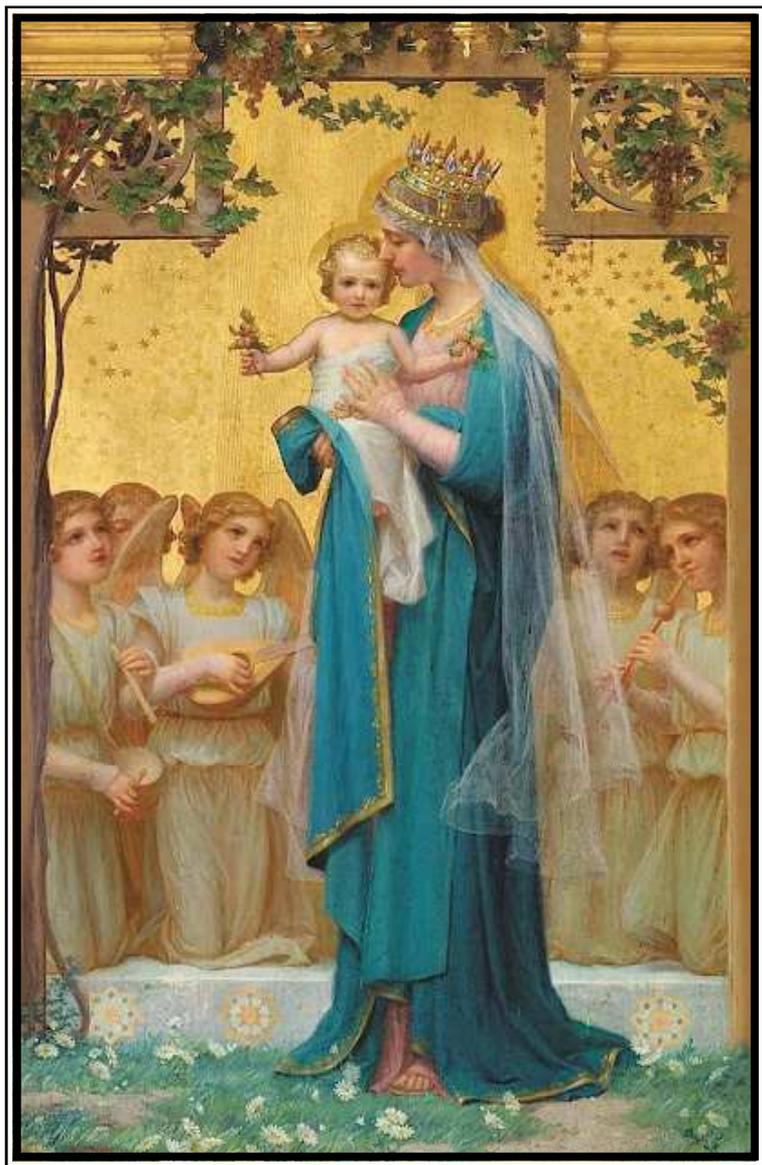


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The SERAPH defends the authentic doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and the moral values upon which Godly nations were founded.

The SERAPH stands opposed to any and all heresy, particularly as manifested in today's heresy of Modernism. It holds to the principle that good will without truth is a sham and that truth without good will is a shame.

The SERAPH seeks to serve and unite in spirit all Roman Catholics faithful to tradition and all men of good will for the betterment of society according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

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Baptism of Blood and Desire

Baptism of Blood and Baptism of Desire have been a very intensely debated topic for many years among those who claim to be true Catholics. Still it seems there is no end to the number of those who desire to keep the argument going. The lack of a true pope to definitively put this debate to rest, has kept those on the side of heresy in business denouncing the true belief as heresy. There are many self-made “religious” and “theologians” all too eager to do their online “research” and publish their discoveries for the rest of the world. These souls apparently do not believe that there is any need for the order and discipline of the Church.

Every Catholic once knew that he could not publish anything concerning doctrine or morals without the approval of his bishop. Everyone also knew that to become a true religious, one must apply, be accepted, and make vows in an approved religious order from approved representatives of that religious order. While we are on the topic, every Catholic also knew that every priest must be under a bishop. We see that the majority of those who call themselves “Traditionalists” completely disregard all of this. The “Traditionalists” have thrown all order and discipline out the window. In doing so, they unwittingly

condemned themselves to the error of anarchism. Their own “private” interpretation of all things has given them a well-known Protestant type liberality, where they are all beyond any instruction or correction.

For all the readers of THE SERAPH, we remind you that you must avoid reading the “publications” (dealing with doctrine or morals) of everyone that does not have the approval of your bishop. This is not something new. It is something that every Catholic once knew. Not exposing ourselves to the filth of heretics is the first step in avoiding being contaminated by them.

The “Boston Heresy” (denial of Baptism of Blood and Desire) is greatly promoted by the followers of Rev. Father Feeny. Their principal argument is an undeniable doctrine of the Catholic Church: “There is no salvation outside of the Catholic Church.” They can quote very many sources for this position, and there is no denying that it is a profound truth or reality.

The problem lies hidden in the fact that for almost every rule, there is an exception. The saints have provided us with instances of unbaptized catechumens having died, yet having received the effects of this sacrament because they truly desired it. Likewise, there are instances of those who have shed

their blood for the Love of God; which we are informed provided the effects or the grace of the sacrament that they had not yet received.

Baptism of Blood and Baptism of Desire are not sacraments. The name given them is perhaps a bit misleading because of this. There is only one baptism – not three. Baptism of blood and desire are given the adjective “baptism” because they produce the effects of baptism, not because they are a true sacramental baptism.

Baptism with water is the normal and natural means that God has established to wash away sin and to incorporate men into the Mystical Body of Christ – The Church. Every person that is to be saved must receive this sacrament or at least the effects of this sacrament. To not seek the reception of this sacrament in a timely manner is a proof of the lack of desire for the sacrament. The heretics often accuse us of saying that Sacramental Baptism is not necessary because all one has to do is say they desire it and they have it. This is foolish talk. Apparently, their heresy has blinded them to simple logic. If I desire something, I am not satisfied in just having the desire. The desire compels me to do whatever I can to obtain the object of my desire.

It seems a simple matter to point out that God accepts the desire for the deed. If God will judge a man

guilty of murder simply because he willingly entertained anger in his heart; or if He will judge a man guilty of adultery because he lusted after a woman in his heart; then it appears obvious that God does accept the desire for the deed. The desire of the heart is even more important than the actual commission of the action. If God punishes us for evil desires; it appears to be a simple matter to reach the corollary that God rewards us for good desires.

The person who truly desires baptism (not just with words, but actually desires and actively pursues this desire) has already received grace from God; and if he is impeded by death then the Church says he has obtained, not the sacrament, but the effects of this sacrament. Likewise one who lays down his life for the love of God, receives this grace too, because in the sacrifice of his life in this manner he has shown the desire to do whatever he could to please God. If he had lived, he would naturally have sought out baptism because it is his desire to do whatever will please God, whom he loves more than anything.

We must also remember that God can and does set aside the very rules or laws that He has created. We witness these as miracles. To place a strict and unmovable law by saying not even God can remit sin without a physical baptism of water, is a denial of His omnipotence.

Feast of the Purification

2 February 2014

Dear Friend,

Today's feast belongs to the Christmas Season. It is a celebration of light – Jesus is the Light of the World. According to the Law of Moses, forty days after the birth of a child the mother must present herself in the temple. Mary had completed her forty days of purification and now she came with Jesus to the temple.

Mary had no need of purification because she is without stain or sin. She fulfilled the law nonetheless, just as Jesus did in so many other things. This law of purification has been done away with in the Church and replaced with the Churching of women. This ceremony of the New Testament is not one of cleansing, but rather one of thanksgiving. The Church and the mother give thanks to Almighty God for the gift of the child that has been received.

The main focus today, however, is Jesus. His mother is present, but she is not the main focus. The holy Simeon enlightened by the grace of God, perceives immediately who Jesus is. Simeon gives thanks to God and announces his readiness to leave this world, because God had fulfilled His promise of allowing him to see the Messiah.

Every child is a special gift from

God and should be received as such. Recently, we read an account of “parents” winning a “wrongful birth” lawsuit against the doctors and hospital where the baby was delivered. The suit was because the hospital and doctors failed to tell the parents that the child was “handicapped.” If they had known the situation of the child, they would have murdered him before he ever could be born. Instead of being grateful for a living child, it seems all they can do is find fault. No amount of money will ever be able to turn back the clock so the child would never be born, or would never exist. Nor will any amount of money ever remove the difficulties that the child was born with.

In what is supposed to be a Christian nation we live and rule ourselves as Pagans or Satanists. Jesus Christ, the light of the world, has shown His light upon us, and it seems we have turned away from The Light. We have chosen darkness rather than light.

In the celebration of this feast, we are being called upon to refocus our attention upon THE LIGHT. We need to remind ourselves of Truth and Goodness. We must strive to see and follow Him. In the light of God's grace, we will see that everything is a gift from Him. We

will see that the only real evil is sin. And sin is not a material thing, but rather a spiritual one. All that God has made is good. It is the perversity of men's wills that take the good things God has given us and uses them in evil ways against God's desires. This is what brings evil and sin into the world.

Every child has an immortal soul. They are made to the image and likeness of God. Even if the world declares them to be monsters, they are nonetheless, gifts of God. Perhaps physical defects in a child are due to the evil of the parents. Scripture tells us that children will inherit the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generation. Or perhaps, the handicapped child is given to parents for the greater perfection and sanctification of everyone involved. The crosses God sends or allows us, are not always for our punishment. They may also be for our improvement and greater sanctification.

We should be grateful to God no matter what He gives us. A cross is often of much greater value and merit for us than gold and riches. We should, therefore, be even more grateful to have a cross and affliction than if we had received gold and riches. It is true what the scriptures tell us, that God chastises those whom He loves. A great cross or burden in our lives is more often a sign of God's love for us rather than His displeasure with us. A

long and painful illness is a gift for which we should be grateful, because it allows us to more closely follow and imitate Jesus Christ. Riches, more often than not, make it more difficult for us to lead good and holy lives; they tend rather to lead us away from God. We should be even more grateful for poverty or sickness than we would ever would be for riches and health.

Let us imitate the holy Simeon, and be ever grateful for all the crosses and burdens of this life, as we look forward to the great and glorious coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. His life was a long one as he anxiously awaited the fulfillment of God's promise to him. We, too, have been given a wonderful promise from God. He invites us to receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. There He will transform us and restore spiritual life to our souls. He will make us one with Him. All that will await us after this is the completion of this union in Heaven. Once we have received Him into our bodies, as Simeon received Him into his arms, may we just as readily turn away from this world as Simeon did. Let us pray with Simeon to dismiss us from this world once we have born our crosses and burdens of this life for the love of, and in the imitation of Jesus; and then have worthily received Him into our hearts and souls in Holy Communion.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

CHAPTER IV

OUTBREAK OF THE STORM

Henry's divorce and the question of papal supremacy — The Crisis — The king usurps spiritual supremacy over the Church in England — Meets with opposition from the Franciscans — Contemplates rigorous measures against them — A favorable opportunity — Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent — Her revelations and the king's divorce — Two of her adherents: FF. Richard Risby and Hugh Rich — The "public penance" — The two friars defend the Pope's spiritual supremacy — Accused of high treason — The first martyrs for the faith.

The question of the king's divorce was intimately connected with the question of papal supremacy in spiritual matters. Henry VIII had married Catherine of Aragon after Pope Julius had granted the required dispensation; and now, when the king wished to annul this marriage, he again

appealed to the supreme head of the Church as the one and only competent authority to loose the bond. What he sought, however, was not an unbiased decision for the quieting of his alleged scruples, but an annulment of the marriage for the gratification of his unholy passions. "Let the Pope pronounce sentence in my favor," he declared, "and I will admit his authority, else it shall not be admitted."¹ Already in 1532, Pope Clement VII wrote to Henry threatening him with excommunication if within a month after receiving the letter he should still refuse to dismiss Anne Boleyn and take back his lawful queen, until the papal court had passed judgment.² But the king wantonly disregarded the Pope's admonition, so that finally his Holiness, on July 11, 1533, definitely passed sentence, declaring that the marriage with Anne Boleyn was null and void, and that the king had incurred the greater excommunication,

1 Stone, Faithful Unto Death, p. 27.

2 For a copy of this letter see Dodd, Church History of England, Vol. I, pp. 288 seq.

which would not go into effect, however, till the end of September, so as to give to the king ample time for reflection.³

This action of the Holy See brought matters to a crisis. During the remainder of the year 1533, negotiations between the Roman court and Henry's agents continued. The king dreaded the impending excommunication, and urged his agents to do all in their power to prevent its promulgation. Great, too, was his disappointment, when it *was* learned that the child, which Anne Boleyn bore him on September 8, *was* a girl. From then on his affection for the ambitious coquette cooled perceptibly. From Chapuy's correspondence it appears that at this time the unhappy king suggested or even concluded an agreement with Charles V to reinstate Catherine in her rights. But political considerations stood in the way, while self-seeking courtiers prompted him to defy the Pope's threat and to take the divorce matter into his own hands. When, therefore, early in December, the papal Bull of excommunication was

delivered to him by Thomas Cromwell, he grew desperate, and the following spring had parliament pass a bill, vesting him with powers that hitherto had been exercised solely by the Pope as spiritual head of the Church, and demanding that all priests and religious in the realm defend this new royal prerogative publicly in their sermons.⁴

As Henry and his party had expected, the Franciscans soon proved as fearless and outspoken in opposing his usurped title and authority as they had been in upholding the rights of his outraged queen. While jurists and divines debated on the nature and scope of papal supremacy, the friars, directed by their holy Rule from the start, espoused the cause of the Pope. The boldness of FF. Peyto and Elstow and the effect of their action on the people had not been forgotten. Hence, they and their confreres were mentioned in particular when orders were issued to the effect that no one was to occupy a pulpit in England unless he would undertake to defend the king's supremacy.⁵ Could he but have won them over to his side,

3 For the text of this papal definition see Pocock, *Records of the Reformation*, Vol. II, p. 677.

4 Hope, *First Divorce of Henry VIII*, pp. 332, 343.

5 *Ibidem*, p. 344.

to gain the people for his cause would then be an easy matter. This thought it probably was that induced him to have the child of Anne Boleyn baptized in the Franciscan church at Greenwich with utmost splendor and solemnity. But the friars were insensible to royal blandishments when higher duties were at stake; and the king had to hear to his dismay that all over England they were publicly denouncing his rupture with Rome. Now his rage knew no bounds, and goaded on by those who had reason to hate the friars, he determined to strike terror into them and into the nation at large.

A favorable opportunity was not long in presenting itself. Near Canterbury, where the Franciscans had a friary, lived Elizabeth Barton, who seemed to be favored by Heaven with visions and ecstasies.⁶ Ever since 1525, her revelations were causing a stir, among the people; wherefore William Warham, the zealous and prudent Archbishop of Canterbury, appointed a

6 The following account regarding Elizabeth Barton is based chiefly on Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, Vol. I, chap. iv. See also Wright, *Suppression of Monasteries*, letters, VI-XIII.

commission of learned priests to investigate the matter. Of their number were two Franciscans, presumably of Canterbury.⁷ The report of the commission was favorable to the Holy Maid of Kent, as Elizabeth was called, so that when she applied for admission into the Benedictine nunnery of St. Sepulcher, nearby, the archbishop readily gave his consent. In the convent, her strange visions and ecstasies continued. What especially caused comment among all classes of society were her bold utterances on the king's relations with Anne Boleyn.

At first, Henry gave the affair little attention. But about midsummer, 1533, shortly after his secret marriage with Anne was proclaimed to the kingdom, the Holy Maid declared it had been revealed to her to go and tell him "that if he went forward with the purpose that he intended, he would not be king of England seven months later;" and added that "this punishment would be brought about, not by any temporal or worldly power, but by God alone."⁸ On hearing this, Henry became much alarmed and

7 Gasquet (p. 112) has "Father Lewis and his fellow (two observants)", on the authority of Lambard.

8 Hope, *Franciscan Martyrs in England*, p. 40.

had the “nun and those who were supposed to have advised and favored her thrown into the Tower. Among these were FF. Richard Risby and Hugh Rich, guardians of Canterbury and Richmond.

In order to delude the people and to give his proceedings the semblance of justice, it was deemed necessary to blacken the character of the Maid of Kent. Of this foul plan Cromwell and Cranmer were eager abettors. About the month of October, 1533, they subjected the nun and her adherents to a strict examination in the star chamber, and then spread the false report that the nun had signed a statement, in which she confessed her visions and ecstasies to have been a fraud to arouse popular sentiment against the king. On November 23, she and her supposed accomplices were compelled to undergo a most degrading ceremony. A high scaffold was erected at St. Paul’s Cross in London, on which they were exposed as rebels and impostors to the gaze of the populace. Dr. Capon, Abbot of Hyde, occupied a pulpit opposite the scaffold. With a zeal worthy of a better cause, he publicly defended his royal master and branded his victims as lying

hypocrites and dangerous plotters against the king and the country. The principal target of his strictures were the two Franciscans, whom he blamed as ringleaders of the whole affair, inasmuch as by word and deed they had influenced others in behalf of the nun. Thereupon, he read aloud the document which the king’s ministers had drawn up and proffered as the nun’s confession.⁹ After this public humiliation, the “penitents” were conducted past a large concourse of people to the Tower. Henry was elated over the effect of this ceremony on the popular mind. To all appearances, the people’s faith in the Holy Maid had been shaken; they were now more favorably disposed toward him.

Meanwhile, the question of his spiritual supremacy had become acute. The king was bent on silencing those who dared to oppose his usurped authority; and since the Franciscans had again been foremost in this respect, he decided to make an example of the two friars who were already in prison. Accordingly, FF. Risby and Rich were called on to hold a disputation with the

⁹ According to *Grey Friars Chronicle in Monumenta Franciscans*, Vol. II, p. 196, a similar “penance” was performed by them at Canterbury.

king's men on papal supremacy. Everything short of brutal force was employed to elicit from the friars a denial of the Catholic doctrine. But, neither promises nor threats could for a moment shake their constancy. Finally, they were taken back to prison and tortured most cruelly. Here again they steadfastly professed their faith, declaring themselves ready to suffer a thousand times more, even death itself, rather than renounce him whom, as children of Mother Church and as followers of St. Francis, they held to be the only legitimate Vicar of Christ on earth.

Henry was incensed when he heard of their unflinching and intrepid constancy. The sight of Tyburn, thought he, would make their detested confreres quail, and the blood of the Holy Maid of Kent and of her adherents would quench all enthusiasm for the Pope. But, in order to condemn them to death, it was necessary to convict them of some capital offence. Therefore, on March 12, 1534, parliament was made to pass a bill of attainder, establishing it as high treason to criticize the king's marriage with Anne Boleyn or in any way to uphold the supremacy of the Pope. Now Henry could act with impunity. Without any form of

trial, the holy nun and her party were pronounced guilty of high treason and condemned to death.

On April 20, 1534, they were fastened on hurdles and dragged to Tyburn amid the gibes of a deluded populace.¹⁰ Faint with suffering and bespattered with mud, the poor victims at last came in sight of the place of execution. On a scaffold stood the gallows with a caldron of boiling water; nearby, on a bench, lay an axe and a huge knife. One by one the martyrs were unbound and led below the scaffold. Elizabeth Barton was the first to suffer. She was hanged and beheaded. Fr. Risby was then ordered to mount the scaffold. His gaze turned to heaven, he was praying for perseverance in the hour of trial and torture, when suddenly a courier came dashing through the crowd with a message from the king. Great was the surprise of all when it was learned that his Majesty offered life and liberty to the

10 The details regarding the martyrdom of the two Franciscans we *have* drawn chiefly from Bouchier, *Hist. Peel. de Martyrio FF. Ord. Divi Francisci* (pp. 6 seq.), whom Gasquet (Vol. I, p. 150, footnote) considers an authority, since he took the Franciscan habit in 1557 and hence had occasion to gather information from those of his brethren as well as from others who had known FF. Risby and Rich.

friars if they would renounce the Pope and acknowledge the king as supreme head of the Church in England. After reading the message aloud, the presiding officer turned to Fr. Risby and began to extol the king's mercy and long-suffering. A look of celestial peace played on the countenance of the condemned friar. This was in very deed what he had been hoping and praying for. Now he could publicly profess his faith, for which he was about to undergo torture and death. He listened in silence while the officer spoke. Then raising his eyes heavenward, he exclaimed with a loud and resolute voice, "Not only will I not rebel against the authority of the Pope, but I am ready to suffer the most cruel death for Holy Mother Church."¹¹ Hardly had he uttered this heroic profession of faith, when the executioner rushed like a madman on the holy friar, rudely flung the rope about his neck and thrust him from the ladder. Instantly he leaped toward the dangling body

¹¹ From this declaration as well as from the king's offer to grant them full pardon, it would seem that the two friars suffered death for refusing to deny the Catholic doctrine of the spiritual supremacy of the Bishop of Rome in the Church. See Gaudentius, *Bedeutung und Verdienste des Franciskanerordens im Kampfe gegen den Protestantismus*, p. 28, footnote 4.

and cut the rope by which it was suspended. With a dismal thump, the body fell to the floor of the scaffold. Now a scene was enacted that can be better imagined than described. Seizing the huge knife, the executioner thrust it into the friar's abdomen and ripped open his body. All this while, the helpless victim, still living and conscious, moved his lips in silent prayer. Then the executioner thrust his sacrilegious hand through the gash he had made, tore out the still palpitating heart, held it up to the people and exclaimed in cold derision, "Behold the heart of a traitor." Finally, after extracting the entrails from the bleeding corpse and throwing them into the fire, he severed the head, quartered the body, and threw the limbs into the boiling caldron; later, they were exposed to public view on the gates of London, while the head was fastened to a pole and placed on London Bridge.

All eyes turned toward Fr. Rich when his name was called. With mingled emotions of pride and grief he had witnessed the horrible sufferings under which his confrere had passed to his eternal reward. Now it was his turn to die a similar

death for the faith. With fearless determination, he stepped forth and mounted the ladder. While the executioner was placing the rope about his neck, the noble friar made the offering of his life to God in the words of the Royal Prophet: "I will freely sacrifice to thee, and will give praise to thy name, O God: because it is good." When the officer in the king's name offered him life and liberty if he would do the king's bidding, he smiled complacently and declared that nothing in this life could separate him from his supreme Master; that, on the contrary, he deemed it a privilege to be allowed to die in defense of Catholic truth. This was enough. Without further delay, he was thrown from the ladder, cut down, and while still living subjected to the same inhuman treatment as Fr. Risby. When the executioner seized his heart to tear it out, the martyr said with a broken voice, "That which thou hast in thy hand is consecrated to God." At this, the brutal executioner smiled disdainfully and completed his bloody work.¹²

As FF. Peyto and Elstow had been the first publicly to denounce the king's wanton policy against

¹² Besides FF. Risby and Rich, two Benedictines of Canterbury and two secular priests were executed on this occasion.

his lawful queen, so now again two Franciscans were among the first to suffer martyrdom in defense of papal supremacy. Although Mother Church has not yet conferred the honor of her altars on FF. Risby and Rich,¹³ they are commemorated in the *Franciscan Martyrology*, on June 3, in these terms: "At London in England, the suffering of the Blessed Martyrs, Richard Risby, guardian of the friary at Canterbury, and Hugh Rich, likewise guardian of the friary at Richmond, who in defense of the Catholic faith, at the command of Henry VIII, King of England, were executed in a horrible manner."

¹³ That their names are not on the list of the English martyrs beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1886, is probably owing to the fact that their martyrdom antedates the formal passing of the Act of Supremacy by seven months.

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The Problem of Evil

Bishop Giles O.F.M

We all experience ups and downs in life. Our physical positions or economic positions, our emotional positions, as well as our spiritual positions, tend to fluctuate from day to day or even hour to hour. One day our economic success may bolster us up, only to be followed by a monetary downturn that weighs us down. Our emotions very frequently seem to ride on a roller-coaster too. One moment we find ourselves happy to be alive and eager to live and do things, only to experience despondency with a feeling of hopelessness or uselessness in the next moment.

Our spiritual life is likewise subject to these same undulations. We might feel the joy and love of God at one moment and be eager to do all things for Him; only to later be filled with sadness and remorse for having ever offended our good and loving God. Very often these ups and downs cross over their respective boundaries and we find that we experience the bottom of all these at the same time; and then our faith becomes sorely tried. The devils and the

world often suggest that we are fools to have any faith at all.

Our goal in this life is not to be giddy with pleasure all the time. We must seek to be moderate in all things. Virtue is in the middle course. Modesty is moderation in avoiding two extremes. For example: in dress we must avoid nudity, or a lack of covering for the body; and we must avoid extravagance, or extremeness in: cost, quantity, or style that is beyond our station in life. Modesty is the median, normal, or average that is appropriate for our current situation.

In this manner, we can apply the term ‘modesty’ to all aspects of our lives, not only dress. We must strive for modesty in our speech, entertainment, work, etc. We can study sin from this perspective of modesty. Sin from this perspective, is the abuse or misuse of something to one extreme or the other. While entertainment is good and necessary, when it is taken to an extreme it becomes an evil. We read of many who are unable to put down their electronic entertainment. They ‘forget’ to live in the real world because

they are too occupied living in their virtual one. There is an extreme that we hear of in the ‘workaholic’ who does not take time to relax or enjoy the good things of this life; or he neglects his other obligations to family and society because all of his time is occupied in his work.

Avoiding the extremes of this swinging pendulum is the task that God has placed before us in this life. A common psychological diagnosis given today is ‘bipolar’. In the past, this was known as manic-depressive. People who suffer with this problem tend to focus their lives in the extremes of this pendulum, avoiding the virtue of moderation in the middle. They are either living in the extreme of mania and feel in control and on top of everything, or they enter into the extreme of despair and find it a struggle just to keep on living. All vitality seems to have been sucked out of them. It almost seems as if this despair is contagious and infects all those around such people in this condition.

In the spiritual life, we are faced with balancing the extremes of presumption and despair. Based upon God’s goodness and His promises, we are permitted to

hope for His mercy and pardon. We must avoid the extreme of presumption, where we fall into the trap of Martin Luther and believe that we can “sin on bravely” presuming that God will save us without any effort on our own part. Also, we must avoid the despair of Judas, believing that we are so evil that not even God can save us now.

There is in the spiritual life a kind of bipolarism that affects many. The devil keeps them focused upon both extremes, avoiding the virtue of hope and modesty. They allow themselves to be filled with presumption at one moment and then to fall into the depths of despair in the next. There is at one time the sin of scrupulosity, which is quickly followed by the other extreme sin of carelessness.

To avoid this spiritual roller-coaster, we must come to some understanding of sin or evil and its purposes. The problem of evil in the world has tormented a great many philosophers throughout the ages. The question is generally presented in something similar to this: How can we reconcile the existence of evil in the world, with an all-loving, all-good, all-powerful, etc. God? If God is good, how is

it that there is evil in the world? If God is all powerful how is it that He allows evil? Our natural weak mind suggests that either God does not exist as we believe, or evil must not exist. It seems impossible to reconcile the two.

Before running off recklessly with wild imaginings, let us reaffirm our belief in the truths that God has given us through the Catholic Church. Without any doubt, God is all good and all perfect. All that God does is good and well ordered. All that God has made is good. Etcetera.

God does not will evil in this world, but He permits it for a couple of reasons: First, God has given us a free will and this is good. He permits evil because He does not wish to deprive us of the use of the free will that He has given us. Secondly, God makes use of evil to manifest His wisdom in drawing good from evil.

All things in this world (except sin) happen by the will and power of God. Sickness, pains, afflictions, misfortunes, etc., happen by the order and will of God. This is an undeniable truth. There is no such thing as chance or fortune – there is only Divine Providence. The wise man says:

“Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God.” (Ecclus. xi, 14) Jesus tells, us that not one hair falls from our head without God’s permission. (Matt. x, 19) There is no such thing as chance; what seems to depend upon chance is an effect of His unalterable will. He adjusts all things for His wise purposes.

Let us consider the act of murder. God is the one who has permitted the murderer to lift his hand against his fellow man. God is the author of the raising of the arm, the striking, etc. All these actions are good in themselves. The evil of murder is not really in these material actions, but is rather the will of man. While God is the author of all the physical movements of man; man by his free will becomes the author of the evil. It should not be difficult for us to discern that evil is in the will more so than in the deed. Our Lord says the man that harbors anger in his heart is already guilty of murder, the man who lusts in his heart is already guilty of adultery, etc. Even before any physical action is taken, the sin is committed. Sin is therefore in the will, not in the actions. Our free will in bringing sin to physical actions

forces God, in a sense, to not only witness, but to participate in a manner with our evil. The prophet Amos says: “There is no evil in the city which the Lord hath not done.” (Amos iii, 1)

As God often makes use of the devils to try the faithfulness of His servants, or to chastise men for their sins, as we see in the history of Job and of King Saul, so does He make use of wicked men to try our virtue, or to punish us for our sins.

God permits evils in this world to manifest His wisdom, by drawing good from evil. The fall of our first parents was a great evil, but in spite of this, it has become a source of our greatest good. In desiring to repair the fault of our first parents, the wisdom of God sent His only begotten Son. God gave us the Incarnation and the maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These are the greatest of all of God’s works. For, nothing can be greater than Jesus Christ, Who is God Himself. Likewise, no creature exceeds the great work of the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God. Both of these were brought about to show forth the goodness, mercy and wisdom of God in overcoming evil with goodness.

Another example was our patriarch Joseph who was sold into slavery by his own brothers. This evil God used to put Joseph in power in Egypt so that during the famine, all the sons of Israel should be saved.

God often permits men to wallow in sin to humble them so that they will be capable of doing even greater works for His honor and glory. Just consider: The good thief on the cross, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Margaret of Cortona, and many other saints. Our Lord once spoke to St. Catharine of Sienna, “... you must remember that, from the evil of guilt and punishment, I can draw a good which by far surpasses the extent of the evil itself.”

The trials of Joseph were a means to reach temporal prosperity, and so are many of our trials and tribulations of today if we will only accept them for the love of God. Next, our trials are like bitter medicines which the doctor gives us for our health. Only God knows what is truly in the best interest of our souls. He creates and gives us a perfect cross that fits us exactly and is just the right size, shape, and weight to heal and cure our souls. But, once again, we must

not reject the crosses, but rather embrace them willingly for the love of Him. In this manner our greatest evils become our greatest blessings.

Even the just must suffer in this life so that they may expiate their faults, increase their merits and their reward in Heaven. Father Müller states: "If we see Job sitting on a dunghill, Joseph loaded with chains in a dungeon, David reviled by Semei, -- in a word, if we see a just man suffering, we immediately cry out in astonishment, 'How unhappy, how much to be pitied is that man!' Blind mortals as we are, we call those unhappy who suffer; whilst Jesus Christ says, 'Blessed are they that mourn.' (Matt. v, 5.) Where is our faith? If God afflicts the just man, it is because he loves him; for, if He loved him less, He would treat him as He does the fortunate men of this world: He would permit him to enjoy the pleasures of this world, to be deluded with the world, to be perverted with the world; and the day would come when He would judge, condemn, and punish him with the world. Sufferings are the mark of the elect. Whoever shall not be stamped with this sacred character shall never enter into

that kingdom which Christ gained for us by His sufferings. We are all children of Calvary. It is there that Jesus Christ regenerated us with His blood. This tender, this dying Father left us no other inheritance at His departure out of this world, than His cross and His grace. ..."

We might then ask, why the wicked are allowed to prosper in this world. Even the wicked sometimes do good. God is just and rewards every good deed that we do. If God cannot reward us in eternity, His justice demands that He reward us here and now. The wicked receive their reward now, but have none to expect in eternity.

Inequality of states and conditions, far from being contrary to Divine Providence, is the certain effect of it; and because there is a providence, there must be an inequality of states and conditions. The wicked are rewarded with natural recompenses for their natural goodness. The good bear burdens and crosses supernaturally and are recompensed with supernatural goodness. The inequality is necessary for the maintenance of this world. There could only be anarchy if everyone were exactly equal.

Who would command, and who would obey? Who would direct and who should carry out the directive? The inequality of this life is only a temporary one. The scales of justice will only be truly balanced when we enter into eternity. There the good will have an eternal reward and the evil will have an eternal punishment.

“Dives, the rich man was an unfortunate glutton, whose pleasures and magnificence were so many snares which entrapped him into everlasting ruin. The beggar is that unfortunate Lazarus, whose miseries were like so many golden keys to open to him the gates of heaven. God gave earthly enjoyments to the rich man – partly, to reward him for the occasional good works performed by him, and partly, to punish him by giving him up to the desires of his heart, and not chastising him as he chastised Lazarus, His true servant. This is evident from the answer which Abraham made to the rich glutton then in hell: ‘Remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.’ (Luke xvi, 25)” (Father Müller, *The Apostles’*

Creed)

We must then regard the sufferings of this life as so many blessings of Almighty God. Divine Providence is always giving us what is best for us. Sufferings are a tremendous gift if we will receive them as such. Success and riches are a tremendous snare, unless we are careful to remain humble and to put them to the purpose of furthering God’s will, rather than our own. In all events we must remain humble and modest neither becoming presumptuous nor falling into despair. God is still in control and His will is our salvation. May we accept with grateful hearts the pleasures and the sufferings with equal gratitude and love, knowing that all things work for the good of those who love God.

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Franciscan Saints

FEBRUARY 10

VEN. JUNIPER VEGA AND HUMILIS MARTINEZ

Martyrs, *First Order*

In spite of the fact that for more than a century Mexico was a prey to Freemasonry and to laicism, the worst offspring of Freemasonry, it was reserved for this unfortunate country to be the first with which we associate the kingship of Christ in the sense of the new feast of Christ the King. To Mexico may also be attributed the first martyrs to Christ the King. Prominent among these are thirteen secular priests, one Augustinian, one priest of the Society of the Heart of Mary, two Jesuits, three Franciscans, and several Tertiaries.

Today we commemorate Father Juniper de la Vega and his faithful companion, Brother Humilis Martinez. Both received the habit of St. Francis in the same convent in 1901, remained together later on, suffered together for Christ, and were awarded the crown of martyrdom at the same time.

Father Juniper and Brother Humilis were both born in

Mexico, the former in 1874, the latter in 1873. Juniper was another Nathaniel, a man in whom there was no guile, with a pronounced tendency towards the interior life. Humilis was impetuous by nature and possessed a tireless impulse for work.

During the persecution under the notorious Calles, both were twice cast into prison for the cause of Jesus Christ. In February, 1928, Brother Humilis wrote to his provincial: "I am in a prison which held a martyr captive before me. One can still see the traces of his blood. I am sending you a bit of ground that is saturated with his blood." On February eighth, Father Juniper was questioned in court. "How many Masses have you read?" an officer demanded. In all simplicity the Father answered: "Figure it out for yourself, for I was ordained to the holy priesthood in 1905." "I did not ask that," the officer replied, "but how many Masses have you read

since the prohibition was issued that no Masses be said at all?" The confessor asserted in his simple, upright manner: "If I am to tell the truth, as many Masses as I could." That was a crime punishable with death. Both the father and the brother were again led back to prison and were fully aware of what was awaiting them.

Brother Humilis again wrote to his provincial: "I spent the entire night in humbly asking God to forgive me my sins and in recommending my soul to the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, for it is clear that we must die. You need not, however, reply to this letter, for without doubt I shall not receive the answer any more."

During the night Father Juniper heard the confessions of his fellow prisoners. Early the next morning he cast himself upon the ground and prayed. When Brother Humilis begged him to take a little rest, since he had spent the night without any sleep, Juniper answered: "There is no longer any time to sleep; the hour has arrived to prepare for death." And so it happened.

The executioners soon arrived. Both confessors were forced to board a military train. At Ecuandureo Father Juniper was forced to alight and run. A rain of bullets followed him. Meanwhile, the rude soldiery were making sport of Brother Humilis. At Zamora he, too, was forced to alight, and was shot down in his tracks.

The funeral of the two martyrs was like a triumphal march. Father Juniper was solemnly interred at Ecuandureo, Brother Humilis at Zamora. Over the graves of both martyrs the jubilant cry of many thousands of voices could be heard repeating: "Live, Christ the King!"

ON LAICISM

1. What are we to understand by laicism? This pestilence of our modern era consists in the determination no longer to recognize a place for God, religion, and the Church, and to eliminate them from the lives of the people and of the state. Laicism has been most unhappily successful in Mexico and in other countries. The name of God is purposely disregarded at state, political,

and business sessions. It has been forgotten that God is “the blessed and only mighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15).

2. How did laicism arise? At first the authority of God was denied, as also that of His Anointed One over the nations, then the right of the Church of Christ to teach and guide the people. After that the religion of Christ was assigned to a place alongside the false creeds, and grossly subjected to civil authority. Finally, every Christian conviction was rejected. And yet, the God-man has solemnly commanded the representatives of the Church: “Going therefore, teach ye all nations” (Matt. 28:19). — Let us, then, be the more faithful to Christ and His Church, the more others attack them.

3. What results are bound up with laicism? Pope Pius XI gives the answer in his encyclical of the year 1925: “Dissension has been sown everywhere, the flame of envy and jealousy is kindled among the nations. Human society, which has rebelled against God and Christ, has been shaken, brought to the verge

of perdition, and is threatened with unavoidable dissolution.” The representatives of laicism are “blind and leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14). And matters must come to a still worse turn before they will recognize the real state of things. — Pray for these deluded souls, and, following in the glorious footsteps of the Mexican martyrs, take your stand unflinchingly for the rights of Christ and of His Church. Do this particularly at the time of elections.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Almighty and eternal God, who didst make Thy glory known to the whole of Christendom; protect the work of Thy mercy, so that Thy Church, which is spread over the world, may remain firm in its confession of Thy name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Our Catholic Culture and Heritage

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part IV

The Effect of the Destruction of the Catholic Culture Upon the Church and its Members

When the Modernists began the changes in the 1960's, many Catholics thought it was only about changing the language of the Mass. The more astute Catholics soon discovered the Mass was at the heart of the changes, and was one among a growing number of steps which would undermine and destroy the Deposit of Faith, and as a result our Catholic Culture and Heritage.

It must be understood that in order to destroy a culture there are a number of things which must be completed. The enemies of the Church not only wanted to destroy the Mass without naïve Catholics being aware of it, but they quickly commenced their evil deeds to undermine the Sacraments, religious and priestly life, the Catholic education system, and all else which would bring about a revolutionary change of such a nature that the informed and educated would no longer come to recognize the Church they once knew and loved.

By the time the changes were taking place in the local parishes, they had long since begun in the monasteries, convents and seminaries. For the most part, all that needed to be spoo-fed to the parishioners was a foregone conclusion by an informed number of bishops and priests.

Perhaps these matters are best explained by using the Latin phrase, *lex orandi lex credenda*. The phrase is commonly translated, *the law of praying is the law of believing*. It simply means *the way in which you pray is the way in which you will believe*.

The documents of the false council, Vatican II, gave the revolutionaries the “legal” means to carry out their devilish intentions. One should be able to conclude there was at least “a handful” of churchmen who understood what was taking place and had the intention of destroying what Mother Church had given us over nearly two-thousand years.

The Modernists openly state one of the more important Vatican II documents to them

was the one on ecumenism (Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*). They would use this document to undermine one of the more important dogmas of the Church, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*, i.e., “There is no Salvation Outside the Church.” Religious indifferentism was the seed planted in this schema and now forty-eight years later there are only a small number of Catholics who hold to the correct meaning of *No Salvation Outside the Church*.

Catholics have erroneously been taught to pray for a false unity and that has indeed changed the manner in which Catholics believe. How often have the Modernist clergy led the laity in some generic “prayer service” with Protestants present in the Church. This scene has been repeated so many times that one wonders who believes there is only One True Church?

It didn’t take the Modernists long to destroy the Catholic School System. Some will naively argue the system still exists today as there are still many “Catholic” elementary schools, high schools and colleges. Perhaps what they won’t tell you about (if they know) are the hundreds of schools that have closed because of “fruits

of Vatican II!” More importantly, the Faith ceased to be taught on these once-hallowed grounds of foundational Catholic learning.

This writer experienced firsthand (in the fourth grade) the destructive nature of replacing a Baltimore Catechism with a “Sadler Series” book on secular humanism. (Can we call this an equal trade?) If the poor, duped Catholics parents had understood the effect of replacing these books, they would have reacted as though they had been slapped and sucker-punched at the same time! Less we forget, these were carried out by the priests and teaching sisters whom we dearly loved!! (And yes, that was intentionally written in the past tense!) It was also in the fourth grade when the altar-boy responses were first learned in English.

He also experienced the 7th and 8th grade students being used as “spiritual guinea pigs.” Ours was the first to “take up the gifts” i.e., the wine and water to the priest in the once-sacred sanctuary. We were the first to read the “Readings” – the Epistle and Gospel. This was my first experience in public-speaking, and oh, what a disaster! It was a real-life experience in stage-fright! (One which I would rather

forget.) Should I be thankful for all of these “historical moments?”

During those same tumultuous years of the 1960’s, the Mass was continually being changed from one week or month to the next. All those “optional” changes were quite obligatory! Heaven help you if you didn’t “go with the flow,” even if the scent was distinctly that of sulfur.

Doctrines were being openly questioned; discipline was being undermined; Devotions, Novenas and Benedictions were being cancelled; modesty and decorum were replaced with shock and scandal; the Rosary was rarely promoted, etc.

The result of these unending changes was an essential change in the Catholic mindset. Previously, the Catholic knew the doctrines and rules. They understood the parameters. That which was taking place was not only new and different, but quite revolutionary. Adult Catholics of that time were quite confused over an extended period. They weren’t sure what to think. Division and chaos reigned.

Are we able to make a comparison of this time with the French Revolution? From the orchestrated chaos of both periods

came some type of “peace,” or so it seemed. A true peace has its origin in Christ. Were these movements of God or of Satan?

We certainly know that the French Revolution was not of God. There are many accounts of the revolutionaries pillaging and otherwise destroying Catholic Churches; numberless priests and religious, both male and female, were martyred via the guillotine; an unknown number of clergy apostatized; the revolutionaries overthrew the Catholic government and instituted a secular, godless government.

Do these actions sound as though they are of God? It is quite simple to conclude to the contrary. The French Revolution, simply, was carried out by men and women who were doing the work of Satan and his devils. There were no good spiritual fruits which came from this Freemasonic revolution.

Many Catholics to this day believe Vatican II produced good things. They are convinced the Holy Ghost guided this false council. What is the objective truth on this matter?

A general council of the Church is meant to bring together the leading Catholic hierarchy from around the world. Past councils

have usually focused on a few teachings of the Church because this is the reason why the council was called, i.e., to condemn the heresy and state the correct teaching. The Council of Trent was an exception to this because the Protestant Revolution was having such an effect upon the Church it was necessary to restate dogmatically all of the chief teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

When John XXIII called for Vatican II there was **no** doctrinal reason to do so. He stated in a speech *prior* to the Council beginning, there was *no plan to define any teachings* within the Catholic Church. This in itself was never done before. All previous general councils had defined some aspect of the Church's teachings.

The honest Churchmen will tell you that if a council is not meant to be dogmatic, then by deduction it is to be considered pastoral. If a council is pastoral, there is no guarantee the Holy Ghost is guiding it. This is one of the arguments that have been going on since 1965 when this false council ended.

If the Holy Ghost guided this Council, this confusion would not exist. It would be clear from its

teachings and its fruit.

Briefly, the documents of this council are unlike anything the Church has ever seen. They undermine the Council of Trent and Vatican I. They plant the seeds for spiritual and liturgical revolution, which, by the way, had already begun *prior* to the council.

Another of the arguments that again goes on to this day is the clarity, or the lack thereof, of the documents. We have heard to the point of *ad nauseam* about how we must return to the original meaning of the documents. Contrary to what these naïve or *agents provocateur* are saying, those things which have been taking place since 1965 are *exactly* what was intended by the Modernists in the know.

Catholics have seen nothing but chaos and division since the false council of Vatican II. This is not the work of the Holy Ghost. If, indeed, the Holy Ghost guided this council, we would have seen good and abundant spiritual fruit within and outside the Church. Contrary to the opinions of those outside the True Church, the good fruit of the Catholic Church does have a good effect upon society.

We would not have seen the

numberless, seminaries, convents, churches and schools close in the United States and around the world if the fruit of Vatican II was good. Our Lord had told us what we should do with a tree that produces bad fruit. ***Cut it down and burn it.*** The problem we face today is that the thief runs the bank; the fox rules the henhouse; and the heretic rules in the Vatican.

There is a reason why when one speaks of Catholic or (true) Christian Culture today, very few seem to have a good, clear understanding of what this means. The enemy within has utterly gutted the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church. They began with the Holy and Eternal Sacrifice of the Altar, then the Sacraments, the episcopacy, the priesthood, the Deposit of Faith, Catholic education, Scholastic philosophy, ethics (morality), the Church calendar, and the Saints and Blessed.

What is left? A mere shell that is nothing more than a façade that continues to fool and entrap millions of naïve and ignorant Catholics.

This is why two to three generations of Catholics are left to wonder what it means to be a Catholic in the 21st century. They

fail to understand how they have been stripped of the Catholic Heritage which should have been passed on to them in their Catholic churches, schools and homes.

There is more to our Catholic Culture than memorizing a few questions in the Baltimore Catechism. It is more than attending Mass on Sunday. It is more than tithing each week. It is more than not eating fish on Friday. It is all of this and much more. It combines all aspects of the Catholic Faith and provides a solid, unshakable foundation from which it is the Church's prayer that not only do we gain our salvation, but are able to teach and influence others in this life. It is the guide and way of life that is the central influence in the home and *at work*; in private and *public life*; in the church and *the marketplace*. Regardless of race, culture, vocation or societal position, we have been given the Greatest Good with all that it encompasses.

If we are left to pass this on to our children within the home for this moment in time we must understand the responsibility that we are given. Do not run from it. Embrace it with your entire being and thank God for it.

Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER X

An Indispensable Friend

“For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

1. *Friendship with Jesus is necessary for salvation.* In human society, friendship, in the full meaning of the term, is indeed a great blessing, one which adds considerably to the enjoyment of life; but it is not absolutely indispensable. It is a freely chosen relationship as distinguished from others which have their origin in nature, as for example, the relation of a child to his parents or of a citizen to the state.

Friendship with Jesus is, of course, also free in the sense that no one is physically forced to take Jesus for a friend. Indeed, to speak of forced friendship would involve a contradiction, since love is essentially an internal attachment to a person which has its origin in the depths of

the soul. Nevertheless, we are commanded to love God; “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment” (Mt. 22:37, 38). No mere man can command another to love him; but God can, for He has created the human heart and has given it not only the capacity, but also the inclination to love Him. Our rational nature, as long as it has not been vitiated by sin, naturally tends to God as to its highest good and last end. When God, therefore, commands us to love Him, He is merely formulating the unwritten law indelibly imprinted in every human soul.

Nevertheless, God does not use physical force to insure obedience to this law; instead He gives all men liberty either to love Him and attain their last end, or to reject Him and lose forever the possession of their greatest good. The loss of the love of God is in itself the greatest punishment for

deliberate separation from God as St. Augustine tells us: “What am I to Thee, O God, that Thou commanded me to love Thee and that Thou art angry with me when I do not love Thee and threatenest me with unspeakable misery? Would it then be but a small misfortune if I did not love Thee?”¹

This also is our relation toward our Saviour. We can be His friends if we wish; we *ought* to be His friends, because right order and His holy will demand this of us; but we are at liberty to reject His friendship and to pay for our folly in eternal misery. Jesus, therefore, is an indispensable friend inasmuch as we cannot attain salvation without Him. As St. Paul so tersely says: “If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema” (1 Cor. 16:22). The relation between the love of God and the love of Jesus Christ is explained by St. John in this way: Jesus Christ is born of God, “and every one that loveth Him who begot, loveth also who is born of Him” (cf. 1 Jn. 5:1).

Jesus Christ is of God, not because of His humanity, but also according to His humanity. The Son of God did not lose His eternal sonship when He became man. Just as Christ is but one person, so He is one Son of God. There are not two sons, one eternal and one adopted in time. The assertion that in Christ we have two sons is heretical and has been condemned by the Church. Consequently, we owe our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the same reverence and the same love that we owe our heavenly Father. Therefore, without love of Jesus, without His friendship, we cannot attain salvation.

Jesus demands such love of us. “He who loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me” (Mt. 10:37). “Amen, I say to you, he who is not prepared to leave father and mother and all that he has when My service calls for such sacrifice, cannot be My disciple” (cf. Lk. 14:26). But of those who love Him, He says: “the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me” (Jn. 16:27). “Abide in My love” (Jn. 15:9). “He who has My commandments and keeps them; he it is who loves Me. But he who loves Me, will be loved by My Father: and I will love

1 St. Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1 Chap. 5.

him, and will manifest Myself to him” (Jn. 14:21). Mutual love and spiritual communion of life are identical with friendship; hence, friendship with Jesus is necessary for salvation. The kingdom of heaven is made up wholly of the friends of Jesus. They constitute the Church triumphant, and this Church is the bride of the Lamb clothed in fine linen. “For the fine linen are the justifications of the saints. . . . Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Apoc. 19:7 ff.). But he who is not clothed with this wedding garment will fall a victim to the same sad fate that befell the man in the parable to whom the king said: “Friend, how didst thou come here without a wedding garment?” And he commanded the waiters: “Bind his hands and feet, and cast him forth into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping, and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 22:12 ff.). Such is the lot of those who do not love Jesus; for the wedding garment is nothing else than love and the works wrought by love. If I possess all gifts and perform all good works, but have not charity, it profits me nought; I am nothing (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1 ff.).

2. *Why is the friendship of Jesus necessary for us?* Since friendship with Jesus is distinguished from all other friendships by this that it is necessary for us, we may here ask a question that is not ordinarily asked in the case of human friendships: Why is this friendship necessary for us? This question and its answer, as we shall see, are in no wise derogatory to the concept of the noblest and purest friendship. The answer may be given in a single sentence: Man needs the friendship of Jesus to become again truly a man such as he ought to be according to the designs of God. Since the fall of our first parents there has been but one Man who fully realized in Himself the divine prototype of man. This one is Jesus Christ; all others approximate this prototype or ideal more or less closely as they are more or less intimately united with Jesus.

After Adam had sinned, God said to him: “Dust thou are and into dust thou shalt return” (Gen. 3:19). The divine had been lost, only the earthly remained. Because of their descent from Adam, men had lost their moral excellence; they retained only that which was lowly, earthly, beastly. Then God gave us in Jesus Christ a new Adam, a spiritual

progenitor, through whom man was to regain his original dignity.

St. Paul explains the difference between these two progenitors in these words: “The first man was of the earth, earthly,” of him the earthly minded are born; “the second Man, from heaven, heavenly,” and of Him the heavenly minded are born (cf. 1 Cor. 15:47, 48). If we do not become heavenly minded men through union with Christ, we shall remain under the curse pronounced over the earthly minded because of our origin from the first Adam. Hence, we need the friendship of Christ that, delivered from the curse of sin, we may become again such men as we ought to be according to the intention and original plan of God. Hence, too, the Apostle warns us: “Strip yourselves of the old man, and put on the new, formed to the image of the Creator, where Christ is all and in all” (cf. Col. 3:9 ff.). Put off the old man, who is a child of death; put on the new man, for whom Christ is divine strength unto eternal life.

Unfortunately there are millions of men on earth who outwardly seem to exemplify the concept and ideal of man, but who interiorly are but sorry wrecks of that humanity which God had planned from

all eternity and created in time. “God created man to His own image” (Gen. 1:27). The body is not an image of God, for God is incorporeal; but the soul is. God stamped on it His image with sanctifying grace, by which man, participating in the divine nature, becomes a free, blessed child of God and heir of heaven. Since the fall of Adam this image has been destroyed in countless souls, and on its ruins a new picture has been raised, the image of the fallen angel, whose slave man becomes through sin. Man is the child of him whose image he carries in his soul; those who bear the image of God, are children of God; those who bear the image of Satan, are children of the devil (cf. 1 Jn. 3:9, 10). A child of the devil is certainly the opposite of the ideal of noble humanity. We are true men only when, renewed after the ideal of Christ, we become children of God.

Christ is the substantial “image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col. 1:15). Man was created after the pattern of this eternal exemplar and consequently was in his original beauty an image of God. How was the image of God, which had been destroyed in the souls of men by sin, to be restored if not by renewing again

the original pattern which was the plan also of the first creation? All things were created after the eternal image of God, and all things were to be renewed according to this likeness. "All things were created through Him and unto Him" (Col. 1:16); hence, all things must be renewed by Him and in Him. Such is the plan God conceived from all eternity "to reestablish all things in Christ" in the fullness of time (Eph. 1:10). At the moment when we are re-created according to the image of Christ and united to Him, those creative words resound again in our souls: "Let there be light"; but now it is the eternal light itself which glows in our souls. For the Son of God became man that He "the brightness of His (God's) glory, and the figure of His substance" (Heb. 1:3), might renew in our souls, freed from sin and renewed in grace, the image of the glory of God. Thus all of us, as the Apostle tells us, "with faces unveiled, we are being transformed into His very image, from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). In other words: We shall reflect in the godliness of our Christian conduct the glory of the Lord which dwells within us and shall interiorly become more perfectly transformed by "the spirit of the Lord" into more perfect images

of Christ, and shall grow in glory until at last we shall attain perfect glory through union with Christ our Saviour in heaven.

For those who are walking on the path to destruction, this glory is veiled; for them "the god of this world [the devil] has blinded their unbelieving minds that they should not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4). We, however, no longer wish to bear the image of the earthly man in us, but rather that of the heavenly (cf. Cor. 15:49), in order that we may be renewed day by day (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16) and that we may not only be called children of God, but may be such in truth and become daily better and more-loved children of our heavenly Father as brothers of His beloved Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. As our Saviour alone is essentially the image of the Father, so, too, He only is by nature the Son of God. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 17:5). "Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee" (Heb. 1:5). Through grace men become the adopted children of God (cf. Gal. 4:5). Of course, this adoption is not merely an external formality such as we have when a man adopts a child; but we

are transformed by it interiorly through sanctifying grace into children of God, though only into adopted children.

With the loss of sanctifying grace men had lost their adoption and become slaves of Satan. Who could restore their kinship with God more appropriately than He who is by nature the Son of God? Through love of us He became one of our race, satisfied for the whole of our debt, restored sanctifying grace to us, and raised us to the dignity of His brothers, “that He should be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). He is not ashamed to call us brethren, says the Apostle (cf. Heb. 2:11). He became man “that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:5). Without friendship with Christ, without becoming His brothers, we remain children of wrath (cf. Eph. 2:3), rejected, disinherited children, whose portion is hell; hence, friendship with Christ is necessary for us.

3. *What are the fruits of friendship with Christ?* The answer to this question is obvious from what has already been said. Friendship with Jesus raises us from our fallen state and makes us once more pleasing to God. Through Christ, God has made

us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in the light of truth and justice, He has delivered us from the powers of darkness and translated us to the kingdom of the Son of His love (cf. Col. 1:12, 13). Friendship with the archetypal and ideal Man, Jesus Christ makes us once more true men, “men of God” (2 Tim. 3:17).

Through friendship with Jesus, the image of God destroyed in us by sin is restored. Of every friend of Christ are the words of the Apostle verified: God foreknew those who will be His own; these He predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, first here in time, then perfectly in eternity (cf. Rom. 8:29, 30).

Through friendship with Christ we attain once more our lost dignity of children of God. “You have been called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). All friends of Christ possess the spirit of Christ, and this spirit bears them witness that they are children of God and as children of God brothers and joint heirs with Christ (cf. Rom. 8:9, 16, 17). As brothers of Christ, they are obliged to accept the mind of Christ (cf. Phil. 2:5). For since

we have access through Christ to the grace of being children of God and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God (cf. Rom. 5:2, 3), we may have no other mind; than that which Christ has.

This is why the devotion to the Sacred Heart is so significant. While other devotions bring before us chiefly the exterior of Christ — as for example the devotion to the five wounds or to the holy cross — devotion to the Sacred Heart is concerned entirely with the interior. It is directed toward the love of Christ and toward the life of His soul animated by this love. Consequently, it might be designated as the devotion to the sentiments of Christ. And can anyone who is a friend of Jesus, who is familiar with the sentiments of His heart, ever cherish thoughts and ideals other than heavenly? Can the spirit

of the world, selfishness, pride, quarrelsomeness, and all the other vices, be cherished by one who honors the heart of Jesus? If we ask ourselves in all our thoughts, aims, and endeavors: “Is this worthy of the heart of Christ?” our conscience, animated by faith, will not leave us in doubt.

Let us, then, conform our heart to the heart of Christ, and our conversation will be in heaven (cf. Phil. 3:20). The heavenly atmosphere that fills the heart of Christ will also purify our sentiments and strengthen them and influence our deeds and omissions. We will live the life of a child of God and spread everywhere the pleasant air of good conduct. God will make us to triumph in Christ Jesus and to carry with us in every place the very atmosphere of our knowledge of Him (cf. 2 Cor. 2:14).



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