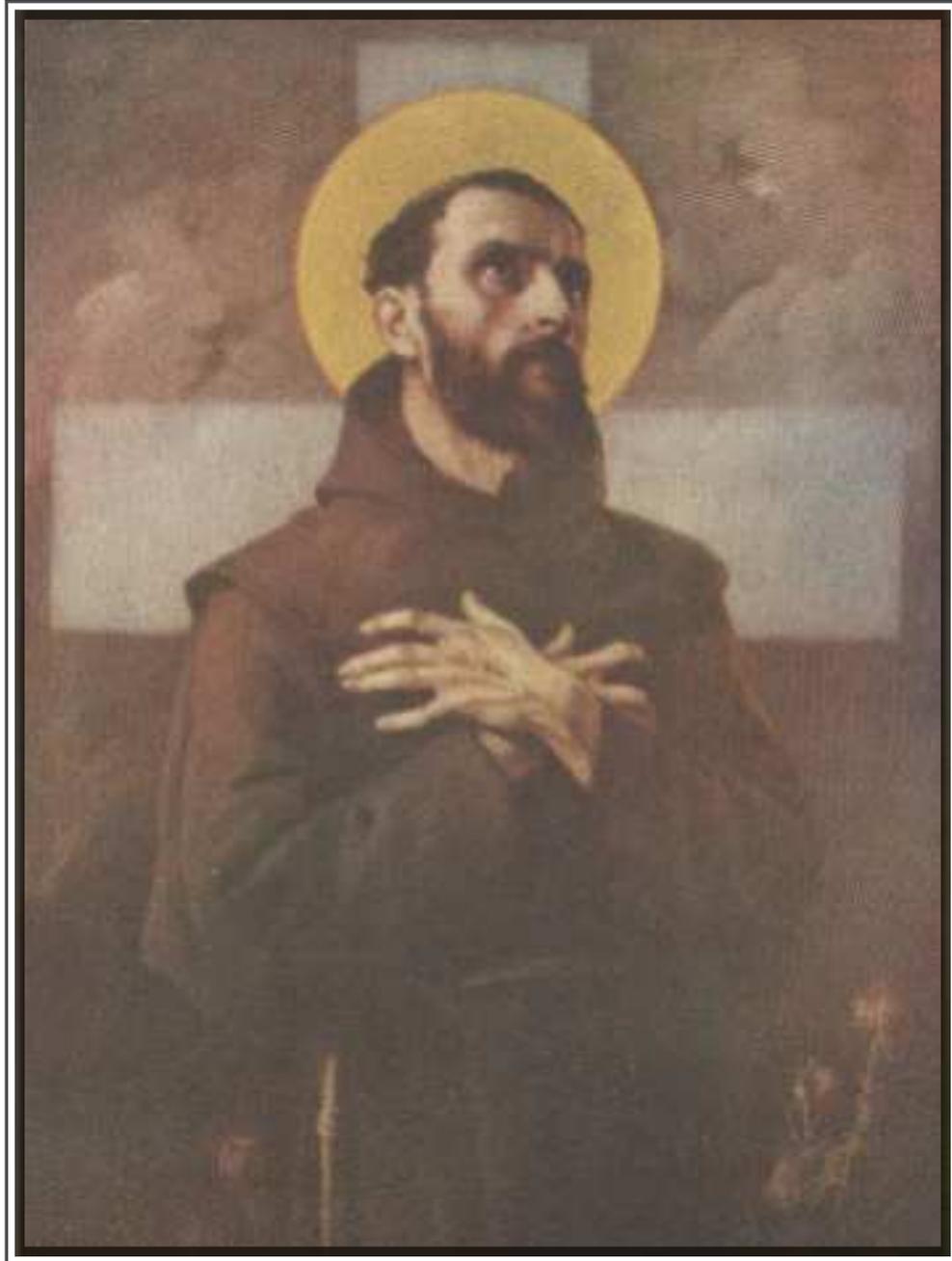


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Essential Ideas to Understand

There seems to be a recurring (or continuing) ignorance among so many, would be true, Catholics concerning: validity, licitness, and jurisdiction. These are all very essential things to understand if we are to intelligently discern where the True Church is.

In the early years (immediately following the implementation of the Novus Ordo) we find that there was a great emphasis upon the Mass. Father Altenbach is famous for his saying: “It is the Mass that matters.” He had taken this quote from the Protestants in their attack upon the Church. In this vein the thought was that we must preserve the Mass. While so many were focusing only upon having a valid Mass, few stopped to realize that it is not enough to have only a valid Mass. The Mass must also be licit. The Church teaches us that illicit sacraments are to be considered of no value.¹ Likewise, many forgot that there were also the sacraments and doctrines and morals under

attack. It was not just the Mass! The Mass matters, but so do all the sacraments, dogmas, and morals of the Church.

Returning to valid and licit, we must understand that many heretics and schismatics can have valid Masses, but that they are not licit and therefore there are no graces flowing from them. They are what many would call: “Valid sacrileges.” Valid means, that it is real and not a fake. If we use the example of human babies, we know that every baby is a true baby and therefore valid, regardless of how this baby came into existence. However, not every valid baby is licit, or legal. Very many babies are conceived through illegal unions, either of adultery or fornication. Such babies are bastards or illegitimate and have no legal right to the inheritance of the father. In a similar manner the Mass, and sacraments can be valid, but illegal or illicit. The illicit Mass and sacraments (even if valid) are considered by the Church as of no value. We understand “of no value” to mean that the grace produced by the valid sacrament cannot be obtained because of an impediment in the way of grace.

¹ The Roman Ritual (tit. I, 4) contains these words: “Although the sacraments cannot be defiled by the impure... Nevertheless those who administer them in impurity and unworthiness incur the guilt of eternal death.”

Very many have fallen into this deception of only considering the validity of the Mass or the sacraments and have ended up deprived of very necessary graces. Without the necessary graces they have been blinded and led down many false paths. Sometimes the grace of God opens their eyes and they cooperate with His light and grace, but most often their pride and vanity get in the way and they will defend their “find” of a valid Mass as the only thing of importance. All doctrine is secondary to them. When doctrine then becomes secondary, we see a kind of “ecumenism” among “Traditionalists.” As long as there is a Latin Mass and it appears to be valid, they have no concern about anything else.

A true Catholic cannot turn to non-Catholic methods to obtain any sacraments, even if they are valid. Such “sacraments” are illicit and lead of necessity to heresy and schism, because they are of no value. Those participating in the illicit means, commit sin rather than receive grace. The only exception to this law is in *Articulo Mortis* (At the time of death). When one is dying, he may (if there are no licit means available), ask for valid

sacraments from those outside the Church, and the Church (the Bishops) supply for the defect of licitness for the emergency at hand.

The next confused and misunderstood term among “Traditionalists” is: jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is the area of work designated to certain hierarchy of the Church. The pope exercises universal jurisdiction. He has authority to govern, judge, and sanctify every Catholic in the world. A bishop exercises limited jurisdiction (usually a diocese).² A bishop’s jurisdiction is limited so that there is never a conflict among the bishops in their apostolic works with the sheepfold of the faithful. In order to ensure that two bishops were not in opposition to each other the Church made a law that no bishop is to be consecrated without a papal mandate. In this manner the pope who is the principle of unity ensures that jurisdictions are clear and do not overlap.

In the absence of a true pope,

² Canon 108 of the Code states that the power of jurisdiction is by divine ordinance given to the Supreme Pontiff and the subordinate episcopate. (Note: the bishops’ jurisdiction is given by divine ordinance just as the pope’s; and is ordinary and therefore not delegated by a pope.)

it devolves upon the bishops to continue working in harmony with one another in this principle of unity. In today's world we see that the majority of the "bishops" are in union with an anti-pope and the new religion (Novus Ordo) of the false council of "Vatican II." There was therefore a vast void created in the world of a true, valid, and licit hierarchy of successors to the Apostles.

Bishop Ngo stepped forward to help fill in this void by consecrating bishops. He was labeled insane by many who were not ready to admit the great-apostasy of the "Vatican II." He was completely sane. He observed the vacancy of the papacy, the apostasy of most of the bishops who went along with the Modernist Novus Ordo Church that was brought into being with the false "Vatican II" council, and he did what was in his power, right, and obligation to do in order to preserve the Apostolic succession and the True Church.

Many of the "Traditionalists" were still half in and half out of the Modernist Church, or refused to acknowledge any legitimate successors in the Church. These too, often claim that Bishop Ngo was insane. It

is not surprising that many who never knew him, attack him with this unjust accusation. What is surprising is that so many are willing to believe it. It is nothing more than a demonic attempt to discredit the true (valid, and licit) successors of the Apostles. It is likewise, an attempt to discredit the true Church by saying that these bishops do not have any jurisdiction because they have not been approved by apostate anti-popes from the false Church of Vatican II.

The unvarnished truth is that the Modernist Church has absolutely no jurisdiction in the true Catholic Church. The Modernist Church has invalidated most of the sacraments by changing matter and form. They are not licit because they cannot legally change the eternal truths of God and the Church. The Modernist Church is not the True Catholic Church.

The Church with all its power and authority to: teach, govern, and sanctify resides only in the valid and licit, bishops, who were made bishops without any taint of the errors of schismatics, heretics, or the Apostate, Modernist, Novus Ordo ("Vatican II") Church.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

CHAPTER VIII

CATHERINE OF ARAGON, FRANCISCAN TERTIARY

The Spanish princess — Departure for England — Sudden death of Prince Arthur, her consort — She marries his brother Henry — Eighteen years of marital happiness — The king's infidelity — The divorce question — Catherine and the papal commission — Before the ecclesiastical court at Black friars — The queen's appeal to Rome admitted — Henry retaliates — Catherine insulted and disowned — Her secluded life at the More — At Buckden — At Kimbolton Castle — Bodily and mental suffering — Royal supremacy — Within sight of the scaffold — Her last illness and violent death — An estimate of her character.

The history of the English Franciscans during the first years of the religious persecution would be incomplete without a special chapter on Queen Catherine. Her private and public life bears a striking resemblance to that of Bl. Thomas More. Like him she was a Tertiary of St. Francis¹ and by

¹ Dr. Nicolas Sander is our main authority on this question. He lived from 1530 to 1581. His much-quoted work, *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatici Anglicani*, was published for the first time four years after his death. "It is now acknowledged to be an excellent popular account of the period

unfeigned loyalty to her God and to her king made manifest how deeply the spirit of St. Francis was rooted in her noble and beautiful soul.

Queen Catherine of Aragon was the youngest daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Born at Alcalá de Henares, Spain, on December 15, 1484, she passed her infancy and early childhood in the Christian camp before the walls of Granada. In 1492, this last Moorish stronghold in Spain surrendered and henceforth became the home of Catherine. Her early education was entrusted to the Franciscans,² who enjoyed the favor and esteem

from the Catholic point of view," says J. P. Polen in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol. XIII, p. 436). Sander himself affirms in the preface of his work that he recounts the history of the schism "conformably with what we have gathered from public records or have drawn from both the writings and the sayings of very creditable men, or at least have known or seen ourselves." On page 5, we read: "Under the royal robe, she (Catherine) wore the habit of Blessed Francis, in whose third order she had enrolled herself." Rishton did not question this statement when he reedited Sander's work, in 1690. It is likewise attested by Davenport, Wadding, Parkinson, Leon, Strickland, Du Boys, Guerin, Magliano, Hope, Stone, Heimbucher, and others.

² Guerin: *Le Palmier Séraphique*, Vol. I, p. 124.

of the Catholic Sovereigns of Spain under the vigilant care of her excellent mother, the gifted princess acquired those noble qualities of heart and mind which were one day to signalize her career as Queen of England.

At the tender age of twelve years, Catherine was promised in marriage to Prince Arthur, the elder son of Henry VII and heir apparent to the English throne. Four years later, on September 26, she bade farewell to her cherished home and kindred and attended by a splendid retinue embarked for England. After a voyage of six days, she landed at Plymouth. Elaborate festivities marked her journey to London, where, on November 14, in St. Paul's Cathedral, the archbishop of Canterbury, attended by nineteen bishops and mitred abbots, performed the solemn marriage ceremonies.³ Little did Arthur and Catherine, amid the rejoicings of whole England, imagine how soon grim death would shatter their bright prospects for a long and happy union. But God directs the destinies of men; they were never to live together as husband and wife. Shortly after the wedding, Prince Arthur fell dangerously ill, probably of the plague,⁴ and

3 It is worthy of note that on this auspicious day Catherine was escorted from the bishop's palace to the cathedral by the Duke of York, who in after years, as Henry VIII, so cruelly embittered her life.

4 See Strickland : Lives of the Queens of England, Vol. II, p. 485.

the next spring, on April 2, he breathed his last.⁵

Catherine broken in spirit answered the summons of Queen Elizabeth, her mother-in-law, and for the present resided in the country palace of Croydon. Her parents wished her to return to Spain. The English king, however, anxious to secure the remaining half of her marriage portion which consisted of 200,000 ducats, proposed that she marry his younger son Henry. Indeed, after the death of Queen Elizabeth, he himself wished to marry Catherine. But Queen Isabella of Spain would not hear of it, and the English King did not urge the matter.⁶ Finally, he succeeded in gaining the consent of the Spanish sovereigns in behalf of his son, and in 1504, Pope Julius II granted the necessary dispensation. Though Catherine had not the least misgivings as to the legality of a union with Prince Henry, she was averse to a second marriage, especially with a prince who was five years her junior. She desired to return to her native land and to join the Order of Poor Clares in the convent of Toledo.⁷ Hence it was only to please her parents that she made the sacrifice, and on June 25, 1504, consented to her betrothal to Henry. A few

5 From the testament of Arthur in which he bequeathed nothing to Catherine, historians rightly infer that he never regarded her as actually his wife. See Strickland, p. 486.

6 Du Boys : *Catherine D'Aragon*, p. 30.

7 Guérin, p. 145.

months later, Queen Isabella died. "Thus unhappily deprived of her admirable mother, she was left a passive victim at the disposal of the two wily diplomatists, her father King Ferdinand and Henry VII."⁸ The English king subjected her to every privation and indignity to extort from her father the remaining share of her dowry, while Ferdinand, greatly impoverished by the death of Queen Isabella, could not be induced to pay it. Then, actuated by rather unseemly motives,⁹ Henry VII, about 1506, not only debarred his son from meeting his future consort, but even forced him to sign a written protest against his previous betrothal to her. All this combined to make Catherine's situation very embarrassing. At last a change came. Henry VII died on April 22, 1509, and he was succeeded by his son, Henry VIII.

Ever since the death of his brother Arthur, young Henry had been witness of Catherine's constancy and patience in suffering. He sympathized with the wronged princess and in time became sincerely attached to her. Catherine, too, had gradually learned to esteem the English prince whose accession to the throne was hailed as the beginning of an era of national peace and prosperity. A feeling of joy and satisfaction thrilled the English nation, when on June 3,

8 Strickland, p. 488.

9 See Strickland, p. 497.

1509, Henry and Catherine were solemnly married at Greenwich,¹⁰ and when on June 24, the royal pair were crowned at Westminster.¹¹ No one, least of all Catherine, then thought that her crown of gold would eventually become a crown of thorns.

The first years of their union proved a period of mutual love and edification, coupled with true zeal for the religious and political welfare of the kingdom. They held court chiefly in the palace at Greenwich, since Henry had a predilection for this place.¹² How highly the king esteemed his worthy spouse, we see from his letter to Ferdinand of Aragon. "Her eminent virtues," he wrote, "daily shine forth, blossom, and increase so much, that if we still were free, her we would choose for our wife before all others." Nor was this mere policy on his part. Catherine, indeed, became his adviser and confidante in all affairs of State. In 1513, during his military sojourn in Flanders, he appointed her regent, granting her powers such as no English queen had ever held. It was in great part due to her that in the same year the English army

10 Probably in the Franciscan church adjoining the royal palace.

11 It is important to note that on this occasion Catherine appeared with flowing hair and in a white robe, which, according to custom, was permitted only to a virgin. See Strickland, p. 505; also; Du Boys, p. 88.

12 Timbs : Abbeys . . . of England and Wales, Vol. I, p. 122.

vanquished the invading Scots at Flodden Field. Catherine, indeed, was wholly devoted to Henry and to the interests of the English realm. She rejoiced at the news of Henry's victory over the French at Guinegate, and after making a pilgrimage to the Lady-shrine at Walsingham, hastened to Richmond to welcome him home.¹³

In his treatise on Christian matrimony, Erasmus cites Catherine as a model wife and mother. "What house is there," he asks incidentally, "among the subjects to their realm, that can offer an example of such united wedlock? Where can a wife be found better matched with the best of husbands."¹⁴ In her private life, the queen was a mirror of holiness. She was wont to rise at midnight and to pray in the church while the friars chanted Matins and Lauds. At five in the morning, she dressed hurriedly, frequently averring the only time she wasted was that spent in dressing. Beneath her royal robes, she wore the Tertiary habit of St. Francis. Every Friday and Saturday she fasted, while on the vigils of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin she contented herself with bread and water. Twice a week, on Wednesday and Friday, she went to Confession and received Holy Communion every Sunday. She recited the office of the Blessed

13 Hope: First Divorce of Henry VIII, pp. 24 seq.

14 Strickland, pp. 518, 531.

Virgin daily, and spent six hours every morning in church. At noon she would read for the space of two hours the lives of the Saints to her servants and attendants. Then she returned to church and remained there till almost supper, of which she partook very sparingly. She prayed on her knees, never using the comfort of a cushion. "Who will wonder, that so saintly a woman had to be tried in some greater fire of tribulation, in order that the odor of her virtues might be more readily diffused over the entire Christian world."¹⁵

Needless to say, the pious queen, as a Tertiary of St. Francis, held the Franciscan friars in greatest esteem. Having spent her childhood under the wholesome influence of their brethren in Spain, she was happy now to find them equally zealous and popular in England. Their friary at Greenwich adjoined the royal palace, which naturally entailed her becoming more intimately acquainted with them. Before her marriage with Henry, she requested her father to send her a Franciscan from Spain, since she could not confess in English.¹⁶ Later, however, when she had sufficiently mastered the language, Bl. John Forest became her confessor and adviser; and we have every reason to believe that

15 This fair picture of Catherine's personal sanctity is taken from Sander, p. 5.

16 Strickland, p. 495, quoting a fragmentary letter of Catherine to her father, King Ferdinand, of Aragon.

her subsequent conduct must in great part be ascribed to the advice given her by the saintly friar.¹⁷

During the first years of his reign, as we have seen, Henry zealously shared in the pious practices of his queen. But alas! clouds of adversity gradually began to darken their mutual love and happiness. Of the five children with which their marriage had been blessed, all had died except Mary the youngest, who subsequently, in 1553, ascended the throne of England. These premature deaths together with the gay and loose life at court gradually estranged the heart of Henry. Catherine knew that he was no longer a true and faithful husband; she felt that her piety bored him, that her very presence was becoming irksome to him. Thus matters stood when, early in 1527, to her utter dismay she learned that Wolsey had summoned Henry to his legatine court to examine the scruples of conscience he alleged regarding his marriage.¹⁸ The queen had only recently recovered from a severe illness, and the news of

17 This partly accounts for Henry's subsequent hatred of the Franciscans. See Stone: *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 6.

18 Cardinal Wolsey is often accused of having first raised these doubts in Henry's mind. Dodd, in his *Church History of England*, Vol. I, pp. 72 seq., carefully examines the various theories held by historians on this question and then concludes with Cavendish, who was Wolsey's secretary, that the king's passion for Anne Boleyn "not only gave the first motion to, but carried on the whole affair."

Henry's hypocritical scheming against her harassed her innermost soul. Finally, on June 22, 1527, the king himself laid the affair before Catherine.¹⁹ The helpless queen was now convinced of the hypocrisy of her faithless consort and burst into tears when he told her to leave court, since he could no longer share her company. She argued with him and declared she would never live apart from him. Even now she treated Anne Boleyn with sweet forbearance, although she knew her to be the king's favorite and constant attendant. Only once, at a game of cards, did she tenderly reproach her rival, saying, "My lady Anne, you have the good hap ever to stop at a king; but you are like others, you will have all or none."²⁰

In May and June, 1528, a plague, called the sweating sickness, carried away a number of courtiers. Anne Boleyn was the first to contract the disease. Henry stricken with fear and remorse returned to Catherine and "instead of attending to his 'secret matter,' joined the queen in her devotional exercises, confessing himself every day and receiving the Communion every Sunday and festival."²¹ But no sooner had the plague abated than he recalled his favorite to court. The following October; Campeggio,

19 Hope, p. 50; also Stone: *Mary the First, Queen of England*, p. 33.

20 Strickland, p. 538.

21 Lingard: *History of England*, Vol. IV, p. 250.

the papal legate, arrived in England. The queen's ascetic habits made Henry hope that on the legate's suggestion she would readily enter the convent. But, in an interview Catherine informed Campeggio that as queen and mother she could never consent to such a thing, and boldly rebuked Wolsey for confirming the king in his shameless perfidy. "Of malice," she declared, "have you kindled this fire, especially for the great grudge you bear to my nephew the emperor, whom you hate worse than a scorpion, because he would not gratify your ambition, by making you pope by force; and therefore have you said, more than once, you would trouble him and his friends — and you have kept him true promise, for of all his wars and vexations, he may only thank you. As for me, his poor aunt and kinswoman, what trouble you put me to by this new-found doubt God knoweth, to whom I commit my cause."²²

On Friday, June 18, 1529, Wolsey and Campeggio opened their legatine court in the palace at Blackfriars. The king was present by proxy. Catherine, attended by

22 Strickland, p. 542. Du Boys, p. 264, cites a letter of Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, to the emperor, dated November 18, 1528. From this letter we learn how Wolsey browbeat Campeggio and in a threatening tone told him to be on his guard that what lately happened in Germany through the severity of a certain Cardinal might not also take place in England through another Cardinal. See also Hope, pp. 52-57.

her counsel of four bishops²³ and a great train of ladies, appeared in person and with due respect to the presiding Cardinals solemnly appealed to the Pope for a hearing, alleging that in England, where there was no one to take up her cause, the court would necessarily decide against her.²⁴ In reply, she was told to appear again on the following Monday; in the meantime, the Cardinals would consider the justice of her appeal.

Accordingly, on June 21, the king and queen appeared in person. When Henry's name was called, he arose and to delude the judges and the assembled people loudly extolled the virtues of his royal consort, at the same time professing his reluctance to part from her were it not for the scruples that panged his "tender" conscience. Disgusted at this shameless hypocrisy, Catherine asked how, if he now spoke the truth, he could have been silent these twenty years. When Henry replied that the great love he always had and still retained for her, had till now sealed his lips, the queen became indignant and in trembling accents reiterated her appeal to Rome. But the judges declared that her appeal was

23 One of their number was a Franciscan, Fr. Henry Standish, bishop of Asaph. See Parkinson: *Antiquities of the English Franciscans*, p. 237.

24 For the original account of these proceedings, together with a copy of the queen's appeal, see Pocock: *Records of the Reformation*, Vol. I, PP. 216-222.

unjust and could not be accepted. On hearing this, Catherine went over to where the king sat and falling on her knees before him, made a heroic effort to touch his heart. "Sir," she said, "I beseech you, for all the loves there hath been between us, and for the love of God, let me have some right and justice. Take of me some pity and compassion, for I am a poor stranger, born out of your dominions; I have here no unprejudiced counsellor, and I flee to you as to the head of justice within your realm. Alas! alas! wherein have I offended you? I take God and all the world to witness that I have been to you a true, humble, and obedient wife, even conformable to your will and pleasure. I have been pleased and contented with all things wherein you had delight and dalliance; I loved all those you loved, only for your sake, whether they were my friends or mine enemies. This twenty years have I been your true wife, and by me ye have had divers children, although it hath pleased God to call them out of the world, which has been no fault of mine. I put it to your conscience whether I came not to you as a maid? If you have since found any dishonor in my conduct, then I am content to depart, albeit to my great shame and disparagement; but if none there be, then I beseech you, thus lowlily, to let me remain in my proper state. The king your father was accounted in his day a second Solomon for wisdom;

and my father, Ferdinand, was esteemed one of the wisest kings that had ever reigned in Spain; both, indeed, were excellent princes, full of wisdom and royal behavior. Also, as me-seemeth, they had in their days as learned and judicious counsellors as are at present in this realm, who then thought our marriage good and lawful; therefore it is a wonder to me to hear what new inventions are brought up against me, who never meant aught but honestly. Ye cause me to stand to the judgment of this new court, wherein ye do me much wrong if ye intend any kind of cruelty; for ye may condemn me for lack of sufficient answer, since your subjects cannot be impartial counsellors for me, as they dare not, for fear of you, disobey your will. Therefore most humbly do I require you, in the way of charity and for the love of God, who is the just Judge of all, to spare me the sentence of this new court until I be advertised what way my friends in Spain may advise me to take; and if ye will not extend to me this favor, your pleasure be fulfilled, and to God I commit my cause." Then she arose bathed in tears and bowing to the king left the court. When told that the crier at the king's bidding was calling her back, she said, "I hear it well enough; but on — on, go you on, for this is no court wherein I can have justice. Proceed, therefore."

²⁵

25 Strickland, p. 544, quoting Cavendish;

Her touching appeal had made a deep impression on all present. This the king noticed and with seeming emotion declared, "Forasmuch as the queen is gone I will in her absence declare unto you all, my lords, she hath been to me as true, as obedient, and as conformable a wife as I could in my fancy wish or desire. She hath all the virtuous qualities that a woman of her quality, or of any lower rank, ought to possess."²⁶ Arriving at Baynard's Castle, Catherine said to her council, "This day, for the first time, lest I hurt my cause, I have not obeyed my lord the king; but the next time I meet him, I will crave his pardon on my knees."²⁷ Summoned again on June 25 and 28, she refused to appear. Instead, her written appeal to the Pope was solemnly read in court.

Shortly after these occurrences, Wolsey and Campeggio visited Queen Catherine in the palace of Bridewell and begged her in the king's name to consent to a divorce. Taking the Cardinals aside, she remained for some time in earnest conversation with them. What she told them was never made known. It is probable that she again reproached Wolsey for having let matters come to

see also Hope, p. 128, and Du Boys, p. 327 (footnote 2).

²⁶ Hope, p. 131. For a dramatic and historically accurate version of this trial scene at Blackfriars, see Shakespeare's *King Henry the Eighth, Act II, Scene IV*.

²⁷ Sander, p. 37.

this pass.²⁸ Certain it is, both Cardinals were after this interview more favorably disposed toward her. The next October, when the legatine court resumed its sittings, Henry's council pressed the legates to give judgment. Then to the great disappointment of the king, Campeggio declared that the Pope had found Catherine's appeal justified and had already revoked her cause to Rome. With this the court was dissolved and Campeggio soon after left England.

Though incensed at this turn of affairs, Henry for a time feigned kindlier feelings toward Catherine. Indeed, when told that Rome would likely decide against him, he was even on the point of dropping the matter entirely and of reinstating the queen in her rights²⁹ But he had already gone too far and egged on by Anne, again began to treat the queen with cruel contempt. Her sufferings now became well-nigh unbearable. In the autumn of 1530, Chapuys wrote to the Emperor, "The queen's ailment continues as bad or worse than ever. The king absents himself from her as much as possible, and is always here (at London) with the lady (Anne), whilst the queen is at Richmond. He has never been so long without visiting her as now, but states, in excuse, that a death from the plague has taken

²⁸ Du Boys, 346.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 410, on the authority of Cardinal Pole.

place near her residence. He has resumed his attempts to persuade her to become a nun; this is, however, only lost time, for the queen will never take such a step. The continual uneasiness which she endures causes her to entreat your majesty, as well in my letters as yours, that her suit be brought to a final conclusion.”³⁰ During the ensuing Christmas festivities which Henry attended with Catherine at Greenwich, he again asked her to revoke her appeal to Rome and to submit the affair to four English prelates or secular lawyers. On her refusal, the king broke up the festive gathering and withdrew to Whitehall. Her subsequent refusal to acknowledge the king’s supremacy in spiritual matters brought the affair to a crisis.³¹ At Whitsuntide, 1531, a royal deputation again visited Catherine and requested her to submit the question to four English prelates and four nobles, since the king suffered great pangs of conscience. “God grant my husband,” replied the queen, “a quiet conscience; but tell him I am his lawful wife, married to him by the power of Holy Church. The court of Rome has taken the matter in hand: when it speaks I will submit.”³² After the festival of Trinity, Henry and Catherine set out together for Windsor. The cruel monarch was by this time determined to take the fatal step.

30 Strickland, p. 549.

31 Hope, p. 229.

32 Du Boys, p. 420.

Accordingly, soon after their arrival, he left the royal palace and proceeded on a hunting tour with Anne Boleyn. We can readily imagine the bitter anguish that filled the soul of Catherine. But her grief knew no bounds, when about the middle of August she received a message from the king telling her that she and her daughter Mary were to leave Windsor before his return. “Go where I may,” the noble queen replied, “I am his wife and for him I pray.” In October, the king’s envoys once more entreated Catherine on their knees to submit to a decision of English bishops. Thereupon, Catherine, too, fell on her knees and begged the envoys to use their influence with the king in her behalf. At first, she refused to go to the More in Hertfordshire, as Henry commanded, because the place was unhealthful. Finally, declining to choose a place of her own liking, she humbly obeyed his command, offering a silent prayer for him whom she was never to see again in this life.³³

Far from allowing a sullen and vindictive demeanor to widen the breach between herself and the faithless king, Catherine rather tried to forget her injuries and to soften the heart of Henry. Shortly after her arrival at the More, on New Year’s Day, 1532, she sent him a golden cup in token of her undying love and esteem; but the

33 Strickland, p. 551; see also Hope, pp. 234 seq.

uncivil wretch, though praising its beauty, returned the gift, saying he could accept none from her; much less did he send her and her ladies the customary New Year's present, and he even went so far as to forbid his courtiers to do so.³⁴ About this time, Catherine wrote to her daughter Mary, who was residing at Greenwich. In this letter, the careworn queen does not complain of her wrongs. She merely says that the absence of the king and of her daughter troubles her; that she trusts in God, however, who will "shortly turn all to come with good effect." Then she urges her beloved child to be as assiduous in the study of Latin under her new tutor, Dr. Fetherstone, as she had been under her mother's direction.³⁵

Soon after her repudiation, Catherine informed the Pope of Henry's measures against her. His Holiness, in a private letter, kindly but earnestly admonished the king to reinstate his lawful wife and to dismiss Anne, till Rome had pronounced sentence. The letter dated January 25, 1532, was sent to Catherine who, however, did not venture to forward it to Henry until the following May.³⁶ The latter entirely ignoring the Pope's

34 Hope, p. 237.

35 Strickland, p. 551; the author brings the letter together with an autograph signature of the queen. Dr. Fetherstone was later martyred for the faith, and he is now numbered among the Blessed.

36 Pocock, Vol. II, pp. 166 seq.; Hope, pp. 251 seq.

fatherly appeal, continued to retain Anne in the queen's apartments, and, as if to defy the Holy See, had Catherine removed to Buckden (Bugden),³⁷ still father distant from court. This house, where the queen lived for some months, belonged to Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, who had formerly been Henry's confessor, and who as now an ardent promoter of his cause. Naturally, this circumstance nettled Catherine, while the unwholesome climate greatly impaired her health.

The next September, Anne was created Marchioness of Pembroke, and a month later she accompanied the king on visit to the French monarch at Calais. Not satisfied with this public insult to Catherine, Henry was rude enough to send a messenger for her jewels, that Anne might wear them for the visit. The noble queen obeyed, though with reluctance, surmising, perhaps, that she would never see them again.³⁸

It must have cheered the troubled heart of Catherine to know that, thanks to the activity of the Franciscans in her behalf, the people sympathized with her. If in brighter days she had had a high regard for these zealous friars, how much greater was her esteem

37 According to Strickland, p. 556, Buckden was a palace four miles distant from Huntingdon. It is not noticed by Timbs in his *Abbeys . . . of England and Wales*, probably because it was of inferior rank.

38 Hope, pp. 256, 287.

now, when they proved the most fearless champions of her rights as wife and queen.

Equally staunch in her defense was Bl. Thomas More and the Earl of Shrewsbury, who had charge of the queen's crown, and openly declared that he would never consent to have any other than Catherine wear it. Sir Henry Guildford, the Controller, and many other state officials spoke publicly in favor of the queen. The same is true of Bl. John Fisher and even of Reginald Pole, the king's cousin. Thus, in the course of time, Anne Boleyn became an object of popular contempt. In derision the people nicknamed her Nan Bullen, and on several occasions threatened to take her life. Once she would surely have met a violent death at their hands had she not received a timely warning and made good her escape.³⁹ According to Ludovico Falier, a *Venetian* visiting England at the time, general discontent with the king's unjust policy ran so high that, could they have found a leader, the people would have risen in rebellion and demanded justice for the queen they loved. On December 16, 1533, Chapuys wrote to the Emperor: "You cannot imagine the grief of all the people at this abominable government. They are so transported with indignation at what passes that they complain that your Majesty takes no step in it, and I am told

³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 261 seq.

by many respectable people, that they would be glad to see a fleet come hither in your name, to raise the people; and if they had any chief among themselves, who dared raise his head, they would require no more."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Stone, pp. 47, 64.

(To be continued)



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In the Midst of Darkness and Chaos

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

Children, and some adults, are quite afraid to enter an unlit room. The darkness frightens them. It is true that it is difficult to see in an unlit room, and for this reason light is necessary.

Are there any other reasons why a person may be afraid of the darkness? Some will speak of the possibility of a stranger being in the room who might harm them, such as a burglar. How reasonable is this in a secure home or building?

Still others will fear that which is more elusive, the *unknown*. They are unable to give a real, positive reason for their fear, but are quite afraid nonetheless. The person is usually not aware of it, but the fear is a negative one, for it lacks a foundation in reality. It is simply based on a person's *unbridled imagination*.

There is a fear, although we are unable to see it, which has a very real basis in reality. It is the fear of the spiritual darkness which surrounds those in mortal sin and ongoing vice. The perceptive soul in the state of grace can, at times, tell who is surrounded by demonic evil.

Have you ever been in the middle of a large crowd – a crowd that is restless or perhaps out-of-control?

Were you afraid that you would be trapped or simply unable to get away from the danger before being harmed?

Perhaps there is a better example. You are outside on an overcast night (no moon, no stars) outside of the city where street lights would provide at least some dim light. There is no light – NONE! This is what we call pitch dark. You are able to extend your hand two feet in front of you, but are unable to see it. There is no sound, no movement on a perfectly still night.

Many will understandably avoid such a situation in the same way they would avoid the unlit, haunted house. Some will refuse to enter their own attics or basements at night for fear of the unknown darkness.

Will these same people go to similar efforts to avoid spiritual darkness? The physical darkness, in itself, will not harm you. The spiritual darkness, though, will thrust you into hell if it is not overcome before your death.

One of the basic and more important problems of spiritual darkness is that the person is unaware of his environment because he has been spiritually blinded. That is, of course, unless he is a willing agent

of Satan. Even here, though, the blindness is such that he does not completely and fully understand his actions, for no one would work for Satan if he was given a complete understanding of who this Father of Liars and Deception is.

The reader is reminded that in Hell the darkness is a clear sign of God's absence, the Eternal Light. Within this darkness is chaos of the worse type. It is a demonic chaos – one that is filled with great pain, suffering and bewilderment. There is intentional confusion thrust upon the soul. There is no peace within the soul or in the environment surrounding it.

Now relate this description to circumstances in this world. Relate it especially at this time (2014).

There are many souls in this life who are in the state of mortal sin. We know this is a state of spiritual darkness for the soul. This condition is dangerous enough, but if the person contritely confesses his sins quickly, the state of grace will return and the long-term effect is minimized. Light and order return and rule the soul.

There is a distinct difference, though, with this case and that of the soul which is continuously in mortal sin. Here the soul is filled with a pervading darkness. In a soul such as this, there is no glimmer of supernatural light.

There has been much written and said in recent years concerning spiritual blindness. What does this mean? Spiritual blindness is a condition within the soul which does not allow the person to see or understand those religious or spiritual matters which are easily understood by those who are not affected by this blindness. It does not allow the person to either understand a personal condition (pride, vanity, anger, etc.) or a matter that exists in the Church.

The blindness of the Modern Catholic is, perhaps, the best example. Why is it that Modern Catholics do not understand that which has taken place in the Church? They have taken the spiritual bait (the lies and heresies of the clergy) and have imbibed them as though it were a delicious drink. The tragic result is they are unwilling to accept the truth.

This spiritual blindness opens the door to a darkness which clouds the mind, heart and soul. The intellect may have the capacity to comprehend a matter, but is unable because of darkness which clouds the mind. This darkness often produces a “wall of stubbornness.” This explains why the stubborn person refuses to change his mind, i.e., because of the darkness within him. That which may exist as a person's fault (stubbornness), becomes the means by which

darkness overcomes him.

The heart grows cold and distant due to a lack of supernatural love because of the state of mortal sin. This coldness often leads to an unkind, mean-spirited person. The individual who seems always to be in a “bad mood” or is angry or bitter, has a heart which is hardened due to sin.

The condition of such a person begins in the soul. When the person is in the state of mortal sin, as stated above the darkness blinds the individual resulting in the person being unable or unwilling or both, to see the error of his ways. When there is no spiritual light, the darkness rules.

The key to the soul being able to see is that it maintain spiritual light, i.e., the state of grace. This cannot be overstated in an age when self-indulgence and egotism go hand in hand with mortal sin and offending God.

For the soul that remains in mortal sin for any length of time, not only is darkness present but chaos, also. Chaos is defined as ‘great disorder or confusion.’ This dictionary definition fits perfectly because any soul which lacks grace and, therefore, light, will be disordered and confused.

If the Holy Ghost is not present, and

cannot be present due to sin there will not be a spiritual void in the soul. The act of sinning mortally has opened the soul up to the devil. The devil, of course, needs no special invitation or push to enter into this means of life for the body. He and his demonic subjects will reside there as long as they are able.

Whether or not one is considering the soul or the world in general, it must be understood there is but one thing which will overcome the state of darkness and chaos. It is Christ, Who is the Light of the world.

If the soul is in the state of darkness and sin, it will more easily succumb to the darkness and chaos of the world and the devils. The two are basically the same, i.e., an environment devoid of Christ which is determined to destroy one or more souls.

One is encouraged in spite of spiritual darkness all around us, to remain in the state of grace by avoiding the occasion of sin, receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist regularly and maintaining a true, humble desire to live according to God’s Holy Will. If these simple but profound instructions are followed, your soul will be a light which pierces the darkness and chaos all around you.

The End of the World

Bishop Giles OFM

The end of the world appears to attract more and more speculation as we obviously draw nearer to it. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, tells us that only the Father in Heaven knows when it will take place.¹ Yet, there are many who are searching for a time and date. Every time we hear of someone's exact prediction of when, we think: "Well, it won't be that date, because no one is to know." What people do not seem to be focusing upon is that they must be ready. We must be always ready, because we do not know when Jesus will return, but when He does, we know that He will come in all power and glory, to judge the living and the dead.

There is related to seminarians a story about St. Aloysius Gonzaga. One day some seminarians were discussing the end of the world during their recreation. The question was asked what should they do, if they knew the end were imminent. One suggested finding a priest and making a good confession. Another suggested that they go to the chapel and pray before

the Blessed Sacrament. Our saint answered that they should continue on with their recreation. Everyone was astonished at this, so he had to explain. Their duty, and therefore their schedule, is God's will for them. If the schedule says that they are supposed to be at recreation, then when God comes, they could do nothing better than have Him find them at recreation. This is a wise lesson for us all. We must always be faithful and busy about our duties, because this is God's will for us. If we are doing all things for the love of God then it matters little what it is that we are physically doing. The most important thing is to be doing God's will, whatever that may be at all times. It is God's will that we work, and play, keep vigils, and pray, fast and eat, etc. all in their proper times and places. But, above all, it is necessary that whatever we are doing, that we do it for the love of God.²

We are told that, this temporal world will end, but that there will be a new world, Heaven, where all the just will live, both

¹ "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the Angels of heaven, but the Father alone." (Matthew 24, 36)

² "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do; do all things for the glory of God." (I Cor. 10, 31)

body and soul, for all of eternity. This should fill us with joy and anticipation rather than with fear or dread. If we truly love God all things will work for our good.³

We know, however, that before this glory takes place we must pass through the Great Apostasy that Our Lord spoke of as contained in the Book of Daniel.⁴ There must also first come the anti-Christ. This is perhaps what fills us with that fear and dread; the suffering that the faithful must endure in imitation and love of Jesus.

Most have come to the conclusion that we are living in the midst of the Great Apostasy. There is already the “abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.” The Modernist Novus

3 “And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as according to His purpose are called to be saints.” (Rom. 8, 28)

4 “When therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth let him understand.” (Matt. 24, 15) Haydock’s bible commentary (1859) writes: “The abomination of desolation was first partly fulfilled by divers profanations of the temple, as when the image of Caesar was set up in the temple by Pilate, and Adrian’s statue in the holy of holies, and when the sacrifices were taken away; but will be more completely fulfilled by Antichrist and his precursors, when they shall attempt to abolish the holy sacrifice of the mass.”

Ordo has invaded and taken over the Church. The sanctuary (holy place) has been invaded by the laity, and even pagans (Recall the monstrosities that occurred in Assisi in the name of peace in 1986 and again in 2011.). The tabernacle and altar have been pushed aside. The Sacrifice of the Mass has been replaced by a Memorial Meal. Invalid “priests” pretend to consecrate bread and wine, but no transubstantiation takes place. (Many have forgotten or do not even know what “transubstantiation” means.)

There appear to be many anti-popes, and minor anti-Christ living today. “The” Anti-Christ, has not yet manifested himself if he is here on earth. We know that “The” Anti-Christ will have the whole world bowing down before himself, and worshipping him as God. The preparation for this seems to be in place and progressing with the “one world” agenda. “The” Anti-Christ, it seems, will lead this one world religion and be worshiped as God by the whole world. Only a few elect will not be deceived.⁵

5 “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if it were possible) even the elect.” (Matt. 24, 24)

There are already “wars and rumors of wars”⁶, while everyone keeps clamoring about “peace”⁷. The sufferings that must come first (before Christ’s return) is perhaps what frightens the faithful more than anything else. Will we be able to stand up to the trials and tribulations, as Job did, with complete trust and confidence in God. If we are humble and praying, seeking to love and serve God in all things, we will be given the strength and grace we need to persevere to the end. The grace of perseverance is something that we all should be praying for. The most important part of our life here on earth is the moment that we die. If we die in the state of grace all is well, if we die in sin and an enemy of God then all will be lost. Let us not foolishly imagine that nothing else matters and that we can with grave presumption sin on bravely in this world, and sincerely repent at the last moment. As a man lives so will he die. A man that lives by the sword will most likely die by the

6 “And you shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars. See that ye be not troubled. For these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” (Matt. 24, 6)

7 “For when they shall say, peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the pains upon her that is with child, and they shall not escape.” (1 Thess. 5, 3)

sword⁸. A man that lives in sin will most likely die in sin. We must live every day as if it were our last, because one day it will be.

Another, great fear of many, is the power of the devils in these last days. While it is true that the devils are evil and will be given a lot of power in these last days, we must also remember what St. Augustine tells us: Devils are like chained dogs, and can only harm those who draw close to them. As long as we keep our distance they can bark at us but can never bite us. God is all just and the devils can do nothing to us without His consent. (Remember Job). God loves us and will never allow us to be tempted without giving us a way to resist and overcome the temptation. Where evil abounds, grace abounds even more.⁹

Even when the devils are permitted to take physical possession, we find that the evil done by the devil through the person’s body is never attributed to the person, but rather to the devil who is doing the evil. The

8 “Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place. For all that take the sword, shall perish by the sword.” (Matt. 26, 52)

9 “Now the law entered in, that sin might abound. But where sin abounded, grace hath abounded more.” (Rom. 5, 20)

person only becomes culpable when he gives his consent and wills the evil that the devils will.

It has been said that very often demonic possession is allowed by God for the further humiliation of the demons and the greater glory of God. The devils do not wish to reveal themselves to men, because in this open revelation they are more likely to be resisted. The devils want to remain hidden behind the scenes, and find this is much more effectual in leading souls to Hell. While the devils remain hidden, men let down their guard, they lose all fear, and draw imperceptibly closer and closer. When the chained dog is not barking, many people will draw near it only to learn its viciousness too late.

When we forget that the devils exist and they are constantly suggesting evil to us, we forget to resist them, we forget to pray to God for help. We stop discerning everything that comes our way. We stop thinking. We become members of a mob; a mob that imagines it is thinking, but is simply following the suggestions and clichés of the mob manipulators. It seems that this is the method we see the devils employing at the moment.

This is their greatest power and influence over mankind in these last days. Throughout most of history we see that men believe in the spiritual world and pray and appease spirits as well as resist others; but today we find that while there is a lot of talk about God and religion, there are very few who live their lives in the reality of the existence of this spiritual world. In this lack of a living, practical faith, mankind is left wide open for the suggestions and manipulations of the devils. The unthinking masses bow down and accept every suggestion of the mass media. The mass media is becoming ubiquitous throughout the world. The clichés of this demonic led mass media, are leading the masses by the proverbial nose, into the open bowels of Hell.

We must remember to always and everywhere use the intelligence and faith that God has given us to test and discern critically everything that this mass media presents to us, as well as the suggestions of family, friends, neighbors, the world, the devils, and our own fallen nature. Recall the punishment that awaited the servant that buried his talent rather than investing it and

putting it to use.¹⁰ Our faith and our intellect are talents entrusted to us by God. We must not put them on a shelf and forget about them, thinking that they are safe and secure. The talents are only safe and secure when they are put to use at all times.

If we are to save our souls in the midst of this current Great Apostasy, and resist the Anti-Christ when he manifests himself, we must make it a priority to develop and increase the faith and intelligence that He has given us. But, in doing this we must always remain humble. With humility and God's grace we will easily recognize the evil hidden in the suggestions of the demons wherever they are presented. We will be able with Christ and the saints to say: "Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve."¹¹ We will be made able to see and to resist and to drive the demonic barking dog far from us.

Let us not fear so much the idea of demonic possession, but rather the crafty demonic deceptions

¹⁰ "Wicked and slothful servant ... Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him, and give it him that hath ten talent." (Matt. 25: 26,28)

¹¹ Matt. 4: 10

that are so prevalent all around us. We can drive these devils far from us by first learning to recognize their deceptive clichés; and then making use of the graces that God has made available to us in the true sacraments and sacramentals. Someone once said that every Catholic can drive the devils far away with faith, the Sign of the Cross, and holy water. Let us study and pray and humbly begin practicing the habit of discerning of spirits. Once we uncover them and their true goals, often hidden under nice sounding platitudes, then we can resist and fight against them.

When Our Lord returns may He find us diligently employing the graces He has given us. May He find us employing the true Faith; employing our intellect in discerning; employing our free wills; etc. to resist the devils, the world, and our own fallen nature, so that we can draw closer and closer to Him day by day in all Faith, Hope, and Charity. In this manner we will have nothing to fear, but on the contrary be filled with great courage for the battle as all the saints and martyrs had who have gone before us.

Franciscan Saints

FEAST OF THE STIGMATA OF OUR HOLY FATHER ST. FRANCIS SEPTEMBER 17

In the beginning of his conversion Christ crucified called our holy Father St. Francis into His service. Francis imitated Him so faithfully that towards the end of his life our Lord wished to point him out to the world as the faithful imitator of the Crucified, by stamping His five wounds upon his body.

Two years before his death, when, according to his custom, he had repaired to Mt. La Verna to spend the forty days preceding the feast of St. Michael the Archangel in prayer and fasting, the wonderful occurrence took place. St. Bonaventure gives the following account of it:

Francis was raised to God in the ardor of his seraphic love, and wholly transformed by sweet compassion into Him, who, of His exceeding charity, was pleased to be crucified for us. On the morning of the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, as he was praying in a secret and solitary place on

the mountain, Francis beheld a seraph with six wings all afire, descending to him from the heights of heaven. As the seraph flew with great swiftness towards the man of God, there appeared amid the wings the form of one crucified, with his hands and feet stretched out and fixed to the cross. Two wings rose above the head, two were stretched forth in flight, and two veiled the whole body.

Francis wondered greatly at the appearance of so novel and marvelous a vision. But knowing that the weakness of suffering could in nowise be reconciled with the immortality of the seraphic spirit, he understood the vision as a revelation of the Lord and that it was being presented to his eyes by divine providence so that the friend of Christ might be transformed into Christ crucified, not through martyrdom of the flesh, but through a spiritual holocaust.

The vision, disappearing, left

behind it a marvelous fire in the heart of Francis, and a no less wonderful token impressed on his flesh. For there began immediately to appear in his hands and in his feet something like nails as he had just seen them in the vision of the Crucified. The heads of the nails in the hands and feet were round and black, and the points were somewhat long and bent, as if they had been turned back. On the right side, as if it had been pierced by a lance, was the mark of a red wound, from which blood often flowed and stained his tunic.

Thus far the account of St. Bonaventure. Although St. Francis strove in every way to conceal the marvelous marks which until then no man had seen, he was not able to keep them a complete secret from his brethren. After his death they were carefully examined and attested by an ecclesiastical decree. In remembrance of this impression of the five wounds, Pope Benedict XI instituted the feast we celebrate today.

ON LOOKING UP TO THE CROSS

1. With the example of our holy Father St. Francis in mind, consider what effect a glance at the cross should have on us. It led Francis from the service of the world to the service of God and to penance. A look at the crucifix should remove from our hearts all delight in the world and fill us with sorrow for the sins we have committed in the service of the world and of our evil passions. For what other reason was Christ nailed to the cross at hands and feet, and was His whole body bruised? The Prophet tells us: "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins" (Is. 53:5). Recalling the reason caused St. Francis to shed so many tears that his eyes were all inflamed from weeping. — Do you also kneel before the crucifix and bewail the sins through which you nailed your Saviour to the cross?

2. Consider that a look at the cross is also a consolation for the sinner. Our crucified Lord assured St. Francis of the complete remission of his sins. The Prophet also tells us: "By his bruises we are

healed” (Is. 53:5). Moses gave us a picture of our Saviour on the cross when he raised a brazen serpent on high in the desert, so that those who had been bitten by the poisonous serpent in punishment for their murmurings might be healed by looking up to this sign of our redemption. On the crucifix you behold our Saviour Himself. “Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). — Look up to Him with sincere contrition and lively confidence; He will also take away your sins.

3. Consider how the contemplation of the Crucified finally pierced St. Francis through and through with the fire of love, so that our Lord made him even externally like Himself. A look at the crucifix should also awaken ardent charity in us. St. Augustine points this out to us when he says: “Behold the head that is bent to kiss you, the heart that is opened to receive you, the arms stretched out to embrace you.” Do not look at the image of your crucified Saviour in the cold and indifferent way that one looks at a work of art, to

marvel at the painful expression there represented. Let it speak to your heart and let your heart speak to it. “He loved me and delivered Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). — Serve Him faithfully so that you may one day be united with Him in eternity.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O Lord Jesus Christ, who when the world was growing cold, didst renew the sacred wounds of Thy sufferings in the body of our holy Father St. Francis in order to inflame our hearts with the fire of Thy divine love, mercifully grant that by his merits and intercession we may cheerfully carry our cross and bring forth worthy fruits of penance. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.



Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER XV

Faithful Beyond the Grave

. . . I go to prepare a place for you. And . . . then I am coming again and I will take you to Myself (cf. Jn. 14:2, 3).

1. *The faithful love of Jesus goes beyond the grave.* Every purely natural companionship ceases at the grave, for it cannot cross the boundaries of the kingdom of death. A friend can indeed grieve for his friend, he may lament his loss with a soul full of pain, but he can no longer help him even with all the wealth and power on earth. Death is ruthless, it tears asunder the most tender bonds, separates the most intimate union, leads the friend into an unknown, dark land from which no message can be sent to the surviving friend. The grave marks the end of natural, human companionship.

This is not true of our heavenly Friend. Friendship with Him is stronger than death. Indeed, beyond the grave its true glory

is first really revealed. From His tomb the *risen* Saviour sent this message to His friends: "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" (Jn. 20:17). But before He ascends He remains with His disciples for some time to console them. It had never been known until that day that one dead consoled his surviving friends. Only the friendship of Jesus endures beyond the grave. He filled the hearts of His own with peace and great joy, and He strengthened them so that nothing more could separate them from His love.

He ascends into heaven before their eyes and is seated there at the right hand of the Father, who tells Him: "Sit on My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool" (Heb. 1: 13). There He will rule until He has brought His kingdom here on earth to its final consummation and has conquered all His enemies. The last to be overcome will be death, which Satan brought into the world at the beginning of time by sin (cf. Rom. 5:12). Death itself

will be condemned to death, all dying will have an end; and he who has power over all perishes at the hands of our Saviour, so that all principalities inimical to God shall be destroyed (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24 ff.). “The Lamb will overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings” (Apoc. 17:14).

A friend may be ever so powerful, but with death all earthly power ceases. How many at one time desired the friendship of the king of Babylon, who then was the most powerful prince on earth: But he, too, succumbed to death. The prophet Isaias graphically describes how the great ones of antiquity went to meet the king of Babylon in the underworld and derided him, saying: “Thou also art wounded as well as we, thou art become like unto us. Thy pride is brought down to hell, thy carcass is fallen down: . . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? How art thou fallen to the earth, that didst wound the nations? . . . Indeed, thou hast been brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit” (Isa. 14:9 ff.). Such is the end of the friendship of the mightiest on earth.

The words of the prophet Osee: “O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite” apply to Christ (Osee 3:14), for “Christ is on the right hand of God, swallowing down death” (1 Pet. 3:22). He has conquered the mighty ruler of the empire of death and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude (cf. Heb. 2:14, 15). “O death, where is thy victory” (1 Cor. 15:55). Death and the empire of death were cast into the pool of fire (cf. Apoc. 20:14). Christ reigns with His saints “and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Lk. 1:33).

But He is not satisfied merely with His own glorification. Even in heaven He watches over His Church (cf. Mt. 28:20). Jesus Christ is our intercessor with the Father (cf. Rom. 8:34). He is always mindful of us; all that we do and suffer for Him is noted in the book of life (cf. Apoc. 20:12); even the smallest act is not overlooked and He shall reward them all and assign a place to all His friends in the kingdom of heaven, each according to his works. “In My Father’s house there are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you; and when I have prepared a place for

you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am, you also may be. You shall see Me again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man shall take from you” (cf. Jn. 14:2, 3; 16:22). The redeemed of the Lord come with praise, and everlasting joy is upon their heads. Joy and gladness is their portion and sorrow and mourning have fled away (cf. Isa. 35: 10). It is thus that the friendship of our heavenly Friend proves itself even beyond the grave.

2. Just as the friendship of Christ did not cease with His death, it will not cease with ours. Whoever dies as a friend of Jesus will remain His friend for all eternity. The friendship of Jesus is more than a mere friendship coextensive with life on earth, it is a friendship that is to endure for the life beyond the grave. While on earth we are on a pilgrimage to our Friend. “While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:6, 7); but we are full of hope; for we do not walk in darkness, but in the light (cf. Jn. 12:46). For the present this light of faith is but a dim lantern

shining in a dark place; but the day will dawn (cf. 2 Pet. 1: 19); then we shall see our heavenly Friend, our Saviour, as He is, not veiled by faith, but distinctly, face to face, His humanity and divinity. The result will be that we shall be like Him in glory, in blissful contemplation, in never-ending love and joy (cf. 1 Jn. 3:2). Knowledge and love is the food of the soul. This is the reason why the kingdom of heaven is like a banquet of which the blessed, gathered about the Saviour, partake, where they eat and drink with Him (cf. Mt. 8:11; Lk. 22:30). “They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure” (Ps. 35:9).

At the deathbed of her children the Church prays: “May Jesus Christ appear to thee with a mild and cheerful countenance, and give thee a place among those who are to be in His presence forever. . . . May Christ Jesus, the Son of the living God, place thee in the ever blooming garden of His paradise; and may the true Shepherd own thee for one of His flock. . . . Oh! may it be thy happiness to behold thy Redeemer face to face; to be ever in His presence, in the blessed

vision of that Eternal Truth which is the joy of the elect.” Such is the lot of the friends of Christ after death.

The friendship of Jesus endures, indeed, beyond the grave, but its effects will then be different. During our life on earth the friendship of Jesus is manifested chiefly by His merciful love; He receives each repentant sinner and pardons him his sins; despite all shortcomings. He is patient and indulgent. All this ceases with death. He who does not die a friend of Jesus cannot then become His friend, but is lost for all eternity. And if His friends depart this life stained with imperfections, they will not receive a merciful pardon, but must atone for them in purgatory until their souls are pure and fit for entrance into heaven. Mercy and pardon cease, and in their place we have judgment and justice. Each one shall receive according to his works.

Nevertheless, the loving heart of our Redeemer still finds a way to reconcile justice and mercy for His friends in Purgatory. The souls detained there, despite all their sufferings, are full of consolation, because

they know that they love Jesus and are loved by Him and that His friendship, will be theirs for all eternity. They are incapable of desiring anything except what Jesus desires; they rejoice at the fact that the obstacle which still separates them from Jesus is being removed by their sufferings. The dearer they are to the Heart of Jesus, the greater is their satisfaction. Their condition is a marvelous combination of joy and pain. Can you imagine a sick man who, while he suffers excruciating bodily pain, receives some good news which he has long passionately expected? He would suffer and rejoice at the same time. This is an inadequate comparison and it does but vaguely picture the condition of the souls in Purgatory.

But our Saviour is not satisfied with this; He does still more. He inspires the Church and individual Christians to come to the assistance of the souls in Purgatory by prayer, good works, acts of self-denial, patience under suffering, the gaining of indulgences, and above all through the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Through His Church He

has not only set aside one day of the year which is especially consecrated to the relief of the poor souls in purgatory, but He offers Himself daily on a thousand altars to His heavenly Father for the faithful departed that they may the sooner be released from their pains.¹ The life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque is full of instances which show how well pleased the heart of Jesus is when His friends in Purgatory obtain help from His friends on earth. It is the wish of Jesus that all those who honor His Divine Heart, both the living and the dead, remain in intimate communion with one another through prayer.

The love of Jesus for His friends and their love for Him is the common bond which unites the saints of Heaven, the just on Earth, and the souls in Purgatory into the Communion of Saints. This does not merely consist in an external classification, but is an intimate communion of life, because the supernatural life, which they all share has its origin in the same source, and each lives for the whole, and the whole body for each. Yet

¹ Council of Trent, Sess. 22, C. 2, can. 3; Sess. 25, decr. on Purgatory.

the just on earth and the souls in Purgatory are, to a certain extent, members not yet fully grown. When all shall have attained their full stature, life on earth will be over, Purgatory will be no more, and there will be only the Church Triumphant and its glorified Head, Christ.

Only then will the friendship of Christ with His saints appear in all its greatness. Only then shall we understand what great things the love of Christ has done for us; then we shall realize His amiability so perfectly that nothing will be able to prevent our loving Him with the whole ardor of our soul; then this love will fully satisfy the thirst of our souls for happiness. This is the eternal marriage supper of the Lamb with His bride, the Church. The angel, who acted as St. John's escort in his vision of this banquet, said: "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Apoc. 19:9); for the Lamb will there prove Himself the faithful Shepherd of His friends and "shall guide them to the fountains of the waters of life," to the possession and enjoyment of the Divinity, and "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Apoc. 7:17). This is the

perfect triumph of the Heart of Jesus.

3. *The glorified heart of Jesus is the object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.* The object of this devotion is not the heart of Christ separated from His body, not the dead heart of Christ, but the living Heart as it pulsates in Christ glorified. The Jansenists maintained that the devotion to the Sacred Heart was theologically unsound, because in it a dead heart, independently of its union with the Divinity, was venerated. Pius VI in the year 1786 condemned this affirmation as an insidious calumny of the faithful lovers of the Sacred Heart.² We honor the Heart of Christ as it really is; but it is the Heart of our glorified Saviour in Heaven. There His physical Heart throbs in His breast, there He is consumed with love for us, there His whole human nature is united hypostatically to the Second Person of the Divinity. The heart of Jesus is, of course, also present in the Blessed Sacrament and is honored there, but His sacramental condition presupposes His natural condition and depends on it. The Sacrament will one

2 Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion*, n. 1563.

day cease, but the Heart of Jesus will live forever in heaven and will be the joy of His friends. In the Holy Eucharist our Saviour is the companion of our exile, our food on our pilgrimage to eternity. In heaven our exile will have ceased and our pilgrimage will have ended. Then that verse of the Eucharistic hymn will be verified:

Grant that in heaven with Thee,
Faith's veils removed, we see
Thee face to face.³

It was His glorified Heart that our Saviour revealed to St. Margaret Mary when He commanded her to honor His Sacred Heart. She describes this vision for us. "The Sacred Heart appeared to me as a brilliant sun of glorious light, the rays of which struck my heart. . . . On another occasion Jesus Christ, my loving Master, appeared to me resplendent in glory, His five wounds shining like five suns. Flames everywhere issued from His Sacred Humanity, but especially from His adorable breast which seemed to be a very furnace; His breast opened and I saw His loving and amiable Heart which was the living source of

3 From the hymn, *O Esca Viatorum*. "Fac, ut remoto. velo, aperta te in coelo cernamus facie."

these flames. It was then that He explained to me the ineffable marvels of His pure love, and to what lengths it had driven Him, even to love men from whom He received but ingratitude and indifference.”

This vision of St. Margaret was obviously a vision of the glorious Saviour as He is in Heaven; for there Christ is the resplendent Sun which illumines the city of God (cf. Apoc. 21:23). The devotion to the Sacred Heart unites us in a most intimate and tender manner with our Saviour as He lives in heaven, with His Heart which there pulsates with love for us. We cannot wish for

or find a more beautiful, more exalted, more amiable object of veneration and enthusiastic devotion than the glorified God-man. And this King of glory wishes to be our Friend if only we will be His friends. He requests His friends (and what a reasonable request it is) that they return His love with love and make reparation for all the injuries which men heap upon Him. And even this request He makes solely for our sake, because He wishes to inspire us with noble sentiments and make our hearts as much like His as possible. O Jesus, re-create our hearts after the pattern of Thy own.

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