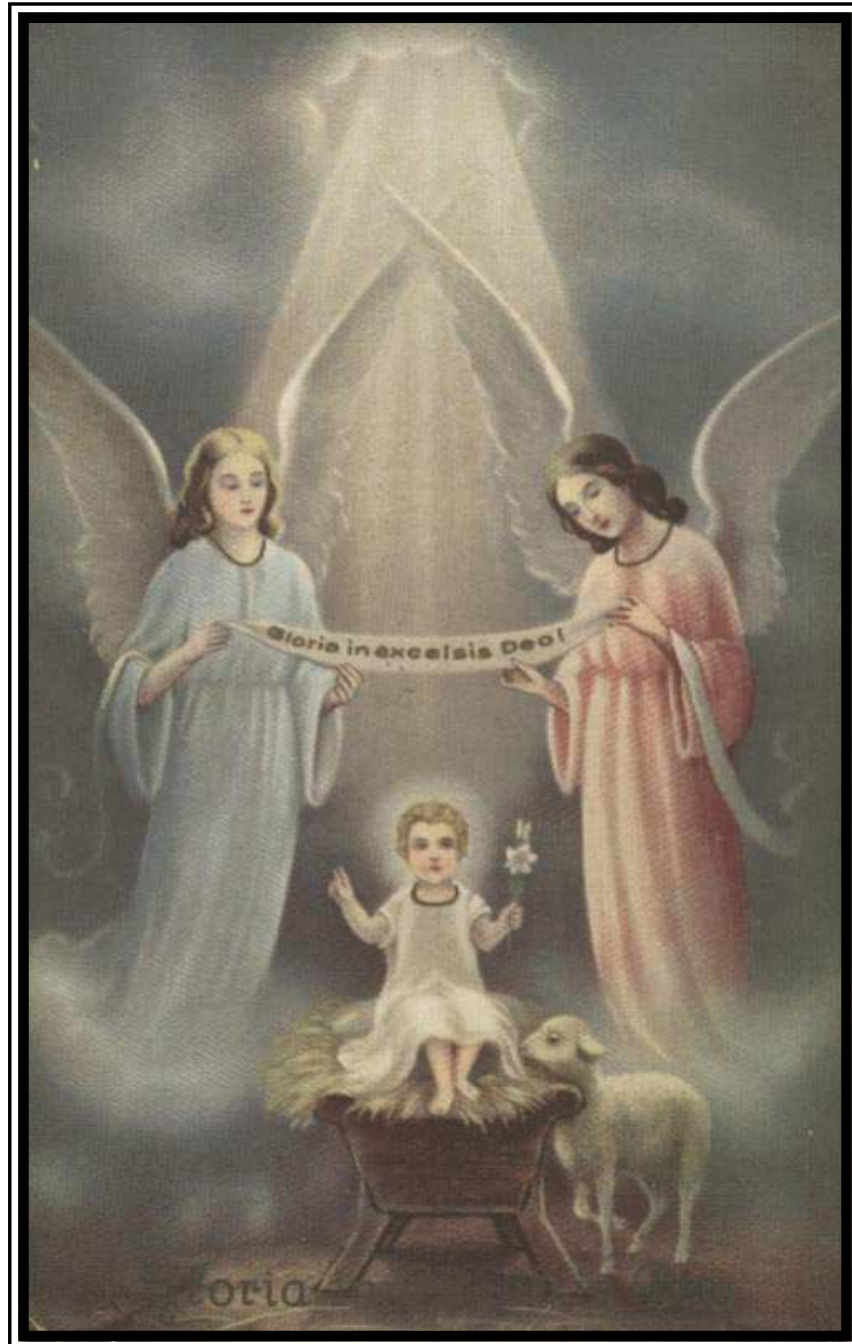


THE SERAPH

December 2014

Vol. XXXV No. 4



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

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

The **SERAPH** stands opposed to any and all heterodoxy, 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.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES
USA: Free upon request.
Suggested donation \$20.00.
FOREIGN: Air Mail: \$40.00 per year

ALL CORRESPONDENCE
SHOULD BE SENT TO:

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franciscanfathers.com

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

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Big Bang and Evolution

I have been asked by several people to comment on “Pope Francis” (Bergoglio) recent statements concerning the big bang theory, evolution, and science.

First, I must make sure all know that we have nothing to do with Bergoglio. We believe that the Modernists have infiltrated what was once the Catholic Church. Now we have heretic impostors presenting themselves to the world as the Catholic Church. This has been going on since the “Vatican II Council” in the 1960’s.

Principally, we see the many false translations, and experimentation done with the Mass and Sacraments to be totally against faith and tradition. Briefly, the Mass of the modernist Novus Ordo (New Order Church created by “Vatican II Council”) is a Protestant meal or memorial service as opposed to the Catholic Mass, which is the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary. In the Catholic Church we have an altar and sacrifice, in the Novus Ordo there is a table and a meal.

The Catholic Church has always

been a promoter of science. Some of the greatest scientists have been Catholic religious monks or friars. These men were able to dedicate a large part of their time in studying God’s creation and were able to understand and systematize logically their understanding so that others may benefit from their studies. Science is essentially this observation, labeling, and organizing of information. The Church has always promoted the natural sciences as well as the theological sciences. Before anyone brings up the accusation of the Church suppressing science, let me say that the Church only opposes the teaching of theories as facts. She does not oppose the forming and investigation of theories (this is fundamental to the natural sciences), only the promoting of them as facts without sufficient proof to back them up.

Catholic dogma concerning the origins of creation is very minimal. It is necessary that we understand that there is a God who has created this world and it is through His intervention that the world continues. He watches over us with loving care. We

must also believe that He created one man and from that one man (Adam) all of mankind has descended. The details of how all this transpired is open ground for various theories. For example, the Church does not forbid anyone in believing that the six days of Creation are six periods of twenty-four hours, or six periods of many years. That precise detail has not been deemed essential to the fact that this world and everything in and around it has been created by an all-powerful God.

We must insist that God is the creator of all things. He is not just a “Grand Architect” as the Freemasons believe. An architect does not create but only arranges already created things in a pleasant or useful manner.

Bergoglio is correct in insisting that all the theories require a Creator. What I see as the greatest heresy in this is the quote: “God is not a divine being or a magician, but the Creator who brought everything to life,” I have looked at several articles and they all give the same quote. The Vatican website however gives this quote: “And thus Creation has been progressing for centuries and centuries, millennia and millennia, until

becoming as we know it today, precisely because God is not a demiurge or a magician, but the Creator who gives life to all beings.” What the press has translated as “divine being” the Vatican has translated as “demiurge.” The *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* defines “demiurge” as: (1. a: a Platonic subordinate deity who fashions the sensible world in the light of eternal ideas. b: a Gnostic subordinate deity who is the creator of the material world. 2. Something that is an autonomous creative force or decisive power.)

In this sense we can find no fault with the statement, because the Creator is God. It is a dogmatic teaching that God is the creator of all things both visible and invisible (Nicene Creed). There is no lesser deity that has created anything.

One peculiar aspect is that he indicates that “God is the Creator who gives life to all beings.” God is the Creator that brought all things into existence, but it is not true that everything that exists or has “being” has been given life. With so much double speak and imprecision in the Novus Ordo documents, we are never sure exactly how to understand what

they are saying. Does he imply that the mountains and hills have a soul and are alive, as the deists imply? Or, hopefully, does he imply that all (living) beings have been created by God (as well as all the non-living beings).

If we look deeper we see that he has made a comparison of the divinity with a magician. It is true that God is not a magician. A magician produces illusions generally by a slight of hand. In creating God did not create an illusion. So in this sense He is not a magician. However, Bergoglio seems to imply that the literal understanding of Genesis indicates an illusion or magical (deceptive) work. He has stated that creation is a progressive work implying a denial of the literal interpretation of Genesis. Bergoglio indicates that God cannot simply say: "Let there be light" and there was light (As this would seem to be "magical" or the work of a "demiurge"). Bergoglio wishes to indicate that God is not all-powerful. This is heresy. Bergoglio indicates that God set creation in motion, but then let it progress on its own.

As we indicated above, the Church promotes true science, but condemns the teaching of theories as facts. When

theories are presented as facts we no longer have science, but we have false religion that is based upon faith. Atheism has infiltrated science and denied God, and established its own god of "science." The problem is that when they present the evolution of the human species from slime in the ocean, they have no facts or real supporting evidence. The Church is not opposed to them presenting this as their theory; where everyone can examine the supporting evidence and the conflicting evidence and draw conclusions, without denying true religion. However, the Church does and has always condemned the teaching of theories as facts. The evolutionists do not teach their theories as theories, but rather as truths. They require of their students faith in their dogma, simply because they say it is so. This is religion and because it is atheistic it is a false religion. This false religion is very much unlike the true religion of the Catholic Church. This false religion of atheism practices pseudo-science and preaches false dogma, all the while claiming to be practicing true science. This is the height of Pharisaical hypocrisy. This was

condemned by God many times, and the true Church continues to condemn it today. Once again, we find true objectivity and true science only in the true Catholic Church.

There are many missing links in the evolutionist's theories, and we seem to be lacking evidence in the current "evolution" of apes into men. Apes should still be evolving, or they should have all evolved by now, and there should not be any more apes. Evolutionists also like to point out the similarity of species and even the similarity of the DNA across various species. This similarity seems to point to a single architect, or designer, or artist; rather than to the theory of one species evolving from another. All these creatures were created by the same being, God; therefore, they show a similarity in design. We see a similarity in all the paintings of the artist VanGogh. We do not conclude that his paintings evolved, one from the other. Rather the similarity tells us that it was the same artist that created all of them. In the same manner, the similarities between men and apes does not prove that men evolved from apes, but rather that God is the creator of both

apes and men.

The Church only declares things dogmatic that are certain, She leaves many things open to our further inquiry. She must however, and She does, condemn the teaching of errors, or theories as if they were dogmatic.

While we may be free to believe or reject the theory of all creation emanating from a "big bang," or that man was created instantly or over a great period of time; we must insist that however these things happened they were brought about by an all-powerful God.

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Modernist Books

We have received the following letter:

Greetings, Your Excellency,

I was not aware that there is no equivalent in the CIC 1917 to the c. 212 of the false CIC 1983. Can you help me to understand why?

(for reference only; CIC 1983)

Can. 212 §1. Conscious of their own responsibility, the Christian faithful are bound to follow with Christian obedience those things which the sacred pastors, in as much as they represent Christ, declare as teachers of the faith or establish as rulers of the Church.

§2. The Christian faithful are free to make known to the pastors of the Church their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires.

§3. According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they possess, they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their

pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.

Perhaps this is a topic you may address in an upcoming Seraph?

*In Christ,
G.L.*

I have not made a study of the “New Canon Law.” This is a work of the Modernist Novus Ordo, and therefore bears no authority over Catholics. From the moment it is clearly determined that the Novus Ordo Church is not Catholic, their works are equated with the works of all the other Protestant churches. While they are useful to study so as to find and point out their errors in the hope of converting its members, or to strengthen our own convictions in the true Faith; we must likewise be cautious lest we become ensnared in their cleverly worded texts.

We must also remind ourselves that the study of Law is truly a specialty and that is why there are men (lawyers) who make this their particular specialty.

The intricacies of law, either civil or Church, are often confusing, to say the least. Laws are usually framed after an abuse has arisen. So the body of law is constantly growing as each case is examined and a decision is made, and another precedent is set. The general law that was originally composed becomes extended and expounded upon with each precedent that is added to it. Sometimes the precedent adds strength to the law and sometimes it softens the law. In either case the study of all this often becomes confusing and often appears contradictory. Added to this dilemma, is the fact that, practices or customs of people actually become incorporated into the body of law, even if they are not specifically written into it.

Having rejected the Novus Ordo as Protestant, we do not recognize their “New Code” and continue to hold the Code of 1917 as the applicable Canon for all true Catholics. This “New Code” as well as all the publications of the Novus Ordo fall into the same category as books (publications) of non-Catholics dealing with religion. In the Code of Canon Law (1917), under Canon 1398, we find a list of “Books

Forbidden By Law.” Number 4 in this list says: “books of any non-Catholics treating professedly of religion, unless it is certain that they contain nothing contrary to the Catholic faith.” (“A PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE CODE OF CANON LAW” by Rev. Stanislaus Woywod, O.F.M. LL.B. 1948)

In this light, the “New Code” of the Novus Ordo is a forbidden book for Catholics to read without a special permission. We would also like to remind our readers that what is said of books applies to all manner of publications: i.e. daily papers, periodicals, and other publications; and we would add publications in electronic formats, i.e. on the internet, computers, tablets, smart phones, etc.

Many non-Catholics (including the Novus Ordo) publish very openly and freely on the internet on websites, blogs, social media, etc. on religious matters. Catholics should be on their guard in their readings, seeking only that which has been approved prior to the Modernist impersonation of the Catholic Church (Novus Ordo); or that which has been approved by us

or a true Catholic Bishop who has and exercises the power of his office.

Catholics are encouraged to study the true Faith, and true Apologetics. This is surely more than sufficient to fill their time and spiritual desires. Those who have received the sacrament of Confirmation should understand that they are now “Soldiers” in this battle against the spirit of darkness. They should be able to refute the basic arguments of the non-Catholic with Scripture, Faith, reason, and logic. This often entails, however, that they know something of what the non-Catholic is saying. This knowledge of the non-Catholic teaching is often sufficiently gained in conversation, or personal correspondence, without any need to read their publications. We encourage everyone to always enter into Apologetics in all humility. No one person can know everything. A Catholic should never be too ashamed to say: “I am sorry, I do not know the answer to that question, but I am more than happy to find the answer and get back to you on that point.” This is much better than creating an answer out of thin air and then

either having to retract it later, or filled with pride and obstinacy erroneously defend it at all costs.

It is possible for certain persons to obtain permission to read forbidden books, but this is only done in rare cases. “In the case of books forbidden by the general law of the Church or by Decree of the Holy See, Ordinaries can give their subjects permission to read only individual books and in urgent cases only”

Having given warning of reading non-Catholic writings dealing with religion, and emphasizing that the Modernists Novus Ordo Church is to be included in this warning, we would like to also add the prohibition of audio and video recordings of the same.

Now, to answer the reader’s question. The Catholic Code of Canon Law (from 1917) deals with the Laity beginning with Canon 682. “The laity has the right to receive from the clergy the spiritual goods and especially the necessary means of salvation, according to the rules of ecclesiastical discipline.” The commentary continues: “The spiritual goods spoken of here are the ordinary suffrages, sacramentals, indul-

gences, ecclesiastical burial, etc., while the necessary means of salvation referred to are the sacraments, especially those necessary as a means or by precept for salvation. This right is conferred partly by the divine law in reference to the necessary means of salvation, especially the sacraments; and partly by the ecclesiastical law, as regards the sacramentals, sacraments not necessary by divine precept, etc. To this right of the laity corresponds an obligation on the part of the clergy. Both the right and the obligation are more accurately regulated throughout the Code.”

The Modernists’ Code seems to have made it a law that its followers must obey the law. “*Can. 212 §1. Conscious of their own responsibility, the Christian faithful are bound to follow with Christian obedience those things which the sacred pastors, in as much as they represent Christ, declare as teachers of the faith or establish as rulers of the Church.*” This seems to be self-evident. When a law is made, those subject to the law must obey it. I am not sure why this would have to be formulated and put into the Modernist’s Code. Of course if we were to examine

this more closely we see an opening for questioning all of the Code. If we argue that the “sacred pastors” do not represent Christ, then their laws are not enforceable. Or if these “sacred pastors” are not true teachers of the faith, then their laws are not enforceable. Or if these “sacred pastors” are not rulers of the Church, their laws are not enforceable.

We can read into this Modernists’ Code a type of democracy. §2. *The Christian faithful are free to make known to the pastors of the Church their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires.* §3. *According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they possess, they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.* We find an undermining of the very foundation of their law. If the laity cannot see Christ in their “sacred pastors;” or argue that what they are

teaching is not a matter of faith, or that the rulers are not true rulers but only symbolic figure heads like the Queen of England then they are released from any and all obedience to them. In a democracy the people rule and the leader is nothing more than the representative of the people. "Of the people, by the people, and for the people." We could logically develop an interpretation of the dogma of the "Mystical Body of Christ" which denies all the authority of the priests, bishops, and pope, and end with a demonic democracy where the will of the people, is taken for the will of God. In this scenario, there ends with no central authority in the Novus Ordo, and thus demonic anarchy reigns. (We did see this with all the "experimentation" done during and following the false "Vatican II Council")

We could Sophistically develop many and various "interpretations" of this Modernists' Code, but this should suffice to show several things to us: 1. The necessity for only a recognized authority to interpret and apply laws. 2. The difficulty and complexity in formulating laws. 3. The need for an accurate

understanding of the spirit of the law as opposed to the letter of the law. 4. The vagueness of the Modernists' formulas. (They allow for an orthodox as well as a heretical interpretation.)

We are still puzzled as to why it is necessary to have a law that gives the laity the right and/or obligation to approach the clergy with their spiritual needs. Is it really necessary to make this a law? Is it not understood that children may approach their parents with their needs; and that parishioners may approach their pastors with their needs? A father is not much of a father if his children cannot approach him for aid and support, as well as instruction and correction.

This part of the law seems to undermine the Catholic Canon Law demanding *imprimatur* and *nihil obstat*, "... *they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors ... and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful.*" It is an obviously very dangerous position when every whim or idea that pops into people's heads is free to be published and promoted without any supervision. This is the Protestant doctrine of

private or personal interpretation incorporated into the Modernists' Code. These souls are free to publish even when under the influence of demonic "inspiration;" to promote every whim or fancy and claim that it is from God. There is no real or true discernment of spirits. There is no right or wrong. Of course there is the added condition: "*without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.*" There is only the deciding factor of a Protestant "sincerity," and respect for others. (Many are quite often, sincere but wrong.) All absolutes have been done away with. Of course the *integrity of faith and morals* is likewise up for individual interpretation.

Perhaps we could illustrate this with a hypothetical situation. Suppose a homosexual individual, maintaining the "integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to the common advantage and the dignity of persons," develops a theory where same sex partners in a "loving" relationship that

"harm no one" should have their "union" accepted and blessed by the "Church." They reinterpret any Scripture, previous Law, or practice of the Church which suggests that only unions between a man and a woman are legitimate, as unenlightened or undeveloped, and that we are now in a more enlightened and more developed time and we can without prejudice to the faith accept and bless homosexual relationships. They are by this law free to publish and disseminate their ideas to the whole world. In this manner, they can, then influence the leaders to change and accept them. This is a democratic way of changing law, and is rather quickly acceptable to many in today's world. This, however, if we examine it more closely is riddled with problems that will terminate in the tail wagging the dog, or complete anarchy.

The Modernists' "Vatican II" Church has changed or allowed to be changed the beliefs (faith) of many would be Catholics, through a subtle and gradual change in the prayers and manner of worshiping. *Lex orandi lex credenda*. The law of prayer is the law of belief. In a desire to change the faith (destroy the

faith) of Catholics, the Novus Ordo promoted experimentation with the liturgy. As various forms of prayer and worship were brought in; changed, and then changed again and again, the doctrines (teachings) were necessarily changed. With a change in doctrine comes a change in faith. Protestantism entered and took over through the “experimentation” of the Modernists. They now believe in the same ‘God’ as the Protestants. The ‘God’ of the Protestants and the Modernist Novus Ordo, is made to fit any and every changing whim or fashion of the day. This ‘God’ is all things to all men in a very heretical sense. This ‘God’ allows, encourages, and promotes divorce and remarriage for those who want this. This ‘God’ does not demand sinners to repent and do penance if they do not want to. This ‘God’ allows people to believe ‘He’ is present or not present in ‘Holy Communion,’ which ever they prefer. This ‘God’ is truly indifferent to the beliefs of men or the worship they offer ‘Him.’

Catholics do not believe in this subjective ‘God’ of the Protestants and the Novus Ordo. God is real and very objective.

He has made it very clear that we must believe in Him and all that He has taught us. He has made it very clear how He desires to be worshiped. It is The Unbloody Sacrifice of Calvary (The Mass), that He desires and not a ‘memorial meal.’ Catholics have an altar and a priesthood necessary for the Sacrifice; the Protestants and Novus Ordo, have a table and a president or presider for a meal.

This one article of the Modernist Code, seems to be perfectly in line with their Protestant mentality. It has opened up the door for more “experimentations.” Anyone and everyone is permitted to bring forth whatever ideas they have (right, wrong, helpful, or harmful) and promote them openly and freely. (Provided they have no prejudice against faith and morals, and are respectful to their pastors and others.) There is no oversight, approval, or correction necessary. This is truly a great Apostasy. May God have mercy upon the foolish souls who think that they can change, and create their own doctrines to please themselves. They have created a false god and worship him, and are thus guilty of the greatest insult to God – idolatry.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

CHAPTER IX

BLESSED JOHN FOREST, O. F. M.

Birth and parentage — Enters the Franciscan Order — Doctor of Oxford — Provincial of England — Espouses the queen's cause — Fr. Richard Lyst, traitor and spy — Blessed Forest and the king — Attempt to remove Forest from the provincialship — Stauneh defender of papal supremacy — Imprisoned, tried, condemned to death — Martyrdom delayed — With the Conventuals in London Entrapped in the confessional — Before the Privy Council — Once more in Newgate — Tried for heresy — Sentenced to die at the stake — His alleged submission — Drawn on a hurdle to Smithfield — The friars and the bishop — Dreadful torture and death.

We have seen in the course of our narrative how fearlessly the English Franciscans championed the rights of Queen Catherine, and how bravely they suffered banishment, imprisonment, torture, and death in defense of papal supremacy. We have contemplated the life and martyrdom of the illustrious Tertiary Chancellor Bl. Thomas More, and have seen the saintly

Tertiary Queen Catherine of Aragon, insulted, discrowned, and repudiated by a faithless and cruel king. Before continuing our sad but edifying story, we must direct our attention to a man whose glorious example of unswerving loyalty to truth guided and encouraged the friars at the outbreak of the storm and finally won for him the martyr's crown.

Bl. John. Forest was born in 1471. It is probable that the place of his birth was Oxford, where according to Wood there resided about the middle of the fifteenth century a family by the name of Forest¹. William Forest, the poet priest, is supposed to have been related to the martyr.² As appears from the letter of Queen Catherine,³ he was of an ancient and noble family. Of his early years nothing is known beyond the fact that, as Wood observes, "he was from his childhood

1 Thaddeos, Life of Blessed John Forest, p. 2.

2 The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VI, p. 144. Among his writings is a long poem on Queen Catherine of Aragon.

3 See the foregoing chapter.

educated in piety and learning.”⁴ During the last two decades of the fifteenth century, the reform movement in the Order of St. Francis was fast gaining ground in the English Province, while the friars by their zeal and sanctity were attracting nationwide attention. Hence we can readily imagine how the parents of Forest rejoiced when he told them of his desire to forgo the promises and pleasures of the world and to embrace the secluded and holy life of the Franciscans. Gladly they consented, and in 1491, the young man of twenty summers⁵ received the gray habit in the friary at Greenwich.



Bl. John Forest

⁴ Parkinson, *Antiquities of the English Franciscans*, p. 241.

⁵ The year of Forest’s birth (1471) and that of his entrance into the Franciscan Order (1491) are based on his letter to Queen Catherine, which was most probably written in 1535. (See the foregoing chapter.) In this letter, he says expressly that he is in his sixty-fourth year, and that he has passed four and forty years in the Order of St. Francis. Others affirm that he was seventeen years of age when he entered the order. See Parkinson, p. 241.

The year of novitiate and the subsequent years of study were spent in seclusion and prayer. Shut off from worldly cares and distractions, the youthful friar was laying the foundation of that magnificent structure of Franciscan ideals which was destined to stand unshaken amid the fury of warring elements.

Little did he surmise, kneeling in prayer before the image of his heavenly Queen, what great things were in store for him, and what a noble part he was one day to play for the spiritual welfare of his country.

In 1500, at the age of twenty-nine, we find Forest residing in the friary without Watergate,

a suburb south of Oxford,, where he devoted himself to the study of theology. Later, he pursued a higher course in the sacred sciences, presumably at the university of Oxford. Here, as Wood informs us, he supplicated the venerable regents for permission to take the degree of doctor of divinity.

Whether he was admitted, is not known. Although Wood thinks that Forest received the degree neither at Oxford nor at Cambridge, still he says that, especially about the year 1517, the registers of Oxford were badly kept. This, Parkinson urges, may account for the absence of Forest's name from the roster of Oxford doctors, "or perhaps," as he suggests, "he was a doctor of Paris."⁶ At all events, it is certain that he held the title; for, besides Wood, also Stow, Godwyn, How, Holinshed, Pits, Wadding; Davenport, Bouchier, Mason, and most later historians, like Dodd, apply it to him; while the fact that Hugh Latimer, on the morning of Forest's martyrdom, repeatedly addressed him as Doctor, seems to remove all doubt in the matter.

As years went on, Fr. John Forest became known far and wide as a man of eminent learning and sterling sanctity. Wholly imbued with the spirit of St. Francis, he labored zealously in establishing and spreading the Observant reform among the friars in England. It was quite natural, therefore, that, probably on the death of the provincial

⁶ See Parkinson, p. 241.

Fr. Stephen Baron, about the year 1520, he was elected by the friars to succeed him.⁷ It must have been in virtue of his authority as provincial superior that, on January 22, 1525, he received orders from Cardinal Wolsey to preach at St. Paul's Cross and publicly to pronounce the censures of the Church on nineteen friars of the Greenwich community. They had left the friary without permission as a protest against Cardinal Wolsey, who wished to make a canonical visitation of their convent, to which act he claimed his legatine jurisdiction empowered him. Though the friars had evidently failed by thus transgressing the

⁷ That Forest was provincial is asserted by Wood, Parkinson, Dodd. Magliano. Leon, Gasquet, Holzapfel (on the authority of Wadding), and by the *Breviarium Romano-Seraphicum*. Thaddeus and Hope *accept it as at least probable*, while Stone thinks "there can be little doubt" that he held the office. That, as Wood and Dodd say, he succeeded Fr. Stephen Baron in this office, is denied by Parkinson. The latter (p. 222) places Forest after a certain Fr. William, who had succeeded Baron, but on being elected definitor general was constrained to resign the provincialship. We may add that several incidents in the life of Forest and the prominent part he played at the outbreak of the religious troubles show that he was provincial superior, whom the other friars were obliged to obey, and whom above all the king sought to win over to his cause.

enclosure rule, and by the very act had incurred papal censures, still the justice of their protest cannot be denied, since Pope Leo X, on the request of Henry VIII, had exempted them from the jurisdiction of his legate.⁸ “But,” as Stone remarks, “in the manner of their repulse, they were undoubtedly wrong and Forest saw in it a flaw in their loyal attitude towards the See of Peter, of which he was so jealous a watchman.”⁹

This remarkable incident in the life of Forest shows how by his sanctity and learning he had secured the confidence of the highest civil and ecclesiastical authorities in England. He was subsequently appointed regular preacher at St. Paul’s Cross. This was at the time the most popular pulpit in England. Hence it gave the zealous friar an opportunity to exert a vast influence on the public mind.

As a fervent Tertiary of St. Francis, Queen Catherine had learned to esteem the worthy provincial of the Franciscans, to whom, we know, she was

⁸ See Parkinson, p. 224; also *Grey Friars Chronicle* critically edited in *Monumenta Franciscana* (Vol. II) by Richard Howlett (p. 190).

⁹ Stone, *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 48.

singularly devoted. Besides appointing Forest her chaplain at Greenwich, she chose him as her confessor and spiritual adviser. To him she confided the innermost secrets of her soul, especially when the dark clouds of domestic tribulation began to gather over her. We have every reason to suppose that her noble and heroic forbearance with her faithless consort must be in great part ascribed to the wise counsel of the Franciscan provincial, in whose prudence she placed absolute trust. The beautiful letter she wrote to him shortly before her demise, breathes the spirit of a loving and confiding child, grateful to the last for the many benefits received at the hands of her spiritual father. Him alone, she remarks in this letter, she followed in the things of God, because she knew him to be deeply instructed in human and divine knowledge.¹⁰

Needless to say, Forest was wholly in sympathy with the wronged queen. Well versed in the sacred sciences, he was from the start convinced that her marriage with Henry was valid and indissoluble. Hence, when the question of the king’s “secret affair” became a matter of public

¹⁰ See the foregoing chapter.

comment, he had already put aside all doubt and hesitation, and was among the first openly to defend Catherine's rights whenever occasion offered. After 1531, when the queen by order of Henry was residing at the More in Hertfordshire, her former confessor frequently visited her. This is plain from a letter which a spy addressed to the king. "As concerning the Friars Observants," he says, "they came at divers times to confess the ladies and gentlewomen, and sometimes they said it was their way from one of their houses to another. As many names as I did know I shall declare Riche, Peto, Sabastyan, Curson, Robynson, Forest and Neswick, with divers others."¹¹

The king was well aware, not only of the provincial's mind on the divorce question, but of the great influence the dauntless friar was exerting on those with whom he came in touch. Accordingly, he summoned him one day to the royal palace and conferred alone with him for more than half an hour. It has never been learned what passed between the king and

the friar during this private interview. But we may take it for granted that the man of God, like another John the Baptist, bravely showed his royal master the utter untenability of his position and warned him against the dangerous path he was pursuing. If the wayward king was displeased with the friar's unfavorable decision, he could not but admire his frankness and sincerity. He subsequently ordered some beef from the royal table to be brought to the Greenwich friary.¹² Perhaps he hoped in this way to make him and the community more favorably disposed toward his projected divorce. We know how poorly he succeeded with the Franciscans at large. It remains to be seen how the provincial met the advances of the king, and how much he had to suffer in defense of truth and justice.

Cromwell, Henry's pliant tool, and Anne Boleyn, his worthless bauble, were keeping the Greenwich community under close surveillance. They were determined to know the sentiments of each friar regarding the much mooted question, and to this end they succeeded in

11 Camm, *Lives of the English Martyrs*, p. 277.

12 See Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, Vol. I, P. 158.

winning the services of Richard Lyst,¹³ a lay brother of that friary. The letters¹⁴ of this renegade to his royal patrons are still extant. They show that the writer was no longer true to his vows, and that he was discontented with his station as lay brother and with the strict Franciscan mode of life. Blinded by promises of royal preferments, he so far lost sight of the duties he owed to God and to his Order as to play the base role of rebel and traitor.

In one of his letters to Anne Boleyn, the unhappy friar tells “his friend” that for his fidelity to her and to the king, he has much to suffer, and has often been called in derision Anne’s chaplain. He is not yet a priest, he avers, but he has ambition

13 “This Richard Lyst,” Gasquet notes, “says in another letter that he was ‘of old lord cardinal’s servant.’ He ‘has dreadful dreams three or four nights each week,’ and thinks ‘he could serve God better in another state than’ as he is, and ‘get rid of his trouble’. He adds, ‘The information I sent you about friar Forest deserves support.’ A few months after he writes as a student in ‘first orders’ from Clare Hall, Cambridge, saying he intends to be a ‘secular priest.’” (p. 159.)

14 They are quoted in part by Stone, pp. 7 seq., as found among the Cottontail MMS. and in Ellis’s *Original Letters*. Though they bear no date, it is most probable that they were written in the interval between the summer of 1532 and the following spring.

to become one and to say one hundred Masses for her welfare. Such a thing is possible now, he adds, because the young woman to whom he was “made sure in the way of marriage, before his coming into religion, is departed to the mercy of God.” He concludes with a petition for money; he had purchased clothes and other things for his mother and is now forty shillings in debt.

How bitterly he hated Fr. Forest and sought to cripple his influence, we learn from a letter which he addressed to Cromwell.

“Sir, your Mastership shall understand that Father Forest, which doth neither love nor favor you, hath labored divers ways to supplant and bring Father Larans,¹⁵ which is the

15 Stone (p. 8) observes that ‘Father Larans’ was probably a certain Friar Laurence, whom Father Forest apparently succeeded in turning out. There is a letter among the Cotton manuscripts from John Laurence to Cromwell, relative to his return to his cloister, the King having seemingly ordered the Greenwich Franciscans to take him back. In this letter, he begs Cromwell to insist on his being lodged in a certain room, in which he will have access to the outside world, be comparatively uncontrolled, and have freedom to correspond about the ‘King’s matter.’ He entreats him not to allow him to be sent back to his old quarters.” Later,

King's faithful, true subject, out of favour, both with the King's Grace and with all our fathers and brothers, and also, *as* much as in him is, to expulse him out of our convent of Greenwich; and his original and chief cause is, because he knoweth that Father Larans is provided, and will also preach the King's matter, whensoever it shall please his Grace to command him, and so the very truth is, that Father Forest will not preach the King's matter himself, nor yet suffer Father Larans by his will to do so. Also I think, it were very convenient and necessary that the Chancellor of London were spoken unto, no more to assign Father Forest to preach at Paul's Cross. Our fathers have oftentimes assigned me to associate Father Forest when he hath gone forth in preaching, because they have supposed in me some intelligence and learning; and many a time when he hath preached, I have sitten under the pulpit with a pair of red ears, because I have heard him so often break Master Priseian's head; therefore, in my judgment, it is more convenient for him to sit at home with his beads than to go forth and preach. Also, I

as Camm notes (p. 181), this Laurence gave evidence against FF. Rich and Risby in the affair of the Holy Maid of Kent.

pray your Mastership, have me meekly recommended unto my Lady Marquess of Pembroke (Anne Boleyn), unto whom I am much bound unto, and also that poor mother of mine, by the reason of her charitable benefits.

On another occasion, the unworthy friar has weighty accusations to make against FF. Peyto, Elstow, Forest, and others. He is anxious to tell Cromwell all he knows, in order to ease his "heart sore to see, perceive, and know the unkindness and duplicity of Father Forest against the King's Grace," who has bestowed so many benefits on the provincial and on the whole community. "The word 'duplicity,'" Stone remarks, "is characteristic of the writer's confused state of mind; he apparently estimates the value of a conscience at the price of 'a great piece of beef,' which Father Forest had received as a present, 'from the king's table.'"

During the year 1532, rumors of Henry's proposed marriage with Anne Boleyn were sweeping like threatening clouds over the country. Gloomy presentiments weighed on the hearts of the people who knew the strong will of their sovereign: Catherine no longer resided with him in the palace at Greenwich. Anne

Boleyn already occupied the apartments of the rejected queen, and it was felt throughout the length and breadth of England that Henry would eventually espouse her and have her crowned queen, no matter what the ecclesiastical court at Rome would decide regarding his former marriage with Catherine.

Owing to the proximity of their convent to the royal palace, it was but natural that the Greenwich friars should frequently converse among themselves on the king's matter. Little did they suspect that in their very midst was one who stood in secret correspondence with the queen's enemies, and who was constantly reporting their utterances to headquarters. Cromwell, anxious to establish himself in the royal favor, was not slow to acquaint the king with Lyst's venomous depositions. This explains why Henry, once so well disposed toward the friars, now began to hate them, especially those of Greenwich, who were loudest of all in condemning his policy. Though he still feigned friendly feelings toward the provincial, in his heart he was determined to let him feel his displeasure. As confessor of Queen Catherine, he thought, Forest might have

induced her to submit to the royal will. Instead, he had all along favored her cause, had exhorted his brethren to do likewise, and had even forbidden Fr. Laurence to preach the opposite. He must thwart the influence of this obstinate and loudmouthed friar. Accordingly, in the summer of 1532, the minister general of the Order received a letter from the English king, demanding that he depose the Franciscan provincial and appoint in his stead Fr. John de la Haye, of Flanders, who would be unbiased in his view on the important question. The minister general prudently evaded the difficulty by replying that he had no power to depose a provincial, but would send the desired friar as commissary general to England.¹⁶

The commissary general did not arrive till the following spring. In the meantime, Lyst continued his vile depositions, and Forest, it seems, was repeatedly summoned before the king to answer for the conduct of his subjects. At a chapter of the province,¹⁷ held in August, 1532, the provincial informed the assembled friars that the king was greatly displeased

¹⁶ Parkinson, p. 227.

¹⁷ This was perhaps the chapter at which all the members of the Order in England were assembled.

with them; that he had even been thinking of suppressing their Order in England; that he would desist for the present, however, being satisfied with his (Forest's) readiness to have the minister general replace him by a friar of Henry's choice. "All this," observes Camm, "reflects no little credit on Forest, who, it is clear, played a considerable part in these conciliatory measures, without in any way compromising his own high principles."¹⁸

On September 26, 1532, the Franciscan friars held chapter at Richmond. This we learn from a "warrant under the sign manual to Cromwell as master of the jewels, to deliver to the Friars Observants, now at their chapter at Richmond, to be employed as alms, L6, 13s, 4d."¹⁹ Whatever may have been transacted at this chapter, we are not inclined to believe that the friars consented to the election of a new minister provincial. They were too much in sympathy with Forest to accede to the wishes of the king for his removal from office.²⁰ The

following February, shortly after Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn, the provincial was again at court. But Lyst had previously apprised Cromwell of Forest's coming, and had supplied him with serious accusations against the friars. It was, therefore, with mingled feelings of sorrow and alarm that, on returning to the convent, the man of God called his brethren together and told them how coldly he had been received at court, and how enraged the king was at the entire community.²¹ But he was none the less determined to continue on his course of action; and we may take it for granted that, in his zeal for the spiritual welfare

difficulty. On the reverse of this letter is found a brief note in which Cromwell lists the six Franciscan friaries with the names of their respective wardens or guardians and places Fr. Peyto (Peyton) at the head of the list as minister. Although this note does seem to have some connection with the chapter held on September 26, 1582, at Richmond, still it is by no means certain that Cromwell was correctly informed as to the results of the chapter. What was more natural under the circumstances than that the Friars should for the present at least keep the name of their minister provincial secret from royal officials? Moreover, this note is perhaps merely a plan of Cromwell's, showing what he would wish when once Fr. Forest should be removed from his office as provincial. In fact, this theory becomes quite probable when we remember how willing Forest was to have the minister general send one to rule the province in his stead.

²¹ Camm, pp. 279 seq.

¹⁸ Compare this statement with the author's assumption regarding Forest's supposed temporary submission.

¹⁹ Thaddeus, p. 15.

²⁰ Here, it is true, one of Cromwell's letters, dated September 13, 1532 (see Thaddeus, p. 14), confronts us with a

of his brethren, he exhorted them faithfully to pursue the path of duty and to bear up like true sons of St. Francis under the trials and afflictions that were sure to overwhelm them in the near future.

It must have been early in 1533 that Forest with deep sorrow became aware of Lyst's treachery. The informing lay brother, on his part, was racked with fear and remorse when he learned that his misdeeds were laid bare. In April, he wrote to Cromwell, requesting that his previous letters be burned, lest their contents be turned against him. At the same time, he pleaded for the minister's and the king's protection. Forest, he complained, would have nothing more to do with him and refused to answer him, when he offered "to make some amends unto God and to the religion whom he hath offended." Little faith, however, must be placed in this accusation against the saintly friar. If he really did treat the informer harshly, it was only to try him. How insincere Lyst was, we can judge from a letter he addressed to Cromwell soon after the arrival of the commissary general. He writes :

There is a good father of our religion, a Frenchman, come from beyond sea unto us, which is chosen and assigned to be our minister, head, and ruler, here in this province, and I trust he shall do much good among us, if he will be indifferent secundum veritatem, as I trust he will, and help to reform Father Forest especially, and also some other things to be reformed among us. And so, if it were the King's pleasure and yours, good it were and also convenient, the King's Grace and also your Mastership to speak with our foresaid new minister, and to inform him under what manner he should use himself among us concerning the King's gracious honour. Also if it were your pleasure to help to reform Father Forest, and to get him removed out of this house, either to Newark or to Newcastle, I think you should do a meritorious deed, and have great reward of good therefor, and many thanks and prayers of many in our religion. And as for my part, I have done, and yet will do as much as is in me possible, to the furtherance and accomplishment of the same, with the grace of Jesu, who have you in His blessed keeping. Amen.

To be continued

Communism in 2014

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part 1

It has been 166 years (1848) since the Communist Manifesto was first published in German. It has been 97 years (1917) since the Communist Russian Revolution.

Many people today will tell you that Communism is dead. In their subjective thinking they see no reason for bringing up the topic. It apparently has become irrelevant.

For many years within the public school system, and perhaps beyond, Communism is no longer explained as a great social danger. This writer has heard from those who have attended the public school system and when asked what they know of Communism, it has been either nothing at all or that “Communism was nothing more than an alternative form of government.”

It is easy to conclude after so many years of this type of classroom conditioning why there is little or no concern about Communism, or for that matter socialism of any type.

What exactly has been happening since the Communist Revolution in Russia? Most of the older readers of this publication are well aware of

the overthrow of the governments in Russia, Eastern Europe, China, Southeast Asia, Africa, Cuba and Latin America. It is quite likely those younger than 40 years of age know little of Communist history unless they have been taught by their parents or some other adult who has had a true understanding of historical events in the 20th century.

It should be noted here that one of the messages which came from the Blessed Mother at Fatima was “to pray so the errors of Russia would not spread.” There were obviously not enough prayers to stop the atheistic contagion of Communism. Does this mean the Catholic hierarchy is in some manner guilty of aiding the spread of Communism? Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the knowledge of the situation of each bishop.

There is a two-fold question which must be asked, though. How is it that the Blessed Virgin asked for prayers to defeat Communism, and separately asked for prayers and penance to prevent World War II, and neither was accomplished? Are we simply able to exonerate the bishops on both accounts?

To have a better understanding

of whether or not we should be concerned with Communism today, let us go back to those who first promoted it and later carried it out.

One of the first social battles artificially and intentionally created by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels was between the Proletariat and Bourgeoisie. This was the “shot across the bow” which helped divide and disturb the different classes of society. They needed civil unrest and in certain places they were successful.

Today we call this class warfare. It pits the poor against the rich. Most all of the propaganda is directed toward the poor who are quite often uneducated and easily manipulated. For those who are familiar with Communist tactics, this is perhaps the oldest “trick in the bag.” The tragic reality, though, is that it too often works among the poor who are unwilling to admit their naiveté of such weighty matters.

If you have had your eyes open and your mind properly functioning since 2008, this tactic of class warfare is “alive and well” in these free (?) United States. The citizens only need to be honest, and with enough courage to understand who is at the source of this unrest. One no longer needs to look abroad to witness this Communistic tactic.

One of the more important and

strategic goals of the Communists is to undermine the public educational system in this country. In the list of Communist goals, *getting control of the schools is number 17*. In a list of 45 goals it is obvious that this is one of the most desirable goals of the followers of Marx.

They understand very well that if you are able to promote socialism and Communist propaganda in the schools, one day the students will either be Communists themselves or will be quite sympathetic toward it. This is, in fact, what has occurred to a greater degree. Fewer and fewer fear the threat of Communism at this time. Many believe this godless system is, indeed, dead. They are sadly mistaken in the worst possible way.

Goal 25 has not only been accomplished but has largely destroyed morality in the United States. It states, *“Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures, radio, and tv.”* Unless one has read the list of goals of the Communist, one would have no idea they have been promoters of this degradation for several decades.

Alongside this point, who is aware of the stated goal of the Freemasons in the late 1920’s which is to undermine the morals of women

over a period many years so as to bring about the destruction of the family and, therefore, that of society. They understood better than most the important role of a moral woman in society. This destruction has been done by slowly uncovering the woman through “style and fashion.” Today partial nudity has become so commonplace no one gives it a serious second thought. Thus, the destruction of morals allows for the easier control of the populace.

Goal 26 is also concerned with moral destruction; “Present homosexuality, degeneracy and promiscuity as ‘normal, natural, healthy.’” Some believe this is about ‘equal rights.’ The more astute know this is about destroying the family and weakening society. The condition of the family has always determined the direction of society.

In a tidal wave of propaganda and political correctness state after state has legalized the perverse union known as ‘same-sex marriage.’ It wasn’t too many years ago that these same states outlawed sodomy. How many states had to overturn laws against sodomy in order to allow this sinful ‘partnership?’ The level-headed person clearly sees the disorder which exists and realizes the real dangers underlying the promotion of a perverse, sick and sinful life.

Far too many have contracted multiple STD’s while disregarding God’s commandment which forbids marital relations outside the married state. Currently 8,000 teenagers or young adults contract a STD for the first time each DAY. So where is the parental instruction and the desire to abide by God’s laws, or have we become nothing more than a nation of two-legged animals?

Goal 27: “*Infiltrate the churches and replace revealed religion with ‘social’ religion. Discredit the Bible and emphasize the need for intellectual maturity which does not need a ‘religious crutch.’*” How long have the Modernists been preaching the social gospel? This writer has heard the experiences of numerous Catholics who first heard the socialist gospel in the 1960’s. Were these clergymen simply heretics or were they Communist infiltrators? Today, the social gospel according Karl Marx is being preached in denominations and sects across the religious spectrum with great success. Therefore, we now witness the presence of much religiosity, but virtually no true religion. The once vibrant Body of Christ is now nothing more than a decaying carcass.

Goal 28: “*Eliminate prayer or any phase of religious expression in the schools on the ground that it violates the principal of ‘separation*

of church and state.” It must first be understood that no such clause exists in the Constitution. This is, in addition, nothing more than a devious trick to fool the ignorant populace. The godless Communists want to eliminate all signs and symbols of Christianity in society. If True Religion is “out of sight and out of mind,” it doesn’t take long before a secular or pagan society results. Look around, what does one see?

The result of taking prayer out of the school has been a laundry list of ethical horrors: teen-age promiscuity and pregnancy, teen-age abortions, birth-control, immodest clothes, immoral music, rebellion in the family, violent behavior, etc.

If one had the goal of destroying a nation without going to war, how would it be carried out? It would begin by first destroying religion in general, the Catholic Faith in particular, and undermining the morals of everyone, particularly those of the women. It is well understood that if the morals of women are destroyed, society will fall.

The second most significant accomplishment would be to destroy the family. This would be done by undermining the morality of the parents and children. Once again, look around and observe

what is easily seen. The proper role of the father is mocked and his authority has been undermined. Motherhood is now optional if children don’t interfere with her career plans.

Abortion has slaughtered 56 million infants since 1973. Artificial birth control is used to control the size of the family, if children are wanted at all. Half the marriages in this nation end in divorce.

Some will argue that not all of these facts are the result of Communism. This may be true because other enemies of Christ have desired similar results, but the destruction of morality has certainly served the Communist purposes.

The goals explained in this article are but an overview of what has been accomplished by the Communists within and outside of the United States. Of the 45 goals, 41 have taken place. The remaining four are in the process of being completed.

Should we be concerned about Communists who are apparently “dead?” The answer is a resounding yes. Why? This will be explained in part 2 of this article next month.

To be continued

Franciscan Saints

DECEMBER 10

BLESSED PETER OF SIENA

Confessor, Third Order

Peter was a simple combmaker of Siena. He was faithfully devoted to his work. He sanctified it with prayer and united his hardships with the fatigue of our Saviour in His work at Nazareth. In his love for penance he joined the Third Order of St. Francis, living up to its prescriptions and adding still more rigorous works of penance. If work piled up, so that he was kept from carrying out his desires, he would offer up his exertions instead. He managed always to find time for certain special devotions which he performed each evening with his devout wife.

When his wife died at an early age leaving no children, Peter found he was free to lead a life wholly in accord with his pious designs. He saw in the poor and the sick, children which God entrusted to his care. He divided his goods with them, visited them, comforted and nursed them in need. He continued his employment, but devoted more time to prayer,

even many hours of the night. He had the grace of intimate union with God and fostered special devotion to our Blessed Lady. She frequently appeared to him and treated him as a mother does a beloved son.

The more intimately Peter was permitted to enjoy this heavenly intercourse, the less he conversed with men. He spoke only when necessity or charity required it. In selling his combs, he would state the price and then place his finger on his lips so as to keep from speaking unnecessarily. His price always suited his customers, because they knew that his wares were good and that he never overcharged anyone.

In his great love for our holy Father St. Francis, Peter asked at the Franciscan convent of Siena for permission to live there. The friars, aware of his extraordinary virtue, arranged a cell for him. The cell became for him an abode of delight. He would spend entire nights

in prayer, enjoying the company of the holy angels and their queen, of the holy apostles, and of St. Francis himself, who would instruct him and fill him with heavenly bliss.

For a long time Peter had to endure apparitions and temptations from the evil spirits. Peter overcame them with his humility, and the higher he was raised by God, the more deeply did he descend in the knowledge of his nothingness. He confessed his smallest failings amid torrents of tears. One day he wrote out the sins and failings of his whole life, and then for his confusion, he read off the whole list. He was then given the assurance that all his sins were forgiven, and actually all that he had read was promptly blotted from the paper.

His humble reserve never permitted him to speak when older people, priests, or religious were present, unless he was invited to do so. But, as everyone knew that he was favored with heavenly inspirations, he was frequently called on to give advice. A religious once asked him what he should do

regarding weariness at prayer. He answered: "Do not on that account curtail the time allotted to it. Sometimes we gain more by patient waiting than by receiving."

God wrought many miracles through His humble servant. He died December 4, 1289. His tomb in the Franciscan church in Siena was adorned with a beautiful marble memorial. So many miraculous cures occurred at his grave that pilgrims came there from all parts of Italy. His perpetual veneration was approved by Pope Pius VII.

ON SILENCE

1. Consider how Blessed Peter acquired the virtue of silence through constant conversation with God. Familiar conversation with God dreads useless converse with men, and no sincere Christian soul loves idle talk. Moses, the friend of God, said to the Lord: "Since Thou hast spoken to thy servant, I have more impediment and slowness of tongue" (Exod. 4:10). Silence also helps us speak with God and pray with devotion. Just as the warmth of a room gradually diminishes if the doors are left open, so will

devotion leave the heart of a man whose mouth is constantly open in useless conversation. “If thou wilt withdraw from superfluous talking,” says Thomas a Kempis (1:20), “thou wilt find time sufficient and proper to spend in good meditations.” — Is your lack of devotion at prayer due to talkativeness?

2. Consider that it is advisable to acquire the habit of silence in order to avoid offense to God and man. “In the multitude of words,” says the Holy Spirit, “there shall not want sin” (Prov. 10:19). How often are charity, truth, and justice injured, while envy, vanity, and conceit are greatly nourished with it! On the other hand, he who speaks little has little responsibility. Often people believe they are making a favorable impression on their fellowmen with their conversation, whereas the opposite is the case. They become a nuisance to others. Hearing them speaking about a third party, their hearers justly fear they will be the subject of their gossip in turn. May you remember that you must some day give an account of every word you have uttered.

3. Consider the merit and the virtue that can be gained by means of silence. Sacred Scripture enjoins: “Be not full of words in a multitude of ancients” (Ecclus. 7:15). “Interrupt not others in the midst of their discourse.” “Answer not a word before thou hear” (Ecclus. 11:8). Short and simple as these maxims are, faithfully observing them may cost you not a little self-control. But if you do overcome yourself for love of God, it will add to your store of merits for eternity. You will learn to be modest and humble, and perceive how foolish and out of place was much of your past conversation. “The heart of fools is in their mouth: and the mouth of wise men is in their hearts” (Ecclus. 21:29). — Reflect on the beautiful example of Blessed Peter and strive to acquire this reserve in your speech.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

We beseech Thee, O Lord, subdue the conceit of our soul with the spirit of holy humility, who didst so admirably raise up the humility of Thy confessor Blessed Peter with heavenly inspiration. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER XVIII

A Heart That Suffered
More Than All Others
“Now the passersby
were jeering at Him”
(Mt. 27:39).

1. *Christ crucified is mocked by men of all classes.* It was a source of great sorrow to our Lord in His agony in the garden that He was alone and deserted by all. As He hung on the cross, He was not alone. But what of the company that surrounded Him? The twenty-first psalm describes them for us: All they that see Me, laugh Me to scorn. They open their mouths against Me, as a lion ravening and roaring. The council of the malignant encompasses Me like dogs (cf. Ps. 21:8, 14, 17). It was the time of the feast of the Passover and there were many people in the city. Curiosity drew not a few to Golgotha. They passed by the cross and wagged their heads saying: “Vah, Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again; save Thyself. Come down from the cross.” The chief priests and the scribes mocking said to

one another: He saved: others; Himself He cannot save, or if He can let Him descend from the cross that we may see and believe” (cf. Mk. 15:29 ff.). These were the insults which His own nation heaped upon its Messias; high and low, the refined and the vulgar had no words of sympathy for Him, only bitter sarcasm. Even the heathens took part in this cruel sport. The soldiers had already ridiculed His kingly dignity by crowning Him with thorns, giving Him a reed scepter, genuflecting before Him, and spitting in His face. Now they mocked Him, offered Him vinegar to drink and said: “If Thou art the king of the Jews, save Thyself” (Lk. 23:36, 37). Not satisfied with having condemned Jesus unjustly, Pilate had an inscription fastened to the cross, which was intended as a bitter taunt: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (Jn. 19:19). He ridiculed the King of the Jews in order through Him to ridicule the Jews. Even one of the robbers who was crucified with Him blasphemed Him (cf. Lk. 23:39, 40).

For three hours our Saviour had to endure this cruel ordeal of abuse. What thoughts were then uppermost in His mind? A sick person on his bed of pain expects consideration and sympathy at the hands of those who come near him; each inconsiderate act, each cruel word, which would be passed by unnoticed in health, now wounds him to the depth of his soul and makes his sufferings more unendurable. Hence, we brand harsh conduct toward the seriously sick as heartless cruelty. Our Saviour on the cross suffered the bitterest of pains. Think of the wounds in His hands and feet which supported His weight; of His body torn by the scourge, of His head bruised by blows from clenched fists and pierced by sharp thorns, of the excessive thirst caused by the loss of blood, of the fever which consumed His whole body — truly horrible sufferings. Now add to this unimaginable physical suffering the ceaseless jeers, the calumnies about His mission as king, prophet, and worker of miracles — are such things not dreadfully painful for a sensitive heart? But the heart of our Saviour was more sensitive than all others, because it was the noblest of all human hearts. He was perfectly conscious of His complete innocence. He knew that He was

really sent of God as Messiah, as King, as Redeemer. He had gone up and down the land doing good, teaching the ignorant, consoling the sad, healing the sick, so that people said of Him: “He has done all things well” (Mk. 7:37) And this was the gratitude which He reaped for His good works — contempt, mockery, derision from His chosen people whom He loved so ardently. That the Gentiles treated Him so cruelly did not wound Him half as much; to them He was just a criminal condemned to death. But that His own people thus rewarded His love, that was bitter beyond all comparison. “For if My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne with it . . . but thou, a man of one mind, My guide, and My familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with Me; in the house of God we walked with consent... they have defiled His covenant” (Ps. 54:13, 14-15-21).

To have acts of kindness rewarded with ingratitude, love rejected and ridiculed are the most painful experiences which man can undergo. These experiences were the portion of our Lord to such an extent that we are incapable of comprehending the greatness of the pain they caused Him. On Good Friday the Church puts

the words which God addressed to the Israelites by the mouth of the prophet Micheas, on the lips of our Redeemer: "O My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee? answer thou Me" (Mich. 6:3). Then the individual benefits are enumerated and contrasted with the ingratitude of the Jews: "I have brought thee out of the land of Egypt into a good land, and thou hast prepared a cross for thy Redeemer; I have planted thee a chosen vineyard, and thou hast given thy Redeemer vinegar to drink and hast pierced His side with a lance, etc." These lamentations of Good Friday are well calculated to make us realize vividly the sufferings of our crucified Redeemer and to move us to compassion.

2. *The heart of Jesus is wounded by the ingratitude of men of all centuries.* Did the procession of those who passed by the cross and jeered, end with the death of our Saviour? Alas, it did not. This endless succession of scoffers extends through all ages and will cease only when the cross of Christ will have appeared in the heavens and the coming of the Son of Man will have announced the final judgment.

As our Saviour hung on the cross, He saw not only those who then actually stood on Calvary and mocked; His gaze penetrated the future — and what did He see? Nineteen hundred years have passed since the death of Christ. If we count as Christians all men who can be called such by any title, their number reaches six hundred and seventy millions. In contrast with these there are one thousand millions who are not Christians. So by far the greater number of men still do not believe in the Saviour, do not love Him, and if they have heard of Him, are either indifferent or full of enmity toward Him.

Now consider that the Son of God assumed our nature for love of *all* men and died on the cross for *all* (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3 ff.; I Jn. 2:2). How painful it must then be for His heart that so many millions in all centuries have not found the way to Him, but remain in darkness and in the shadow of death and are kept by the devil in the hard slavery of idolatry and of sin. How dreadful is the condition of the pagans as St. Paul describes it for us in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans! Was it not painful to the soul of our Saviour that so many men in each century, for love of whom He suffered and

died, live in paganism?

But far more culpable is another form of paganism, which is found not in distant lands but in our very midst. Do we not hear in our own country the fatuous cry: "We cut ourselves off from Christ, away with Him, away with His doctrine, away with His law!" This is the cry of the neopagans for the most part faithless renegades who at one time vowed fidelity to Christ and who have deserted now to His enemies. Books are published in which the gospel stories of Christ are branded as fables or Christ Himself is stigmatized as a perverse dreamer. And these books are eagerly read by hundreds of thousands. Every aspersion is cast at Christ. They have not even hesitated to call Him a monomaniac.¹

O eternal Wisdom, how trifling were the insults uttered against Thee by Thy enemies on Calvary when compared with the utterances which Thy enemies do not hesitate to bring forward today. But Thy heart tasted their bitterness in the hour of Thy agony; each insult, each blasphemy was a dart in Thy heart glowing with love even for these men. As a partial excuse for Thy enemies Thou couldst still

say on Calvary: "They know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). But today they know very well what they are doing. They want to hate Thee and Thy doctrine; they want to destroy Thy kingdom; they want to overthrow Thy throne; they obtain for us an increase of love; true, tender sympathy with the sufferings of His divine heart, and greater and more manly fidelity.

**"O Thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord:
Make me feel as thou hast felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord."**

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¹ Cf. *Christ and the Critics*, H. Felder, Benziger, 1924, Vol. 2.

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