living image of His divine beauty.

Full of love and confidence, let us go to the heart of Jesus. When the queen of Saba came to Solomon, heard his wisdom, and saw his treasures, she exclaimed: "Blessed are thy men, and blessed are thy servants, who stand before thee always" (3 Kings 10:8). How much happier we are, for a greater than Solomon is here, as Christ Himself has told us (cf. Mt. 12:42). Here no mortal man speaks sounding words to the ears of our body, but the eternal Son of God speaks words of heavenly wisdom to our souls; here we are not merely shown earthly treasures, but the incorruptible treasures of eternal life are bestowed upon us. Hence, we must say in the words of the Breviary:

"Since we have now come to the heart of Jesus, we will not permit anything to separate us from It." O Lord, we wish to be mindful of Thy heart, to rejoice and be glad. O Most beautiful Jesus, wash me from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sins, so that purified by Thee I may approach Thee, the all pure, and live in Thy heart all the days of my life. Many saints have found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus a sweet and beatific resting place. Why do we not care to enter and to enjoy the same experiences that they enjoyed?

Perhaps you will say: "If I were a saint, I, too, would find all my happiness in the Sacred Heart but there are my sins, my many and great sins — how dare I approach a sanctuary that is so resplendent with purity?"

We must put aside such fears, for they are without foundation. Did not our Lord say explicitly that He came for the sake of sinners? (Cf. Mt. 9:13.) Is Jesus one of those who say: "Touch Me not, for I am holy"? Think of the woman who was known as a public sinner and who, full of the deepest contrition, cast herself at our Savior's feet as He sat at dinner in the Pharisee's house. The Pharisee, indeed, thought: If Jesus only knew what manner of woman that is, He would not permit her to touch Him. But the judgment of Jesus was very different: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much" (cf. Lk. 7:36 ff.).

There are two classes of sinners, the hardened and the contrite. Hardened sinners may not approach the heart of Jesus; they do not wish to be friends of Jesus. Repentant sinners, however, who have sought absolution from their sins in the sacrament of penance, will find the heart of Jesus open to receive them. If the thought of our sins tends to keep us away from the heart of Jesus, let us take courage and not only cast ourselves at the feet of Jesus like Mary Magdalen, but with a holy recklessness let us enter the very sanctuary of His heart and with fervent petitions implore there, at

the source of all moral excellence, ever-increasing freedom from sin, ever nobler sentiments, and more energetic striving after heavenly things. At the heart of Jesus we will recover from weaknesses and grow strong in energetic love; our heart will daily become nobler because of its friendship with the noblest of all human hearts. Thus we will reflect the glory of the Lord and become daily more perfectly transformed into His image from glory to glory before the face of the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). Then we will experience in our own person how highly the friends of God are honored.

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