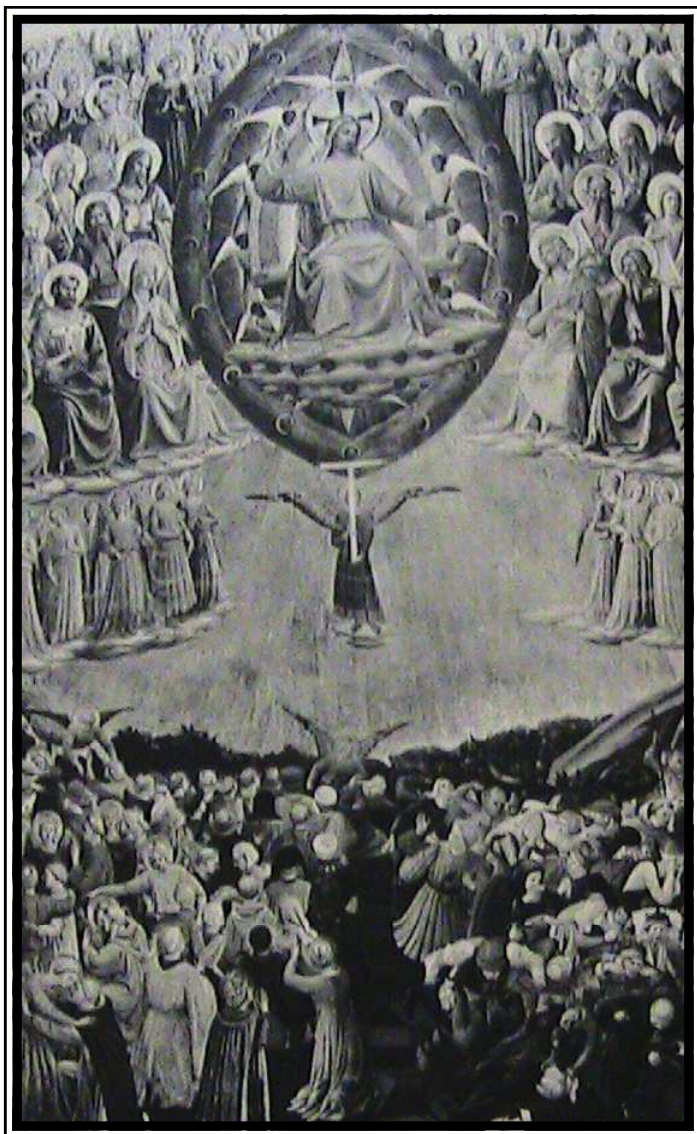


THE SERAPH

November 2013

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The Last Judgment

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Poor Souls & End Times

November brings to mind the poor souls and the ending of the Liturgical year. With the ending of the year our minds begin to contemplate the end of this world. For many, it seems to be a gloomy time of year and the thoughts of the poor souls and the end of this world are rather morose ideas. Those who have died from this world live on in another; and we also will die in this world only to enter another life. If we have a firm faith that God in His mercy will forgive us and that He has, or is finding our penances acceptable, then there is truly nothing sullen in our contemplation of these things. On the contrary, the thought of heaven should fill us with joy.

Truly, we do not have a perfect assurance of having obtained God's mercy, or that our penances (if we are doing them) are sufficient. We can say the same about our departed loved ones. This can be gloomy, but then we find that there is a place of purgation in the next life for all those who have been blessed so as not to die in mortal sin. Though the pains and suffering of the poor souls is not to be

downplayed (saints tell us that the fires of Purgatory are the same as those in Hell), there is a joy in Purgatory because they know that they are purifying themselves so that they may be able to enter Heaven in the future.

If we could only understand this here and now, we would not be so lax in doing penance. We would see the need and justness for mortifications and truly be thankful, diligent, and happy to do them now. As our hearts go out to our dearly departed we, likewise rejoice that if they have been spared Hell, they are either now in Heaven or will be after they have been purified. It is in this spirit that we pray for them and offer the Sacrifice of the Mass for their aid and relief.

The end of this world though, may still feel oppressive. We read of so many evil things that are to happen before the end, and dread those days. Our Lord has promised that those days will be shortened for the sake of the elect. In this we have much to be grateful for. The temptations will be strong, but we are reminded of God's words to St. Paul, "My

grace is sufficient for you.”

This month we are reminded more than ever to pray for the departed souls, and to beg for the grace of final perseverance both for ourselves and our loved ones. May we consider that, all things work for the good of those who love God, and in this find a spot of light and joy in the devotions and liturgy of this month. Instead of dread and fear let us fill our hearts with contrition, faith, hope, and charity. In this manner we will be able to say with St. John: “Come Lord Jesus, Come!” We will find ourselves

eagerly awaiting the day when we may see God directly and enter into the joys of Heaven.

With these thoughts, may we put to rest the darkness and sin, and lift up our eyes to Light and Grace, filled with joy and hope.

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Lenten address to the faithful of Our Lady of the Rosary

From the desk of Bishop Bonaventure Strandt, OFM:

February 27, 2013

Dearly Beloved Children of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

May the grace of God fill your souls with abundant peace. Today I write to you with many thoughts in mind, and many cares and anxieties for your immortal souls. Saint Augustine once said concerning a most important writing that God would help him, despite the apparent difficulties. I trust in the same God that he did; and so I am confident that the Holy Spirit will both aid the message to be written, and to be received, all with the same love that prompted it to be composed.

Among the titles of honor that you bear in the sight of the holy angels is that of “children of God”. In the Mass that was celebrated moments ago on this Feast of St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, the Gospel depicts Our Lord embracing the children, even though the disciples were angry with the parents who desired their children to be blessed by the Messiah. Our Lord not only embraced and blessed these children by laying His sacred

hands upon them; he proceeded to teach us that unless we become like those little children, we will never enter into the joys of the Kingdom of Heaven. His words were: “Suffer the little children to come unto Me.” What are the qualities of this child-like state that God so eagerly seeks from us? To be certain, it is impossible for us to remain as tiny in body, or undeveloped in mind, since God has given such a wonderful natural course of development to our lives. Jesus here speaks of a powerful spiritual reality: remaining a child of God always, no matter our age or bodily condition. This involves practicing some of the attributes of good and virtuous children, especially those of prompt obedience and faithful love. A good child hears the voice of father and mother and obeys the simple commands. A good child does not argue, and does not complain or cause any pain to the parents whom God has given them to guide and teach with divinely instituted authority. Remember that even within the structure of the human family, God’s law demands that right order is kept; and God has truly invested parents

with some of His own power.

It is worthwhile reminding ourselves just exactly how much power is contained in many of the things that we do as Catholics. For example, the devout recitation of the Holy Rosary in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament is one of the most powerful actions that can possibly be performed by human beings. When it is prayed thoughtfully in public, it gains even greater merit for ourselves, and for the aid of this sinful world. Next to the Mass, the Rosary is the most powerful of all prayers, since the Blessed Virgin has been especially endowed with all of the graces of Heaven, in order to dispense them according to her good pleasure. You know quite well that this “Crown of Roses” is a most forceful weapon in destroying vice and conquering all of the evil powers of hell. Now I ask you to bear in mind the very name of this parish: because many profound truths are contained in names. This church has for its patroness the Holy Mother of God under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary. Stop to think upon what this means. Our parish is named after the Mother so pure, so gentle, so kind, and so full of loving compassion. When the world was being ravaged

by heresy and every form of evil, Our Lady gifted the world through Saint Dominic with the Rosary, promising to overcome every evil by praying daily this most beautiful prayer, and placing devout trust in her fruitful protection. Even the very demons who wage wars against us have been forced to admit, against their will, that they are vanquished and completely overcome by the sheer force of the graces that flow when the children of Mary offer this prayer of love. And so, you must all remember that it is the Most Holy Virgin Mary who holds a principle place in this parish, which means that our conduct should be proper at all times, in order to honor the most honorable Queen of Heaven.

It is imperative that I remind you all of these profound realities, because, as Pope Saint Leo the Great announced more than 1,600 years ago: “Wherever the most good is being done, there you will find Satan attempting to work the most malice and evil. He knows exactly how to tempt each and every individual soul.” Yes, my dear children in Jesus Christ, Satan attempts to destroy many things here in our parish, and not only because he is the sworn enemy of Almighty God. He works his many evil designs for other

reasons as well, and perhaps we are in need of a solemn reminder of just what is at stake in our battles with the forces of evil. I ask you to ponder for a moment the great number of children around you, souls who are capable of becoming strong in virtue and models of holiness. There are tender infants who do not yet know the slightest taint of evil desire. There are souls among you who have, as Our Lord declares, “angels who always behold the face of My Father in Heaven.” Yes, some of the tiny ones who cause their little distractions of noise and commotion, actually have a far superior place to us in the eyes of God. Have you never stopped to look deeply into the eyes of a little child who has not yet attained the age of reason? You can almost see the splendor of Heaven in the clarity and purity of those little eyes. The spiritual reality is that the Holy Innocents, and their counterparts here on earth, little children, are far holier than any of us who may believe ourselves to be holy. We must bear in mind just exactly how receptive these precious souls are to ALL of our influences upon them. When a child hears angry words, a strong impression is made upon the mind and soul. When a child

sees adults routinely in a state of fear or strife, the child inherits this unhealthy atmosphere. Truly, I cannot monitor every conversation, nor could I ever hope to calm each storm of discord that the devil raises up among our ranks. There is one thing, however, that I can and must do: I beseech you all, for the love of Jesus Christ Crucified, to consider with all carefulness how deeply your own conduct affects the lives of the little ones around you. The souls of the innocent are so precious in the eyes of the Lord that He was forced to make great threats against those who would scandalize them through evil example.

I bring you now to a most critical consideration, and one that concerns each and every soul here present. The Holy Spirit teaches us in the Book of Wisdom that “by your words you shall be known.” It is an undeniable truth, from God’s own admission, that whether our words are for good or for evil, we will be known by them. Most especially during the penitential season of Lent, we should be preparing our souls to be known as holy by both God and men, through our good and pleasant speech. **Words of peace should prevail in our minds.** Or, as Saint Paul has left us with an eternal reminder: “Insofar as you are able, be at peace with all men.” Now, how could we ever consider

ourselves incapable of preserving a peaceful bond of unity among ourselves, when we receive the Precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus here at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? With God, all things are possible. Yes, the human heart can be very cold and, to my great sadness, even at times hardened towards fellow Catholics. Nevertheless, I am confident in the holy protection of the Virgin Mary, and the prayers of the children to correct many things which need not even be spoken aloud anymore. It is sufficient to say that Our Lord demands forgiveness, just as well as he demands the act of seeking forgiveness. Even the words of the Psalms reassure us in this endeavor towards ongoing peace: “Behold how good and how pleasing it is for brothers to dwell together as one.” And does Our Lord not remind us in the Holy Gospel: “You are all brothers”?

The holy Apostle Saint James, as you are surely well aware, warns of the dangers of evil speech. He calls the tongue a flaming fire, and a dangerous weapon that kills so many souls. It is, as he describes it, like the rudder of a ship. Yes, truly, it is a tiny instrument, but how necessary! If the tongue regrettably begins to steer the soul off course with sharp, malicious, or envious words, it will not be long before the

soul is shipwrecked, and entirely ruined after smashing against the rocks. All of the sorrows that accompany abusive speech could be rectified and soothed so very easily. How do you suppose this could be? Yes, it is as simple as you are thinking it to be: the practice of the holy virtue of religious silence. To put it much more bluntly: keeping our mouths closed. No, it is not necessary, or even possible, to take a vow of silence like a Trappist monk. You could not survive very long that way in the lives you have now. Religious silence, however, is one that is deliberate, and causes us to carefully consider what we are about to say, especially concerning another soul. You will never realize how difficult a virtue it is to obtain until you attempt to practice it. And yes, we are correctly called “practicing Catholics”, precisely because we have many things yet to learn and to develop. Keeping in mind that charity is the highest and most perfect of all virtues, we will make great strides in loving God more perfectly when we guard carefully the powerful faculty of speech. I would pray for a similar experience as that in ancient Rome, when Christians were known quite simply by their high degree of mutual love. Any pagan, no matter how bitterly opposed to Jesus Christ, was compelled to admit the simple truth: “See how they love one another.”

Since every one of us is in need of a teacher of religion, I am offering one to you for the remainder of this Lenten season. He will illuminate your mind with great clarity and marvelous insights into the mind of God. In fact, he walked with God for many years; personally, and walks with Him still, now for all eternity. He is the Holy Apostle Saint John. I am making a formal request of the parishioners of Our Lady of the Rosary, whom I love so dearly, to open your Bibles and read the Gospel according to Saint John. Read also his Epistles, which are so short and yet so full of divine life. His emphasis, of course, is upon love. In desiring nothing but an increase in the amount of love in each one of your hearts, I commend your souls into the guiding hands of the Apostle of Love. In this way, by the time Good Friday approaches, the Passion according to Saint John will have a new and greatly deepened meaning for all of you. Then we will begin to understand more perfectly how this one Apostle, and only this one, was able to boldly stand beneath the Cross of Christ without fear and without hesitation. Nothing in this world could keep him from staying with the Lord, because of his great unifying love for Jesus.

Many of you have most happily
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expressed already a great desire to learn more about the Holy Scripture, and now you have an answer that places you not only in the guidance of the Apostle of Love, but also in obedience to a most gentle invitation from your shepherd. Do not forget that the general practice before reading the Scriptures is to invoke the Holy Spirit with the simple indulgenced prayer "Come Holy Ghost...". Did you know that we are also granted an indulgence of 5 years for simply reading the Gospels a mere 15 minutes daily? Most Bibles still have in the preface section the encouragement of Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII, for the faithful to read with delight the words of life. After all, Our Lord showed us in Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent, that not by bread alone do we live, but "by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God." So how can we expect to live if we do not know the words of life? This is simple enough for everyone to understand. Or, as Saint Jerome so wisely stated: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Jesus Christ." That is indeed a challenging statement. Let us all endeavor to know Our Lord well by learning His most holy words.

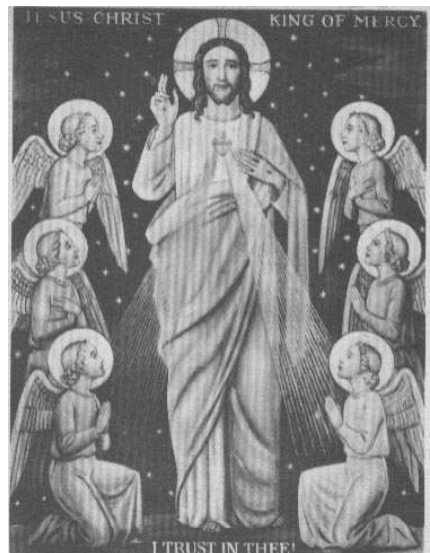
There is one final word of caution that

I am strictly obligated to offer to you, and to warn you about. The duty of every Catholic is to recognize that a priest stands in the place of God. He has been not only chosen directly by the Holy Spirit, but has also been anointed with holy oils and gifted with many graces and badges of honor to mark the most sacred dignity of his priesthood. The Council of Trent clearly remarks how important it is to show respect for the holy priesthood. Surely, no one can avoid the fact that God has chosen mortal men to discharge these most holy duties of preaching, baptizing, absolving, and offering the most sublime Sacrifice of the Mass. This is the will of God, and it is simply for us to obey, by showing every mark of reverence and respect for our pastors. It must be said to you clearly that although you may not always agree with the member of the hierarchy whom God has placed over you for your own good; you are nonetheless bound by sacred obligation to respect and obey Father Bernard in all things that pertain to the governing of the Church. There is no room for misunderstanding here, dear faithful, as disrespect and disobedience is constantly responsible for the damnation of multitudes of souls. You must keep in mind at all times that Father Bernard stands in my place as your pastor, since I am not always with you. The priest is ordained as the direct and closest assistant to

the Bishop. Let it be known that to disrespect Father is to dishonor your Bishop, and to cause grief to your Father's heart. Remember the words of Saint Paul "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit...remember with what a great price you were purchased." This price, my dear children of God, is displayed for you constantly in the striking image of the Crucified One which now hangs above the altar for your loving consideration.

Rest assured of my prayers for your faith to increase, your hope to grow strong, and for your love to overflow. May the Holy Mother of God guard your hearts and minds in all things.

Your Shepherd in Christ Crucified,
Bishop Bonaventure Strandt,
OFM



Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

Continued

About the year 1286, Edward I appointed Fr. John of Stamford, who had been chosen for the archbishopric of Dublin, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and later he sent him as ambassador to the imperial court. This same king placed such confidence in the loyalty and discretion of Fr. William of Gaynesborough, that in 1295 he sent him together with Fr. Hugh of Manchester to the King of France, in order to settle some disagreement concerning English territory in Aquitaine. Later, Fr. William, who had meanwhile become Bishop of Worcester, was again employed by Edward in negotiating the marriage between the Black Prince, the heir of the English throne, and Isabel, the daughter of Philip the Fair of France.¹ Repeatedly, in the course of Parkinson's narrative, we find the names of Franciscans whom the kings of England selected as their confessors and advisers.

After the civil war, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, a great disaster befell the friars. We

mention this incident only to show how little they cared for royal favors when truth and justice came in question. When it was rumored that Richard II, who had been dethroned and murdered, was still among the living and ready to reclaim his throne, the friars credited the report and openly espoused his cause. This so exasperated the usurper Henry IV of Lancaster, that he had several of their number cast into prison. When Fr. Richard, guardian of Leicester, was asked by an official what he would do if the dead king were really alive, he answered that he would fight for him till death. This bold reply cost him his life. Subsequently, eleven more friars were imprisoned and executed for the same reason. After matters had cleared up, however, and Henry IV realized that the Franciscans had acted in good faith and from the start had been willing to acknowledge him their king provided Richard were dead, he reinstated them in their former favor and gave orders that they should be no longer molested, for the stand they had taken.²

1 Ibidem, pp. 98, 125.

2 Ibidem, p. 185.

In 1235, and again in 1240, the provincial of the English Franciscans received a letter from the Pope urging the friars to use their influence in behalf of the crusade's; and in 1254, Pope Innocent IV appointed two of their number to collect subsidies for the Holy Land.³ In fact, the Popes not less than the kings repeatedly employed them in this noble cause. Again, how high they stood in the estimation of Church and of State dignitaries, we see from the fact that so large a number were vested with episcopal dignities in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Italy. Parkinson brings the names of at least thirty-five friars who became bishops. Of these, the most distinguished for sanctity, learning, and influence was Fr. John Peckham, whom Pope Nicholas III appointed Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England. In 1246, Fr. John Anglicus became papal legate in England with full powers over all prelates of the realm. A few years later, this same office was held by Fr. John of Kent and by Fr. Adam de Marisco. In 1441, the Holy See granted Henry VI permission to have Franciscans reside constantly at court and to send them to foreign rulers on

important State affairs. During the Exile of the Papacy, Fr. Thomas Travesham and Fr. Walter Cotton, two men of exceptional learning, were summoned to Avignon by Benedict XII and appointed papal plenipotentiaries.⁴

In their loyalty to the Church and their zeal for the propagation and preservation of the faith in England, the Franciscans did not entirely forget the foreign missions. As early as 1238, Fr. Adam of Exeter was sent by Pope Gregory IX to preach the gospel among the Saracens; but he died before reaching his destination. In 1337, a certain Fr. William, likewise of the English Province, suffered cruel martyrdom for the faith at the hands of the Saracens, at Salmastre in Persia. Finally, in 1392, Fr. Roger of England, engaged on the missions among the Tatars in Asia, was sent by the Vicar Apostolic to the Pope to solicit more missionaries.⁵

When John Wyclif was perverting England by his heretical teaching, the Franciscans of Oxford were among the first to oppose him. Learned theologians assembled at Oxford in 1381, and Fr. John Tyssington, a leading doctor of

3 *Annales Minorum*, Vol. I, an. 1235, num. 27; an. 1240, num. 20; Vol. II, an. 1254, num. 42.

4 Parkinson, pp. 67, 72, 199, 154, 155.

5 *Ibidem*, pp. 41, 154, 180.

the university, was foremost in condemning Wyclif's doctrine regarding the Blessed Eucharist. The following year, on May 18, an ecclesiastical court was held at Blackfriars in London. Here again five Franciscan doctors of Oxford and Cambridge were among the signers of the twenty-four conclusions against the heretic. After the death of Wyclif, Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, held a convocation at St. Paul's in London, and publicly condemned the eighteen heretical propositions which Fr. William Woodford had drawn up from Wyclif's famous *Trialogue*.

Equally zealous in this affair was Fr. Thomas Wolward. Finally, when a second synod was held at St. Paul's, in 1408, to check the spread of the heresy, Fr. William Butler was chosen to preach before the distinguished assembly.⁶

Volumes could be written on what the English Franciscans achieved in the field of letters. We must confine ourselves to a few facts and names. "The English nation has given to the Franciscan Order a greater number of eminently learned men than all the other nations taken together. Yes, if we consider only the leaders of

6 *Ibidem*, pp. 178, 181, 182, 183, 191.

the Minorite schools, they all with the exception of St. Bonaventure belong to England."⁷ Beginning with Oxford, almost all the friaries erected before 1254 had their school. In that year, the province numbered 33 or 34 lecturers, a fact which, as Felder points out, seems to imply that most of the friaries at the time were in need of them. Wood's incomplete catalog registers 67 Franciscans who had been public professors at Oxford before 1350; and according to another catalog, 72 had been similarly engaged at Cambridge before the middle of the fifteenth century.⁸ All these were doctors of divinity, while many of them exerted immense influence as regents and chancellors of the two universities. Again, English Franciscans were summoned to teach at foreign seats of learning. "Lyons, Paris and Cologne," writes Brewer, "were indebted for their first professors to the English Franciscans at Oxford. Repeated applications were made from Ireland, Denmark, France, and Germany for English friars."⁹

Under their influence, theology and philosophy as well as the

7 Felder, p. 316.

8 Parkinson, pp. 28, 62.

9 *Monuments Franciscana*, Vol. I, Preface, p. LXXXI.

liberal arts were, not only greatly promoted, but also turned to practical account. Parkinson remarks that many English friars wrote commentaries on Sacred Scripture. And Brewer finds it remarkable “that the friars, the most ardent upholders of scholastic theology, are precisely the men who constitute the most popular preachers of the age.” The friars were the first to treat medicine and physics empirically; they gave a new impulse to higher mathematics; while by their zeal for the classics, they paved the way for the Christian Humanism of the subsequent Renaissance period.¹⁰ English friars were also instrumental in founding Baliol College at Oxford, Pembroke College at Cambridge, and a lecture hall at Paris. It was probably through their efforts that the art of printing was introduced at Oxford as early as 1463, and that, in 1474, the works of Duns Scotus were printed and published for the first time in England.¹¹ “In the thirteenth century,” says Digby, “the Dominicans and Franciscans surpassed all their predecessors in zeal for writing

¹⁰ Felder, pp. 412 seq.

¹¹ Parkinson, pp. 77 seq., 205.

and collecting books.” At an early date, the Franciscans had two libraries at Oxford, one for the brethren and another for the secular professors and students of the university. Many of the volumes had been bequeathed to them by Bishop Grosseteste, while the large number of Greek and Hebrew works had been purchased from the exiled Jews.¹²

Among the English Franciscans who were esteemed as profound and influential scholars, Ven. John Duns Scotus and Fr. Roger Bacon undoubtedly hold the place of honor. The former, known as the Subtle Doctor, is the founder of the Franciscan school of Scholasticism. But he is chiefly revered as the Doctor of Mary. When the question of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin was dividing the most eminent theologians of the time, it was he who boldly proclaimed this prerogative of the Mother of God — a doctrine which some 550 years later was solemnly declared a dogma of the Catholic Church. Fr. Roger Bacon is justly styled the father of experimental philosophy. As his numerous writings amply testify, there was literally no

¹² Digby, *Mores Catholici*, Vol. IV, p. 139; Parkinson, p. 59.

field of science that he did not cultivate. In the natural sciences, he was far in advance of his time. At the unveiling of a statue to his memory, five years ago, a speaker declared this distinguished friar to be "one of the most eminent as well as one of the most mysterious men that science has produced." It is related that for some marvelous invention of his, he was accused of witchcraft. The friar readily submitted the case to the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome. Needless to say, he was found innocent of the charges; whereupon the Pope publicly exonerated him, adding that his "only fault was being wiser and more knowing than others of his time."¹³ Fr. Haymo of Faversham, at the command of Gregory IX, revised the Roman breviary and missal. Fr. Alexander of Hales, the teacher of St. Bonaventure and of St. Thomas, was the first to systemize Catholic theology. Whatever may be advanced to discredit the name of Fr. William Occham, every historian will agree with Holzapfel in reckoning this friar among the greatest scholars of the Order, on account of the far-reaching influence he exerted on higher learning. The first noteworthy

¹³ Parkinson, p. 111.

encyclopedia of the Middle Ages, entitled *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, was compiled by Fr. Bartholomew, surnamed Anglicus. It was the standard work down to the sixteenth century and was translated into several languages.¹⁴ Fr. John Somer was probably the first to visit the north pole and to measure the lands there with his astrolabe.¹⁵ One of the most influential advocates for the restoration of Catholic unity in the Church during the Great Western Schism was Fr. Nicholas Fackingham.¹⁶ Of the many Franciscans who, besides those already mentioned, deserve special notice, we select a few; viz., Fr. Henry of Oxford, Adam of York, Ralph Rose, John of London, Hugh of Newcastle, John Canon, Adam of Lincoln, Thomas Eccleston, John Hilton, Richard Middleton, John Lathbery, Robert Colman, William Goddard, Robert Finningham, John Kynton, and

¹⁴ Holzapfel, pp. 229, 288, 289, 276. Regarding Fr. William Occham, see *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, Vol. VI.

¹⁵ See *Franciscan Annals* (Pantasaph, England), Vol. XLIII, pp. 90 seq.

¹⁶ Parkinson, p. 188. See also *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, Vol. I, pp. 577.600.

Henry Standish. All these were doctors of divinity and eminent writers on Catholic theology and philosophy.

Such then was the activity of the English Franciscans prior to the Reformation, as widespread and vigorous as it was salutary and providential. “The English Franciscans,” Parkinson justly declares, “were no lazy drones, but active good religious men, and spent their time well, to the edification of their neighbor, as well as for their own improvement. Some of them indeed were wholly taken up in contemplation and prayer, but others in study and in teaching, others in preaching and instruction, and assisting

the people in both spiritual and corporal works of mercy, others in writing out the labors of their learned brethren and all principally, in the constant exercise of religion and a fervorous tendency towards Christian perfection.”¹⁷ Cherished by high and by low, they had decked the shrine of St. Francis with the flowers of sanctity and the laurels of learning. Now the time was at hand when they should gather in also the palms of martyrdom and join the glorious ranks of those “who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

17 Parkinson, Preface, p. V.

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Sacramentals

Bishop Giles O.F.M

God has given us seven sacraments to aid us in all the important states of our lives. These sacraments give grace of themselves as long as we do not place obstacles in the way of grace. It is impossible for us to please God without these sources of His grace. "Men must be born again of water and the Holy Ghost" if they are to be children of God and pleasing and acceptable to Him. This is the door or the key that opens heaven up to us. We must also remember that, unless we worthily receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist we cannot have any spiritual life within us. Etcetera.

Each of the sacraments proves themselves necessary for us. God does not create useless things. As wonderful and great as the sacraments are, we seem to be forever in need of something more. Our Holy Mother the Church has come to our aid with countless prayers and sacramentals to which she has attached some of the merits from her treasure accumulated by the saints.

Catholics easily forget the

potency and worth of these various sacramentals. We find however that there is always something that will appeal to every person regardless of his position or station in life. Some of the more common sacramentals are: holy water, rosaries, scapulars, palms, ashes, etc. We often forget that the Church can and does bless everything for our use. Our children, homes, cars, food, etc. can and are blessed by the Church to make them all spiritual helps for us.

We are also given many indulgenced prayers and devotions. The sign of the Cross, various prayers and ejaculations, novenas, etc. all open up to us great aid for our souls.

The sacraments with their great value should be more than enough, but because of our weakness we are given these countless aids for our souls. We cannot have the sacraments at hand all the time but, we may always have a sacramental on our person, or an indulgenced prayer or ejaculation in our hearts. These things make it easier for us to comply with the command to pray without ceasing or to pray

always.

With every temptation we should have a ready arsenal of sacramentals cleaned and ready for battle through constant use. The demons with their nefarious suggestions are easily put to flight by a Catholic who truly believes and makes the Sign of the Cross, or makes use of Holy Water, etc. The constant practice of praying and using sacramentals also builds up our resistance and stamina. Having done battle with ourselves and the world, fighting the devils off comes rather quickly and naturally. If we neglect these great weapons we will find ourselves growing weaker and weaker, until there is no longer any fight left within us.

Our constant prayer needs to be for God's protection and aid. We need to always remember to beg the grace of perseverance. Only those who persevere to the end will gain eternal life. Many have started out well, yet ended badly. And many started out badly but ended well because they prayed right up to the last.

How often have we come forth from our prayers or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass having not truly prayed? We were present and our lips uttered the words,

but our hearts were far from God. Or we sometimes pray with doubt and hesitation. We pray as Our Lord taught us with faith and confidence, but then hesitate and draw back lest we be found presumptuous, or proud. We vacillate back and forth and never truly pray. We ask then retract the petition. In this inward battle with ourselves we are constantly hindered from praying well.

If we ask for the grace to persevere to the end we will have no need to hesitate or doubt. If we ask that God's will be done, or that we may know and execute God's will for us, we can pray with full confidence.

God desires that we approach Him with confidence as a child approaches his father with the confidence that his father will give him what he asks. Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father," to impress upon us our relationship to God. He wants us as humble, yet confident children to approach our Father. It is not because of any merit or worth on our part. It is simply because God so desires us to approach Him in this manner. Christ took upon Himself our nature, so that we may have this position and so it is in His Name that we are

to ask our Father for all that we need or desire. "Ask the Father anything in My Name and He will give it to you."

The saints that we honor are now in Heaven because they have prayed. They have prayed with confidence and trust, as well as with faith and humility. They are in Heaven because they have persevered right up to the very end. They are now enjoying the blessings of these prayers.

The promises of God should have been enough for us, but because of our weaknesses our Holy Mother the Church has attached some of Her precious jewels to various prayers and sacramentals to further entice us to approach God in this manner. Our prayer books are troves of treasure just waiting for us to gather up and fill our own souls so that we may enter into the Heavenly castle well adorned with the best of wedding garments.

Sadly most Catholics leave these treasures troves just to lay there as they would the dust in the corner of the room. Many Catholics find no reason to take up the scriptures and read the Words of God, so it should not shock us that so many are negligent in taking up the indulgenced

prayers and sacramentals that the Church offers us.

The Church has been given the power to loose and to bind. She holds the keys of Heaven in Her hands. From the infinite merits of Christ's sacrifice as well as the merits of so many of the saints, the Church distributes as She will for the greater honor and glory of God in time and in eternity. Let us come to Her for the Sacraments that God gives to us through Her; and let us take up the sacramentals and indulgenced prayers She has prepared for us. In this manner we will give honor to God, The Church, The Saints, and to ourselves.



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Franciscan Saints

NOVEMBER 5

THE FEAST OF THE RELICS

Preserved in the Churches of the Three Orders

The custom of paying respect to the remains and relics of the martyrs and other saintly persons who have departed this life dates from the earliest ages of Christianity. The Christians always sought to secure the remains of the martyrs at any cost, for they considered them more precious than gold and jewels, as we read in the ancient acts of St. Polycarp. They risked even their lives to rescue such relics from the hands of the heathens. They enclosed them in precious containers and preserved them in their churches. They were placed beneath the altars, so that the holy sacrifice of the Mass might be said over the bodies of those who had sacrificed their lives for God. To this day the Church prescribes that relics of the saints be enclosed in the altar stone.

When in the eighth century the heretics opposed the veneration of the sacred relics, the second ecumenical council of Nice defended and approved it. The Council of Trent declared

against Luther and his followers that the bodies of the martyrs and other saints, which were the living members of Jesus Christ and the temples of the Holy Ghost, and which will one day rise to eternal life, should be held in honor by Christians.

The Franciscan Order has always held in high veneration the bodies of members who shed their blood for Christ, or ended this life in the odor of sanctity. The hallowed bones of the first martyrs of the order were brought to Spain from Africa, and entombed in Coimbra amid solemn festivities. It was this festive observance that awakened the call to the order in the heart of St. Anthony of Padua. In order to render fitting veneration to the body of our holy Father St. Francis, the magnificent triple church was built at Assisi.

But not only were precious metals and lifeless stone to express this veneration; rather, the ardent devotion of fervent souls was to bear witness to it.

That is why the special feast has been instituted in honor of those saints whose relics repose in the churches of the three orders of St. Francis. For, after all, it is the saints themselves whom we honor when we venerate their relics.

ON THE VENERATION OF SACRED RELICS

1. Consider why the relics of the saints are deserving of veneration. The Council of Trent tells us: These hallowed bones were once the living members of Christ and true temples of the Holy Ghost, for they who once dwelt in them were intimately united with Christ as their Head, and bore about in themselves the Spirit of God in the life of grace. With these members the saints fought and suffered for Christ and the Church. Their merits have increased the treasury of the Church, of which we partake through the communion of saints and by means of indulgences. At the resurrection, they will be resplendent in glory. — Do they not deserve our veneration?

2. Consider how God Himself honors the relics of the

saints. By means of them He frequently works miracles, as Holy Writ testifies in both the Old and the New Testament. The body of a deceased person was placed in the grave of the prophet Eliseus, and “when it touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life and stood upon his feet” (4 Kings 13:21). The Acts of the Apostles relate of St. Paul (19:12) that handkerchiefs and aprons touched to his living body were applied to the sick, and “the diseases departed from them and the wicked spirits went out of them.” Thus the confidence which the faithful place in touching the relics of the saints and in visiting their tombs is fully justified. In order to safeguard the confidence of the people, Mother Church has taken wise precautions against abuses in the matter. No relics may be exposed for public veneration without the approval of the bishop. Above all, relics may never be sold, even if only the price of the mounting is paid; a measure calculated to prevent unworthy bargaining and its companion vice of fraud in so holy a matter.

3. Consider that the lifeless remains of the saints also have salutary lessons for us. They encourage us and point out to

us the right road to a glorious resurrection. These hallowed bones were once members of weak mortals such as we are; what they could do, we also can do. Their sacredness does not depend on whether they were members of beautiful bodies, were adorned in rich garments, and dwelt in palaces, nor on whether they abode in lowly huts and were poor and unsightly. These members did not serve sin and sinful pleasure, but practiced justice, penance, fraternal charity, and piety. -- Only then will our bodies rise to a glorious resurrection if they

have served God in this way. “Many of these that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach” (Dan. 12:2).

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Increase, O Lord, our faith in the resurrection, Thou who dost work wonders with the relics of Thy saints; and grant, that we may one day share in that immortal glory, whereof we venerate the pledges in their ashes. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



The Death of St. Francis

Our Catholic Culture and Heritage

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines culture as “*The behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought, especially as expressed in a particular community or period.*”

The same dictionary defines heritage as “*Something passed down from preceding generations; tradition.*”

Both of these ideas represent in perhaps the fullest sense the entirety of the Catholic’s world. All of those things which we do as a Catholic have been given to us from past generations in such a way that it seemed as natural as our parents passing down customs from our deceased grandparents and beyond.

For so many generations this culture and heritage was, in fact, interwoven into our Catholic fabric. It was, indeed, the very essence of who we were. Our Catholicism was NOT separated from our nationalistic or racial backgrounds. It did what it was meant to do. The Deposit of Faith formed our lives in such a

manner that it formed a common thread beyond all borders and languages. Our lives were enriched and elevated to a sphere that exceeded those periods of barbarism or paganism from which most of us came.

There are a decreasing number of people who understand the connection between Christianity and civility. History clearly records how the monks of Europe (mainly from Ireland) returned the European mainland back to, first, civilization, then to Christianity after the fall of the Roman Empire.

There are also countless times when men and women left their native homes to go to lands far away in distance and culture from that which was familiar to them. These Catholics sacrificed their lives to establish the Catholic Faith and Culture in otherwise pagan lands.

A growing number of mindless voices have, in recent years, issued their “pastoral condemnations” of these same men and women, stating what amounts to “long-term scars” which have been

inflicted upon these “poor, helpless” souls. They actually believe their godless droolings, stating these people would have been far better not to have had the Catholic missionaries convert them to the One, True Faith. Apparently, it was the True Faith which left these people in a lonely, desolate situation!

All of this is, of course, nonsense. Let’s take once recent example to prove these anti-Catholic “non-historical revisionists” wrong!

There were several African countries which were colonies of Catholic European nations. The longer these countries remained as colonies, they prospered accordingly. Some of the effects of the Catholic school systems can still be seen today, some fifty years after their “independence.” How often have I crossed paths with black Africans who have come to this country and within the span of a short conversation their excellent education and good manners are witnessed? Compare these fine people with those who attended the American pagan public school system. This is a present day example between the civilized and the barbarians – and America is supposed to be a role model for the world?

Within the last few years we have heard Joseph Ratzinger tell us that we should no longer be concerned with converting the Jews. More recently, Jorge Bergoglio in an interview with *La Repubblica*, Italy’s largest circulating daily newspaper, stated, “*Proselytism is solemn nonsense; it makes no sense.*” Proselytism is the anti-Catholic word for conversion. He, like his heretical predecessors are no longer concerned with converting the world to the One, True Faith. To take this thought to its logical conclusion, they would rather see a world filled with pagan barbarians who have been told they believe in the same god as do True Catholics. Did someone say something in the past about “*if you tell a lie long enough, people will begin to believe it?*”

Since the 19th century there are two errors that have turned our Catholic Culture on its head, or to put it another way, our beloved Faith has been undermined and the public and private effects have been nearly destroyed!

The error of Americanism began to water down the Mission of the Church in the 19th century when the American clergy began to “go

along to get along.” The proper interpretation of this fatal error is that the Catholic episcopacy in the United States began to compromise. They were less concerned with converting non-Catholics than is called for in the Catholic Church.

They found different ways to “go along,” one of which was to name a university with that of the city where it was located, instead of a holy patron. A few examples will demonstrate the point: Seattle University, Seattle, WA; Niagara University, Niagara Falls, NY; Georgetown University, Washington, DC; University of Dallas, Dallas, TX and Dayton University, Dayton, OH.

One does not need to wonder why the founders of such universities named them after the corresponding cities. It would certainly seem to be based in their desire to fit into “American” life rather than profess their faith to the world around them.

Apparently, Fr. Juniper Serra, OFM in an earlier era had no problem with naming several Missions which later became well-known cities after saintly models of the Church along the West Coast of the U.S.!

The effect of such a decision was to compromise with secularism, which was raging across many fronts in those years in the aftermath of the Masonic French Revolution. Further still, it continued to dilute the Catholic Culture. The reader must understand that our culture involves all aspects of life, not simply attending Mass on Sunday and receiving the Sacraments.

The heresy of Americanism was so pervasive in the 19th century that Pope Leo XIII condemned it in his encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae* in 1899. Here is a small, but essential part of the message sent specifically to James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore who was, perhaps the main promoter of this error.

“The underlying principle of these new opinions is that, in order to more easily attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teachings more in accord with the spirit of the age and relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions. Many think that these concessions should be made not only in regard to ways of living,

but even in regard to doctrines which belong to the deposit of the faith. They contend that it would be opportune, in order to gain those who differ from us, to omit certain points of her teaching which are of lesser importance, and to tone down the meaning which the Church has always attached to them. It does not need many words, beloved son, to prove the falsity of these ideas if the nature and origin of the doctrine which the Church proposes are recalled to mind. The Vatican Council says concerning this point: "For the doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed, like a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity, but has been delivered as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ to be faithfully kept and infallibly declared. Hence that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually

to be retained which our Holy Mother, the Church, has once declared, nor is that meaning ever to be departed from under the pretense or pretext of a deeper comprehension of them."

- Constitutio de Fide Catholica, Chapter iv.

It is not known by this writer if there was a concerted effort by the American bishops to correct this problem, but what is known is that there remained an "Americanist" spirit which exists to this day. The effect has been through the years that Catholics in the United States have been spiritually infected by a Masonic-Protestant mentality. The effect has been an ever pervasive indifferentism which was present prior to the Modernist Revolution in the false council of Vatican II.

(To be continued)

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Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER VII

A Wise Friend

*“Christ Jesus, who has become
for us God-given wisdom”*

(1 Cor. 1:30).

One of the advantages of friendship is that in our friend we have one to whom we may turn for advice **even in embarrassments of a secret nature, which we should not care to reveal to anyone else.** No one is so self-sufficient that he never has need of advice. The greater the good that is at stake, the more desirable is wise counsel. What goods are greater than those eternal treasures on which our ultimate happiness or unhappiness depends? And yet the path that leads to them cannot always be easily and surely found. Many, yes, very many, have gone astray because they relied too much on their own discretion. Hence, the Holy Ghost warns us: “Have confidence in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not upon

thy own prudence. In all thy ways think on Him, and He will direct thy steps. Be not wise in thy own conceit” (Prov. 3:5-7). And the Apostle writes to the Romans: “... condescend to the lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits” (12:16); do not cherish an idle, self-sufficient confidence in your own judgment, but open your hearts to good advice. This is the same doctrine that our Lord taught when He repeatedly emphasized that self-sufficient conceit prevented the scribes and Pharisees from entering the kingdom of God: “I praise Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them to little ones” (Mt. 13:35). God does not hate wisdom and prudence which really deserve the name, but He does abominate that false, proud, complacent, worldly wisdom which deems itself in no need of counsel and direction.

Wise direction is especially necessary in the spiritual life, because a threefold obstacle makes

discernment in spiritual matters exceedingly difficult. In the first place, we live in the midst of others who profess and follow principles different from our own. Now, it is hard, in fact well-nigh impossible, not to be influenced by our surroundings. Hence, every man is to a certain extent a child of his age and is influenced by its views and aims. However much these aims and views may change in other matters, in one respect the majority of men, whom our Lord designates as the *world*, never changes. They are always opposed to the doctrine of Christ; harbor only hate and ridicule for its followers, and continually taunt before them the principles of independent thought and material progress as the only ones worthy of man. Do we not daily hear from a thousand quarters that we Christians are a backward race, a pitiable group of stultified idiots? We need not marvel at this attitude of the world, for it has been predicted by our Lord (cf. Jn. 15:18 ff.). Nevertheless, it is difficult to live in the pestilential atmosphere of false principles without becoming contaminated.

The second obstacle to a truly Christian philosophy and conduct of life originates with
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those whom St. Paul calls, "the world-rulers of this darkness" (Eph. 6:12). These spirits are the rulers of that world which is inimical to Christ, and which, consequently, is still sunk in the darkness and shadow of death. Masters of deception, they are very adept in implanting in our hearts those plausible shibboleths which their votaries so constantly din into our ears. They follow their leader, Satan, the master of all liars (cf. Jn. 8:44). If we are not careful, if in our pride we rely too much on our own wisdom, we shall succumb to these suggestions and imperceptibly adopt views and principles directly opposed to Christ. Hence, St. Peter warns us to be on our guard against this adversary, who continually goes about seeking whom he may devour (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). This spirit, according to St. Paul, is active in all the children of unbelief (cf. Eph. 2:2), whose wisdom is foolishness with God (cf. 1 Cor. 3:19).

The world and the princes of this world, the evil spirits, have a powerful ally in our nature with its inordinate impulses and undisciplined passions. The law of our members, which is opposed to the law of our mind (cf. Rom. 7:23), darkens our intellect and

prompts us to hold desirable that which in reality is detestable. Our disordered inclinations make us blind whenever there is question of objects that cause us either pleasure or pain. Since many things forbidden by God are pleasant to our fallen nature and it is painful to carry our cross daily after the example of our Saviour, we seek pretexts to avoid the one and to attain the other. Consequently, under the cross-fire of the false principles of the world and the deceptive promptings of the devil, our souls are in danger of suffering serious harm. However, we must not become discouraged; we have a wise Friend, who can counsel us in all dangers and difficulties, and who will never deny us His assistance if we go to Him with confidence.

2. Heart of Jesus, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, have mercy on us! Thus we pray when we recite the Litany of the Sacred Heart. In the heart of Jesus dwells the personal, divine Wisdom, which pours into the humanity of Christ the fullness of knowledge. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory — glory . . . full of

grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). One man only could say without blasphemy, "I am the truth" (Jn. 14:6). In Christ Jesus there is no error or ignorance, but only the clearest knowledge of the past, present, and future. He knows our thoughts, wishes, desires, resolutions, intentions, words, and deeds. He knows the difficulties and temptations with which we have to contend, and sees how energetically or negligently we strive against them. No pain that we endure is hidden from Him; He is at our side to see whether we carry our cross after His example with resignation and courage, or whether we murmur and complain and only unwillingly keep to the way of the cross. Our Saviour sees all of us individually as if that one were the only object of all His attention. No necessity compels Him to interrupt even for an instant this contemplation. Day and night His gaze rests upon us; nothing, great or small, escapes Him.

And how could it be otherwise? We confess: "I believe in Jesus Christ, who will come to judge the living and the dead." Our Lord said: "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but all judgment He has given to the Son" (Jn. 5: 2), because He

is the Son of man (cf. Jn. 5:27); for since He is the Redeemer of all, it is fitting that He should demand an account from all of how they have used the grace of redemption. For this reason, He commanded the apostles, as St. Peter emphasizes, "to preach to the people, and to testify that He it is who has been appointed by God, to be judge of the living and of the dead" (Acts 10:42). "Then will He render to everyone according to his conduct" (Mt. 16:27). He will judge not only external deeds (cf. Mt. 25:35 ff.), but all words (cf. Mt. 12:36) and thoughts. For the thoughts of the heart are the source of all sin (cf. Mt. 15:19); the external act is sinful only insofar as it proceeds from an evil heart, and good only insofar as it proceeds from a good heart. Our Saviour's answer to the blasphemies of the Pharisees makes this plain: "You brood of vipers, how can you teach good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man from his good treasure brings forth good things: and the evil man from his evil treasure brings forth evil things" (Mt. 12:34, 35). When our Lord will come to judge, He "will bring to light the things hidden in

darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of hearts" (1 Cor. 4:5).

What conclusion must we draw from the fact that our Saviour is judge of the world? Since He is a just judge (cf. 2 Tim. 4:8) and His judgments are just (cf. 2 Thess. 1:5 ff.), and since He renders to all the proper things according to their works (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10), it follows that He must possess an accurate knowledge of all our thoughts, desires, and deeds with all their circumstances; for no man can judge justly in a cause of which he knows nothing. Hence our judge says of Himself: "And if I do judge, My judgment is true" (Jn. 8:16). "I am He that searches desires and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works" (Apoc. 2:23). Consequently, our Saviour knows us through and through, our internal as well as external deeds; He watches over us constantly, nothing escapes His vigilance, and nothing is forgotten.

3. *Our Saviour watches over us during our sojourn here below not as our Judge but as our Redeemer.* "I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (Jn. 12:47). The judgment comes only after death (cf. Heb.

9:27). Here below the wisdom and knowledge of the heart of Jesus is a treasure on which all who fly to Him confidently as to their friend may draw in all doubts and difficulties. Jesus is the light “which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world” (Jn. 1:9) who wishes to be enlightened. If we stand in need of the light of life — and we all do — let us go to Jesus, and pray with the Church: “O Jesus, Light of salvation, enlighten the depths of our souls.”¹ If He, who is light personified, is our Friend, we cannot stray in darkness.

Of course, our Saviour has appointed human teachers and counselors whose direction we may and should follow. He has given the teaching body of His Church the greatest authority that it may infallibly point out for us the path to salvation. He has given us in His priests, and more especially in our confessors, guides of souls endowed with a special grace of office to lead the souls confided to their care to sanctity and beatitude. Hence, to maintain that it is possible to conduct the business of salvation immediately and exclusively with our Saviour and to dispense with

these human aids is erroneous and opposed to the doctrines of Christ. One who is not willing to make use of the ordinary means instituted by Christ will wait in vain for extraordinary assistance; one who wishes to guide himself by his own prudence is certain from the start that he who leads is no wiser than he who is led; one who condemns the external means appointed by Christ and wishes to be guided by inner experiences alone, throws the door wide open to the worst deceptions. No, anyone who wishes to be interiorly enlightened by Christ must first become an obedient child of the Church. When our Saviour first revealed to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque the devotion to the Sacred Heart, He insisted repeatedly that she was to be scrupulously obedient to her ecclesiastical superiors and was to follow faithfully the advice of her confessor.

But if we are possessed of such a truly Catholic habit of thought and action, we may boldly ask and expect that the wisdom of His divine heart will grant us light and strength in all the obscurities and difficulties of life.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, explains how the activity of Christ is correlated with

¹ “O sol salutis, intimis, Jesu, refulge mentibus.” In Lent at Lauds.

that of His ministers. He writes: I have sown the seed of faith in your midst by my preaching, Apollo has watered it by his advice and admonitions; but the increase comes from the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 3:6). All external preaching of men would be useless if grace did not enlighten men interiorly. St. Augustine has well said: "The Master Who teaches is within; Christ teaches, His inspiration teaches. When His inspiration and His grace are wanting, external words are spoken in vain."² This is the doctrine, too, which Christ impressed on His apostles when He said: "Without Me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). It is an article of faith that the grace of God is necessary for every salutary thought.³ The teaching of the Church, the advice of directors of souls avail nothing without the grace of God.

In times of temptation, however, there is ordinarily no one to advise and help us but Jesus. Frequently doubts and difficulties arise which must be solved at once before we can ask anyone for advice. The application of general principles to particular cases, the wise

weighing of all circumstances, is not always easy. Unless we be enlightened by grace, we shall certainly make mistakes. An ancient council of the Church teaches: "Whenever we consider well, and avoid faults and sins, we do so because of grace."⁴ We ought to pray daily: "Lead us not into temptation," that is, do not permit us to succumb to temptation. Our Lord tells us that we ought always to pray, and not lose heart (cf. Lk. 18:1).

We are all beset by difficulties. Human friends often fail to advise us correctly for the simple reason that they are unable to do so. Our divine Friend is always prepared to give advice, and does so willingly to all those who earnestly and in all confidence turn to His Sacred Heart. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque compares His divine Heart to an exhaustless fountain whence "flow love and light for those perfect friends whom He wishes to unite to Himself, in order to communicate to them His wisdom and principles that they may devote themselves heart and soul to glorify Him." Our Saviour does not use audible language in speaking to us, but rays of internal illumination. By these He

2 St. Augustine, In *I Joan. Tract.* 3, n. 18.

3 Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion*, n. 180.

4 Conc. Arausic., II, can. 9; Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion*, n. 182.

makes all: things to appear as they really are: material goods in their nothingness, heavenly treasures in their splendor, sin in its ugliness, virtue in its excellence. He teaches us in such wise that we are not satisfied with merely knowing, but that, as St. Prosper well says: "We strive after those things that we formerly avoided, love those that once we hated, hunger after those things which before caused us nausea; in fine, transformed by a wonderful change, the things that were hidden are made manifest to us; the difficult is made easy; the bitter, sweet; darkness, light."⁵

The instruction which our Saviour imparts is without parallel; it dispenses with all external arguments and yet is more effective than human eloquence. The Prophet Isaias:

5 St. Prosper, *Contra Collat.* c. 7, n. 2.

had prophesied of the future kingdom of God: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isa. 54:13); and Christ affirmed that this prophecy found its fulfillment in Himself (cf. Jn. 6:45). He is made unto us wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30). If we possess this wisdom, we are rich in life-giving knowledge, far beyond anything that the *world* can comprehend. For this is "the unsearchable riches of Christ" whose breadth transcends the limits of the universe, whose length extends through all ages, whose height reaches up even unto heaven, whose depth is the abyss of the divine mercy in our regard (cf. Eph. 3:8-18).

Let us then fervently and faithfully worship the heart of Jesus, and we shall abundantly draw from this fountain the waters of salvation unto eternal life.

**THE MAKING OF A GOOD WILL OR TRUST:
HAVE YOU REMEMBERED GOD?**

**LET YOUR BLESSINGS
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