

THE SERAPH

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**St. Thérèse of Lisieux
and The Holy Family**

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EDITORIAL

The Little Way

We celebrate on the third of October, the feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux – The Little Flower. St. Thérèse was a Carmelite. From her earliest youth she developed a simplicity and childlikeness that is an inspiration to us all. Her mother died when she was about four years old. Her older sisters entered the convent before her and St. Thérèse’s father encouraged and cultivated a deep and profound love of God in each of the children. St. Thérèse, being the youngest, was given not only the example and encouragement of her parents, but also that of her older siblings.

We often stress how important the instructions and examples of parents are for children, and in doing so we pass over the value of example given by older siblings and relatives. Upon the death of their mother the younger daughters latched on to their older sisters to replace their mother and direct them in the ways of God. In taking their mother away at such a tender age, God was preparing St. Thérèse



for a lifetime of suffering and hardships. Her sisters gave their words of encouragement and consolation to each other, but most importantly they led by example in sacrifice.

The word “sacrifice” seems terrifying to many people, but as we see, St. Thérèse shows us how to make it sweet through her “little way.” When we love, there is no sacrifice too great. Love has a way of turning even the most trivial sacrifices into great acts. This was understood and put into practice by St. Thérèse and led her, through life,

in the way of perfection. As a mere child she was incapable of “great” things according to the eyes of the world. God, however, judges according to the heart. He accepts the desire for the deed. A heart may be physically small like a child’s but it is capable of being filled with the infinite love of God. The smallest acts of love become infinitely precious, simply because they are done for the love of God. The sacrifice that appears small and insignificant in our eyes becomes grand and infinite when it is performed out of love for God.

Christ has invited the “little ones” to come to Him. St. Thérèse took this to heart and always tried to be one of His “little ones.” She perfected from her childhood the instruction that Jesus gave to His disciples to become as little children, and to humble themselves. This path to perfection that she followed and Our Holy Mother the Church holds out for us to imitate is a simple and sure means of reaching Heaven.

The little way of St. Thérèse, is a practical application of the love and humility practiced by St. Francis of Assisi. This spirituality is truly the Gospel put into practice. All the saints

have found a way to do this, but those whose lives are marked by this humble childlike simplicity, appear to have found the easiest and quickest way to reach the grand heights of love and perfection.

Society and the family are under constant attack in our day. We tend to focus our attention upon the failings of parents and we encourage them to strive for noble and higher ideals. We direct our attention to children and strive to impress upon them the need for loving obedience and respect. Often, however, there are other members of the family. These members are also intimately connected to the spiritual development of the child and therefore to the future of families and society as a whole. Older siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, often have a greater influence upon the spiritual development of children than parents.

We need not only lectures and lessons for our children, but even more importantly examples and encouragement. “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Many of our children turn away from the Faith because we are trying to push them into a life of virtue. We preach, instruct, discipline,

coerce, but what they truly need is not to be pushed. They need a hand to hold onto and follow. St. Thérèse had good parents, but she also had noble sisters who led and taught by the example of their own lives.

With the inundation of Modernism, sacrifice has become a dirty word. The word love is bandied about, but it is an empty and hollow word when it is devoid of self-sacrifice. What our families and societies need today are not more inventions and conveniences, but rather the example of true love in self-sacrifice. We need saints for our children to follow. Even though we do not all have children; we will all be held accountable for the children. The lives that we live, give the example to all around us of virtue or of scandal. Christ has pronounced woes of the greatest evils to those who scandalize children.

It is therefore necessary for every one of us to do our best to become saints. We can be motivated by the love of God; the love of our own soul; or the love of our neighbor's soul. In the material realm the practice of virtue will heal us, our families, and then our societies. What is broken or missing from our

world is sanctity.

St. Thérèse gives us the example. Even a little girl can do it. We have no excuse. Now is the time for us to begin. It does not require anything grand, but rather in serving God in every little way that we can. Let us pray to St. Thérèse that through the grace of God we take up her little way growing in love day by day.

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Penance and Prayer

Bishop Giles OFM



There is much in the world today that is and should be of great concern to us. There are many considerable evils in the society of this world; but there are even greater concerns that we should focus our attentions upon in the spiritual realm. The readers of *The Seraph* have read for many years of the sad situation in the Church. We are in a time of universal apostasy. The great falling away has taken place. The See of Peter is devoid of a true successor. Would be bishops and priests preach, espouse, and practice heresy and indifferentism.

The logical first question to ask, is what can be done about this? Or what should we do about this? There is an element of pride that suggests that we must do something. When admonished to pray and sacrifice, we are tempted to think that this is not enough, or that this is just a means to quiet and pacify us. It is as if we consider prayer and penance to be of little or no value. We want to do something more dramatic, more noticeable to the world. Perhaps something that is more memorable.

As we consider the sad state of sedevacantism (the throne of

St. Peter is empty) and we are without the true vicar of Jesus Christ, a pope and visible head of the Church, we want to take up arms and make the heretics elect a true pope. How foolish and immature such a thought is can be easily discerned by anyone in the least familiar with logic. The simple premise that “one cannot give, what one does not have” shows us that the heretics that keep pretending to put a pope on the throne of St. Peter, cannot ever put a Catholic in that position, because the very “electors” are not Catholic. Modernism has infiltrated and infected the entire “would be” hierarchy in the Vatican.

There have been many that have been tempted through pride and vanity to hold their own election and elect their own pope. This too is wishful thinking that often ends up making a mockery of the papacy and the Church.

We have witnessed men who unite with schismatics and/or heretics in order to gain “valid” orders and “preserve” the priesthood. Few ever stop to seriously and logically think this through. Can they actually believe that the Church can be helped by denying her? Can God’s will be furthered by

denying Him?

We have witnessed in our own age, men who have obtained the orders of the episcopacy by one means or another and then set out ordaining married men, children, and men who have no training or preparation for this office. The argument is often that we are living in desperate times, and desperate times call for desperate measures. There are arguments that some of the Apostles were married men. In the early days of the Church there were no seminaries. There were saints that could not pass their seminary courses yet were ordained and did great things for the Church. While all this may be true, it is not the whole truth.

The Latin rite of the Church has long ago forbid a married priesthood. The reasoning is obvious to any novice of Church History. A married priest has a divided heart or a conflict of interests. To disregard the laws of the Church in this matter is to invite a return to the abuses that the law was designed to correct and prevent. The same applies to the Church’s tradition and practice of requiring a proper seminary preparation of the priests before they are ordained. The spiritual writers often tell

us that there is nothing more dangerous than an ignorant priest trying to guide souls.

It is often argued, “but, we need the Mass and the Sacraments!” This is true. However, it is also true that God often withholds these graces, so that we may love them all the more. How many years were the Japanese Catholics without priests and Sacraments, yet they retained the Faith? What was it that sustained them? Did the Church suggest to them that they should ordain any one? Divine Providence had in mind that they suffer patiently this loss, but most importantly that they pray, and do penance so that they may

once again receive the priests of the True Church and the Sacraments. It took many long and painful years of prayer and sacrifice, but their prayer was heard. The Israelites were forced by Divine Providence to wander for forty years in prayer and penance before they were admitted to the Promised Land.



If we would receive the blessings of God, we need to observe, not only His Laws, but also the laws of His Bride, Our Holy Mother the Church. These rules were not made to oppress us, but rather to free us. It is in them that we find the protection against so many temptations that eventually cause so much confusion, suffering and misery, not only for this life, but especially in eternity.

The dangers of the Modernists who now present themselves as the Catholic Church in the *Novus Ordo*, are great for the majority of souls. There are a certain number of souls that are, for one reason or another, able to see through this and reject the evils of this Modernist Church and their false hierarchy. For these few, the devils have ever more clever devices up their sleeves. These clever devices run the gamut of: the followers of Lefebvre in attempting to work out a compromise between truth and heresy; men running to heretics and schismatics for

“holy orders;” and to, “bishops” ordaining married men, or unprepared men. In all cases the Church is made a mockery and Jesus Christ is insulted.

What must we do? The Blessed Mother has made it known many times: We must pray and do penance. Let us not think that we can force the Hand of Divine Providence by our actions. The best that we can do is to patiently endure the hardships in imitation of Christ - always praying for the mercies of God. But, should

we not do anything else?!

No doubt, we must do something. We must continue to the best of our abilities to observe and follow all the laws of God and the Church. We must see that the difficulties of a long seminary training are for our own good. The standards for priests should not be lessened or mitigated. In the meantime, we need to pray and offer sacrifice for God to send us not only true priests, but good and holy priests, that are worthy of His Name.



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Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

PART SECOND

UNDER THE STUARTS 1603-1649

CHAPTER I

THE SECOND ENGLISH PROVINCE

Its founder: Fr. John Gennings — His remarkable conversion from Protestantism — Priest and missionary in England — He enters the Franciscan Order — First steps toward the restoration of the English Province — Action of the general chapter in its behalf — A friary at Douai in Flanders — The province canonically established — Fr. John Gennings, the first provincial — Franciscan missions in England — Extent of the province before 1649 — Character of the friars — Their activity against Protestantism.

The banishment of the Franciscans on June 12, 1559, and the subsequent seizure of their friaries was a blow from which the province never recovered. Although, as we have seen, a number of friars defied Queen Elizabeth and remained in England, the adverse conditions under which they labored, the long reign of Elizabeth, and



the relentless severity of her measures against the Catholic Church and its institutions, necessarily effected the gradual extinction of the province. It is touching to read how for almost half a century these persecuted friars, surrounded by dangers and hardships of every description, sought to uphold at least the essentials of their holy Rule. The official seal of the province was handed on from one martyr or confessor to another, who thus maintained to some extent the regular succession of

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superiors and the obedience of the few scattered friars.¹ Not less indicative of their zeal is the fact that, even at this time when to be a friar and a priest meant exile or imprisonment, English youths applied for admission into the Order, and after completing their novitiate and studies joined the brethren in the missions.² Such recruits, however, were few and far-between, while the older friars who had survived the first storm of persecution passed one by one to a better life. Hence, as years wore on without any abatement in the Government's hostile attitude, the number of friars grew smaller and smaller. In his *Annales Minorum* under the year 1587, Wadding commemorates the English province as having perished "by the fury of the heretics."³ Finally, in the statistics of the Order drawn up at the general chapter, in 1623, the name of the English Province is marked with a cross to indicate that canonically speaking it no longer existed.⁴

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there lived in

1 Mason. *Certamen Seraphicum*, p. 19.

2 Parkinson, *Antiquities of the English Franciscans*, p. 261.

3 *Annales Minorum*, Vol. XXII, an. 1587, num. SC.

4 Stone, *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 124.

Litchfield Staffordshire, a Protestant family by the name of Gennings.⁵ They had two sons; Edmund and John. The elder of these, Edmund, at an early age, chanced to come under Catholic influence, which soon resulted in his return to the old faith. Not long after his conversion, he left England and came to Douai, where he studied for some years at the English College.⁶ On March 18, 1590, at Soissons, he was ordained priest. Although physically unfit for the arduous life of a missionary, he was anxious to labor among his countrymen, and immediately after his ordination he received permission to set out for England.

At the time of Edmund's conversion, his brother John was a mere child. Reared and educated in Protestantism, nothing was farther from his mind than to follow in the footsteps of his brother. In fact, the news that Edmund had become a Catholic and, what was worse, a priest served only to steel the heart of John against

5 The subsequent narrative is based on *The Life and Death of Mr. Edmund Gennings, Priest*, written by the martyr's brother John and published at Saint-Omer in 1614. The Life was reprinted in the *Annals of Our Lady of the Angels*, Vol. XIII (1888), Nos. V-VII.

6 See *Douai Diaries*, p. 14. 81.

everything that might influence his creed and mode of life. After the death of his parents, he proceeded to London, where he soon fell a victim to the godless spirit of the times. Many a time, no doubt, the young man thought of his brother, never for a moment surmising what a great change he himself would shortly undergo. Much less did he suspect that the man whom one morning in the summer of 1590 he saw walking ahead of him by St. Paul's Church and anxiously looking round to see who followed, was none other than his own brother. A few days later, while walking along Ludgate Hill, he encountered the same person. This time, his curiosity was roused. From the anxious look and bearing of the man, John concluded that something must be weighing on his mind. He was, therefore, not surprised, when the former approached and courteously greeted him.

"What countryman are you?" queried the stranger. "I am a Staffordshireman," replied John.

"And your name?" civilly demanded the other.

"My name is John Gennings," the youth answered, becoming interested.

At these words, the troubled look on the countenance of



Father John Gennings

the stranger vanished. He raised his eyes to heaven in an attitude of prayer. Then, smiling affectionately on the young man before him, he said calmly:

"I am your kinsman; my name is Ironmonger and I am very glad to

see you well. What has become of your brother Edmund?”

The mention of this name touched John to the quick. That man, he mused, knows more about Edmund than his question implies. But he shrewdly repressed his feelings.

“I heard,” he answered with apparent coldness, “that my brother went to Rome to the Pope and became a notable Papist and a traitor to both God and his country. If he returns, he will infallibly be hanged.”

“I have heard,” sweetly retorted the other, “that your brother is a very honest man and loves both the queen and his country, but God above all. But tell me, good cousin John, do you not know him if you see him?”

At this, the young man became alarmed. What, he reflected, if this man were my brother.

“No,” he rejoined with evident uneasiness, “I cannot tell where he is. I greatly fear, however, that I have a brother a Papist priest, and that you are the man. If this is so, you will discredit me and all my friends. In this I can never follow you, although in other matters I can respect you.”

When the good priest heard this spirited profession of heresy from the lips of his erring brother, he could restrain his feelings no longer.

“Indeed,” he confessed, deeply touched, “I am your brother; for your love have I taken great pains to seek you. I beg of you to keep secret the knowledge of my arrival.”

“Not for a world,” John assured him, “will I disclose your return. But,” he hastily added, “I desire you to come no more unto me, for I fear greatly the danger of the law and the penalty of the new-made statute in concealing you.”

The two brothers had by this time entered a tavern, where, of course, it was impossible for Edmund to discuss that which above all had induced him to search for his brother. But, to his deep regret, he soon learned that John was a staunch and thoroughgoing Protestant, whom for the present there was little chance of bringing back to the fold of Christ. He told him, therefore, of his intended departure out of town, at the same time assuring him that within a month he would return

and confer with him at length on some very important affair. How earnestly would Edmund then and there have sought to win his brother for Christ, if on parting he had foreseen that he would never see him again in this life.

“And thus,” wrote John in later years, “the two brothers parted, the one to his function of converting souls, the other to meditate how to corrupt his own; the one to spend his time in studying how to persuade, the other how to withstand; the one purposed to make haste back again, hoping to save a soul, brotherly love thereunto provoking; the other wishing his brother never to return, through fear of being converted, licentious liberty perverting in him brotherly love.”

Eager for service in the vineyard of the Lord, Edmund left London and went to the country districts. Many a time during the ensuing year, his thoughts reverted to his unhappy brother, whom he knew to be treading dangerous paths. He had promised to see him again within a month; but for some reason or other he was prevented from going to London, much, we may readily suppose, to the satisfaction of John. Finally,

in the fall of 1591, he could fulfill his promise. He came to London, trusting that this time he would find his brother better disposed. But God had decreed that something more than mere argument and persuasion was to bring about the conversion of John. On November 8, while Edmund was saying Mass in the house of Mr. Swithin Wells in Gray’s Inn Fields, Topcliffe suddenly forced his way in and led the assembled Catholics off to Newgate prison. On December 4, they were brought to trial, pronounced guilty of high treason and condemned to death. Six days later, Edmund together with his host, Mr. Wells, was hanged, drawn, and quartered before the very house where he had celebrated his last Mass.

Hardened in heresy and sin, John Gennings was determined that Edmund’s martyrdom for the faith, the news of which he received with cold indifference, should not in any way influence his own conduct. He was a Protestant and a Protestant he would remain. Wonderful, however, and irresistible are the, eternal decrees of the Most high. How in the end the grace of God triumphed over the obstinacy of

this young man, we shall let him relate in his own words.

“This much loved brother,” he wrote, referring to himself in the third person, “this John Gennings, being in London at the very time of his (Edmund’s) execution, hearing of the same, rather rejoiced than any way bewailed the untimely and bloody end of his nearest kinsman, hoping thereby to be rid of all persuasions which he suspected he should, receive from him touching the Catholic Religion. But about ten days after his execution, toward night, having spent all that day in sport and jollity, being weary with play, he returned home, where to repose himself he went into a secret chamber. He was no sooner there set down, but forthwith his heart began to be heavy and his head melancholy, and he began to weigh how idly he had spent that day. Amidst these thoughts, there was presently represented to his mind a strange imagination and apprehension of the death of his brother; and amongst other things, how he had, not long before, forsaken all earthly pleasures, and, for his religion only, endured intolerable torments. Then within himself he made long discourses

concerning his religion and his brother’s, comparing the Catholic manner of living with his and finding the one to embrace pain and mortification, and the other to seek pleasure; the one to live strictly, and the other licentiously; the one to fear sin, and the other to run into all kinds of sin; he was struck with exceeding terror and remorse. He wept bitterly, desiring God, after his fashion, to illuminate his understanding, that he might see and perceive the truth.

“Oh, what great joy and consolation did he feel at that instant! What reverence on the sudden did he begin to bear to the Blessed Virgin, and to the Saints of God, which before he had never scarcely so much as heard of! What strange emotions, as it were inspirations, with exceeding readiness of will to change his religion, took possession of his soul! And what heavenly conception had he now of his brother’s felicity! He imagined he saw him; he thought he heard him. In this ecstasy of mind, he made a vow upon the spot, as he lay prostrate on the ground, to forsake kindred and country, to find out the true knowledge of his brother’s faith; which vow he soon after

performed, and departed from England without giving notice to any of his friends, and went beyond the seas to execute his promise.”

The conversion of John Gennings to the faith of his forefathers was as sincere as it was miraculous. The image of his sainted brother, whose cruel martyrdom had at first left him so strangely indifferent, was now constantly before his mind. What only a few years since he had so greatly abhorred, Edmund’s priestly profession, this same he now had a mind to embrace. He entered the English College at Douai, where, he spent several years enriching his soul with that learning and virtue which so eminently qualified him for his later career. Finally, in 1607, he was ordained priest⁷ and the next year was permitted to depart for the missions in England. It was apparently about two years after his arrival that he met Fr. William Stanney, Commissary of the English Franciscans. Very likely, he told the saintly friar the wonderful story of his conversion, and made known to him how ever since, he felt himself drawn to the religious life and to the Order

of St. Francis. Fr. William soon detected the excellent qualities of the zealous priest and his sincere and deep devotion to the Order he wished to join. It was probably in 1610 that he vested him with the habit of St. Francis and sent him abroad to the friary at Ypres, there to be trained in the Franciscan mode of life and to study the Rule and the Statutes of the Order.⁸

Fr. John Gennings, as he was henceforth known, proved a true and worthy follower of St. Francis. The love he bore the Order to which he now belonged engendered in his heart a lively interest for everything that pertained to its glory and welfare. Hearing how the Franciscans, ever since the first outbreak of the religious persecution in his native land, had suffered and died for the faith, and how in consequence their province was well-nigh extinct, Fr. John conceived an ardent longing to restore the province to its one-time prestige and prosperity. A voice within seemed to tell him that Divine Providence had

8 “It does not appear quite certain,” Thaddeus observes, “in what year Father Gennings joined the Franciscan Order. The dates given in his mortuary bill and his epitaph do not agree.” (*The Franciscans in England*, p. 27, footnote.)

7 See *Douai Diaries*, p. 14, 34.

decreed its restoration and had chosen him as the instrument to accomplish it. This remarkable desire was not merely a transient notion that would fade and die with the first religious fervor. Evidently, it was the working of divine grace, growing stronger and more urgent as years went on. Such, at least, must have been the conviction of Fr. William. As commissary, he knew only too well into what a state of collapse the province had by this time fallen. Hence he was interested in his confrere's ceaseless reference to its possible restoration. Convinced of his ability as he was of his zeal and virtue, Fr. William delivered into his hands the ancient seal of the province,⁹ thereby officially empowering him to work for its return to the place of distinction it once had enjoyed in the Order.

Not long after, Fr. Gennings learned that several priests and students of the English College at Douai wished to become Franciscans and join the province he intended to restore. Without delay he proposed the matter to Fr. Andrew a Soto, commissary general of the Belgian Provinces. The commissary favored the project and granted him all

necessary faculties. Accordingly, in 1616, a residence was procured at Gravelines, and the first community assembled consisting of six Fathers and three novices. At the same time, probably for lack of sufficient accommodations, other novices destined for the English Province spent the year of probation in the friary at Ypres.

On June 8, 1618, the Franciscans held their general chapter at Salamanca, in Spain. It was here that the work of Fr. John Gennings, till then sanctioned only by the commissary general, received the approbation of the highest authorities of the Order. Among other things it was decreed that, as Fr. John Gennings had proposed, a friary should be erected at Douai. The king of Spain offered no opposition, but preferred to leave the final decision to her highness, the archduchess Isabella, who was then governing the Spanish Netherlands, and to the civil authorities of the university town. The archduchess, owing to the intervention of her confessor, Fr. Andrew a Soto, readily gave her consent, while the magistrates of the city even granted a site on which to erect

⁹ Mason, p. 19 ; Thaddeus, p. 27.

the friary and college.¹⁰

On October 30, of the same year, the friars came to Douai and rented a private house, which for the present was to serve as convent. The next step of Fr. John Gennings was to solicit alms. Most generously did the nobility in England and the Benedictine abbots of St. Vedast and Marchienne respond to his appeal. The work on the buildings, therefore, progressed

quite rapidly, and in 1621, the friars could enter their new home, which they dedicated to St. Bonaventure. To the first community belonged FF. John Gennings, Antony Clarke (Clercke), Francis Davenport, and Bonaventure Jackson, whom the commissary general appointed first superior. In 1624, the friary was made a guardianate with Fr. Bonaventure as first guardian.

To be continued

¹⁰ Mason, pp. 21 seq.; *Annales Mtinorum*, Vol. XXV, an. 1618, num. VIII.



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The Catholic Home

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM



A home is a place unlike any other in this world. It is where parents and children go to live their private lives away from the public eye. It is meant to be a place of shelter from the outside elements, whether storms or heat. It provides the place where children go to be with their loved ones, away from the school environment and other various places of activity. It is the place where parents go to find peace and quiet away from the chaotic world of the workplace. It is the place where, in general, all wish to go regardless of who they are or where they live after they have completed a day's work.

Ideally, the home ought to be a place of peace and quiet away from the distractions of school and work. This peace in the Catholic home ought to be the result of a family in the state of grace. Where there is sin (mortal) there is no peace. Parents need to lead the way for their children by giving a good example. This brings up the responsibilities of the parents so vital in the proper raising of Catholic children.

Quite often today when one speaks of the necessity of a good example from the parents, the response of one or both adults is "I'm not perfect." This is already known and should not

be something which prevents parents from doing their best. Depending upon the person, the “I’m not perfect” comment is nothing more than a means by which to avoid parental responsibilities.

Catholic parents ought to approach their responsibilities from the spiritual standpoint. If they are honest with themselves they will realize their faults and work to overcome them. One can be sure that parents with the proper disposition are able to accomplish considerably more than previously considered. Parents simply need to understand they are not capable of doing anything without the grace of God, and with grace comes the possibility of being good, holy parents.

The failure of Catholic parents finds its cause in the lack of supernatural grace or the refusal to use that with which they have been blessed. Parents who rely upon faulty and sentimental ideas, then bring forth children with the same faulty ideas. The same faults being passed to the next generation. How often have children been the victims of parents who are unwilling to change their erroneous, stubborn

ways! It is, indeed, a strange way to show love for their child.

Catholic parents of today must realize there are some things in the life of the family that should never change whether it is 1950 or 2015. The first and most important is that of teaching the Faith. Parents are the first educators and are principally responsible for this education. All too often this is left to the mother although the father is fully capable of assisting her or perhaps doing a better job than she. This is simply culpable negligence.

Observations by this writer in recent years lead to the conclusion that too much mediocrity, or to put it another way, apathy exists among those who are responsible for young children. The faith of the parents must be an active, lively faith. Parents must have a proper, regular prayer life which they can pass onto their children. The importance of daily family prayer cannot be overstated. The blessings of these prayers can have a lasting effect well beyond the years when the children live in the parental home. Time MUST be set aside each day for prayer. This is not only a

teaching moment for the parents, but also a moment when children understand the importance of prayer. This writer has seen far too many families who sadly neglect family prayer. What is the result? Children do not pray as they should, if at all. This means they do not understand the importance of prayer and its role in the life of the Catholic. Lack of prayer brings on a variety of other problems in life which would have been avoided through prayer.

Something ought to be said also about the “weak link” among parents. Unless a child is well instructed, he may tend toward the parent who does not pray or does not practice the faith. Both parents must do what is necessary to make sure this situation is avoided. Once again, it has been seen that such “weak links” eventually lead to a loss of faith.

As important as it is to teach the Faith to children, it is actually more important to teach them a love of the Faith. This, of course, can only be done through good example and the parents themselves possessing a true, sincere love of the Faith.

It should be noted at this point that all too often, today, parents are unable to pass along the Catholic Faith in a proper manner simply because they do NOT know it themselves. How many parents take the time to educate themselves on the Faith? How many are willing to teach the catechism and learn along with the children? It has been said many times that the best way to learn is to teach. Parents should not wonder why their children leave the Church as young adults when, as parents, they failed to do their duty. Parents should be quite concerned with how they will answer to God for their negligence.

It is imperative that parents establish a daily routine for prayer. I have seen parents and children create such a busy schedule for themselves, that they really do not know how to make time for prayer. The fact is that parents and children need to arrange their busy day in such a manner that prayer is possible. It should be done so that one is not constantly squeezed for time. This over-scheduled scenario will undoubtedly provide everyone with a reason not to pray.

Parents, as adults, ought to realize the devil is quite the “expert” at arranging schedules so you will NOT pray, and unless the parents understand how the demons work, they will be oblivious to what is taking place. How can parents lead a family when they are blind themselves? The blind leading the blind does NOT work!

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Franciscan Saints

OCTOBER 7
VENERABLE GEORGE
OF AUGSBURG
Confessor, First Order

George was born in the diocese of Augsburg, and was the son of respectable peasants. He learnt the baker's trade, and as a journeyman baker he crossed the Alps and went to Rome, the capital of Christendom.

George went to Rome more from an interest in things eternal than in temporal matters. Guided by divine grace, he there resolved to leave all temporal things in order to serve God alone in the Capuchin Order. He received the holy habit on November 4, 1724, in the twenty-eighth year of his life.

In the novitiate his solid virtue was the object of admiration, and so, after his profession, along with other duties he was assigned the very difficult task of nursing a sick religious whose

coarse ways aggravated by illness had taken on so repellent a character that no one could stand it with him. George tended the sick man until the latter's death, with so much love, humility, and patience that all were astonished. God rewarded him for it by continually drawing him closer to Himself; he received the grace of interior prayer in a very high degree.

Brother George was now assigned to gather alms for the convent. While on his rounds, he was constantly recollected in God. Whoever saw him was edified. He had such a kindly way about him that he not only attracted the children, but everybody, high and low, appreciated the chance to speak to him. Those who asked him for religious instruction, or for

advice and consolation, were never disappointed. One of his special friends was the Cardinal of York, the last male descendant of the Stuarts.

But George found his greatest delight in associating with the poor and the needy. Many sick persons were restored to health at his prayers, so that the gift of miracles was quite generally attributed to him. His life was so rigorous, it seemed a miracle in itself that his weak body endured the great hardships he undertook.

After a holy life of thirty-eight years in the order, he died peacefully in the Lord in the convent at Frascati near Rome on October 7, 1762. People prayed at his tomb, beneath the lamp of the high altar, as to a saint. As a result of the many answers to prayer, his beatification was proposed, and Pope Pius IX conferred on him the title of Venerable in 1852.

ON PATIENCE AMID HARSH TREATMENT

The virtue of patience meets its severest test amid circumstances like those in which Venerable George had to practice it. To practice patience in sickness

which God sends is not so difficult. Bearing the insults and persecution of wicked men is comparatively easy. And we can close an eye to the shortcomings of inferiors. But it is another matter to preserve patience when serving a sick person who is always complaining, or in daily employment where there is only annoyance and harsh words, or in waiting on aged parents who are cross or ill-humored. Where the teachings of Christ have fallen on good ground, they produce "fruit in patience." Every Christian should take care to acquire a virtue so necessary. The prince of the apostles thus admonishes servants: "Be subject to your masters, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Peter 2:18). Even the Wise Man said long ago: "Honor thy father in work, and word, and all patience" (Ecclus. 3:9). — Have you stood this test of virtue in the past?

Consider that we should not judge people too harshly, who provide us with occasions for patience. St. Gertrude once had a superior that was otherwise an exemplary person but inclined to be cross and harsh; when she asked our Lord to take the fault from her superior, He said:

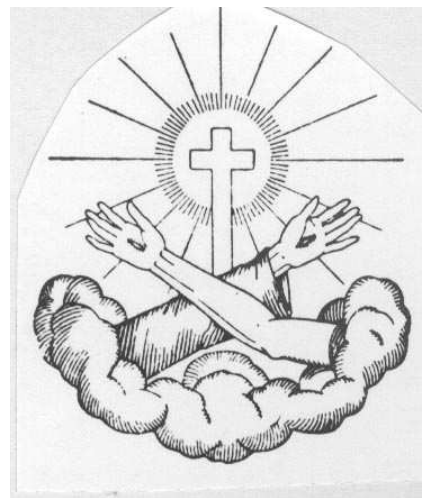
“Why should I rid her of a fault which offers both of you an opportunity to practice virtue? She is given the opportunity to humble herself, you, to practice patience.” Such is the wisdom of God! He permits certain imperfections, of which those who possess them try hard to rid themselves but do not succeed, so that they may become more humble, and others more patient. According to the divine dispensation, the weaknesses of one person thus serve to make perfect the virtues of another. — Profit by these opportunities to achieve your own perfection.

3. Consider the reward that is given to patience that has stood the test. The practice of this virtue is in itself a sweet reward, since it saves us from rancor and preserves our peace of heart. Moreover, God grants the patient man, as He did to Venerable George, special graces to prove faithful in the various events of life. “And patience worketh trial” (Rom. 5:4). But as tried children of God we receive an eternal share in the glorious reward of His only-begotten Son, “who despised the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebr. 12:2). We should direct our thought to Him

when our patience is being tried. That is why the Apostle adds: “Think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds” (Hebr. 12:3).

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *(Monday in Holy Week)*

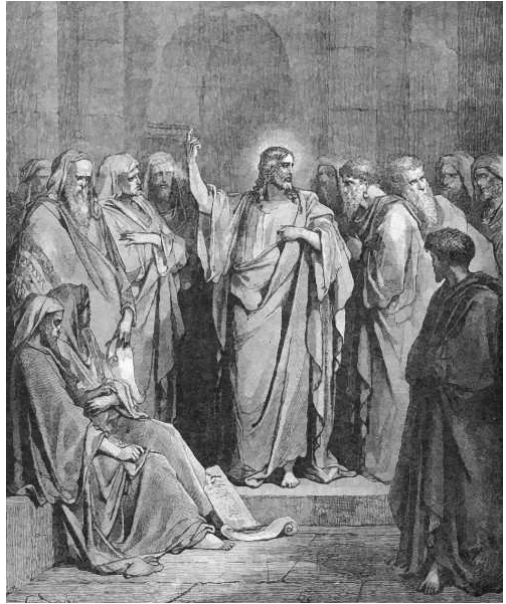
Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that we who fail through our weakness under so many adversities, may take heart again through the pleading of the Passion of Thy only-begotten Son. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.



Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED
BY BERNARD A.
HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY
CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.



CHAPTER XXVI

Grief of the Heart of Jesus at the Coldness of so Many Christians Toward the Sacrament of His Love

“Would that you knew also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge!” (Cf. Eph. 3:0.)

1. *Our Divine Saviour complained to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque especially of the ingratitude of so many men toward the Sacrament of His Love. As manifestations of such ingratitude, He pointed to their irreverence, sacrilege, coldness, and indifference.*

Sacrilege is the profanation

by unworthy use of objects consecrated to God. Of all holy things given man for his use, the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is the holiest. That is why we call it “the Most Blessed” Sacrament. To profane it, therefore, is one of the worst and meanest of crimes. The consecrated Hosts reserved in our tabernacles may be profaned in two ways: either by unworthy sacramental reception or by nonsacramental misuse, such as by forcing open the tabernacle, stealing the sacred vessels with their Contents, throwing the Sacred Species on the ground or otherwise abusing Them. How any Christian who really believes that Our Lord is present

in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar can commit this latter crime, is unintelligible. During the ages of faith, civil laws made it an offense punishable by death. This crime is not unknown even today as the newspapers all too frequently inform us. For love of us Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar as God and Man, and profligate men reward such love by ill-treating our Eucharistic Saviour in a most shameful manner. How does God regard such crimes? King Nabuchodonosor had the gold and silver vessels of the temple brought from Jerusalem to Babylon. His son Baltasar ordered that they be brought forth at a banquet and he and his guests drank from them. At once a hand appeared writing on the wall of the banquet hall and announcing that his kingdom would be taken from him and given to the Medes and Persians, because he had insulted the Ruler of Heaven and had used the sacred vessels of God's house as ordinary drinking cups. That very night he was murdered and his kingdom fell into the hands of his enemies (cf. Dan. 5). This was God's punishment for the sacrilegious misuse of sacred vessels. But what are all the sacred vessels of Jerusalem's

temple in comparison with the Most Blessed Sacrament in which the King of Heaven is present with His Humanity and Divinity? Sacrilegious misuse of the Blessed Sacrament is, therefore, a far more damnable crime than the sacrilege of Baltasar; it is a most grievous insult offered to Our Divine Saviour.

But Our Saviour is more frequently dishonored in the Blessed Sacrament by unworthy communions. The Council of Trent sums up the Catholic teaching on Holy Communion in the following words: "*Since sacred functions may be performed only in a holy manner, it follows that every Christian must be the more on his guard not to approach the holy table without sufficient reverence and holiness; the more he realizes the holiness and Divinity of this heavenly Sacrament, especially since we have those terrifying words of the Apostle: 'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord' (1 Cor. 16:29). Wherefore, let him who wishes to communicate recall to mind that precept of the Apostle: 'But let a man prove himself' (1 Cor. 11:28). These*

words, according to the time-honored interpretation of the Church, mean that no one who is conscious of mortal sin, no matter how certain he may be that he has elicited an act of perfect contrition, may approach the holy table before he has been absolved in sacramental confession.” The opposite doctrine is anathematized.¹ The Church would not speak in this manner if She did not consider the unworthy reception of the Blessed Sacrament a very grievous offense against Our Lord; yet He suffers this injury a countless number of times at the hands of those Christians who wish by the reception of the Blessed Sacrament to pose before men as faithful members of the Church. They can deceive men, but they cannot deceive God, and if Our Saviour complains of such sacrilege, He does so because the communions of many are an abomination in His eyes.

The reason why the unworthy reception of Holy Communion is such a great crime, is that by it the Humanity of Christ is compelled to enter the soul of a man in which the devil still dwells who, we may say, welcomes Christ with scornful laughter. This

¹ Sess. 23, C. 7 can.

Sacrament has been instituted by Christ as the especial Sacrament of His Love, to enkindle the love of God in our hearts at the source of love, His Divine Heart. In a sacrilegious communion, however, the soul tells Jesus: “You came to me to increase in my heart’s love for You; but I do not care to love You; I prefer to be with Your enemies.” In this fashion the love of Our Saviour is derided.

But Jesus has reason to complain of many other Christians who are not guilty of such crimes. Their coldness and indifference grieve Him. He feels this the more keenly, precisely because they are His friends, and because they do not seem to see anything unseemly in treating Him, their noblest and best Friend, in a manner in which they would not treat a fellow being to whom, because of his dignity or station, they owed respect.

2. *Unbecoming conduct toward the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.* Love, by its very nature, demands a return of love. In proportion as a friend gives greater proofs of love, in the same proportion he may expect a more ready recognition and more heartfelt return of love. The greater his efforts to serve his

friend, the greater the sacrifices, the greater the advantages which he procures for him, the more deeply is he grieved if that friend, despite it all, remains cold and pretends that no service has been rendered, or takes it all as a matter of course. Similarly our Saviour is deeply grieved if His friends treat Him coldly especially in that Sacrament in which, according to the words of the Council of Trent, "He has poured out, as it were, all the treasures of His Divine love for men."² His love compels Him to remain constantly in our midst; His love hides Him under the insignificant appearances of bread so that He may unite Himself to us the more intimately; His love delivers Him unresisting into man's power; His love makes of Him a Daily Sacrifice to His Heavenly Father; His love imprisons Him in the tabernacle where He waits day and night to give us of His blessings. And His friends?

We cannot deny that many Christians are wanting in

appreciation of this Most Blessed Sacrament. After all, what is the most precious treasure we have on earth? Suppose we gathered together into one place all the gold and precious stones in the possession of men, suppose we heaped up all the precious things that are found either on the surface or beneath the surface of this earth, and then put beside them one Consecrated Host. Where would we find the



greater value? The treasures of earth certainly possess greater external splendor; beside it, the little, inconspicuous Host is lost. And yet, this Host contains the Creator of Heaven and earth who has called all these treasures and infinitely many more from nothingness into being. In them we find a dead, cold splendor which can conjure up before our eyes false happiness; in the Sacred Host a living Heart beats for us, a

² Sess. 13, c. 2.

Divine Heart overflowing with love, which desires and has the power to make us eternally happy. In the Sacred Host we have the infinite Good with which created treasures cannot be compared. And yet, with what happy anticipation our hearts beat at the prospect that some earthly treasure is about to come into our possession; while the certainty that our Saviour is about to come to us in Holy Communion leaves us unmoved.

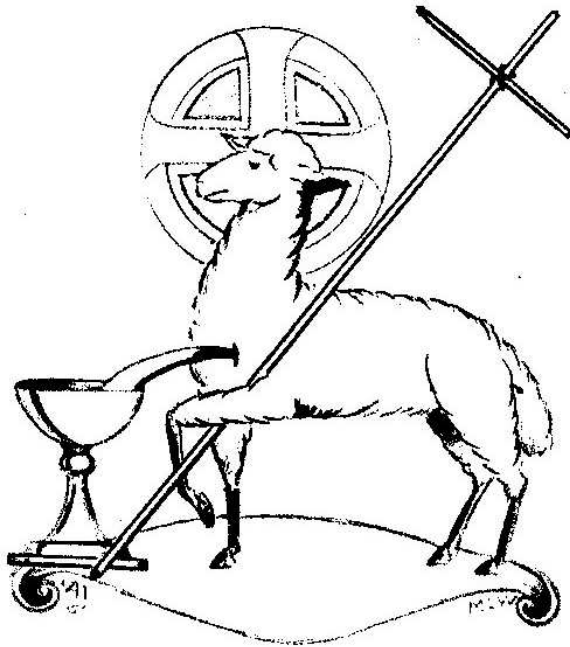
“This is true,” someone may say, “but if I could have at my constant disposal all manner of earthly riches, just as I can receive Holy Communion every day, the prospect of their acquisition would not make such an impression on me.” O Divine Jesus, it is actually Thy boundless love, if we may say so, which defeats its own end. If Thou hadst demanded great effort and sacrifices as a necessary condition to receive Thee in Holy Communion or to visit Thee from time to time, we would have greater appreciation of, and reverence for, this gift of love. But Thy love for us would not suffer this to be so. Thou didst wish to be with us always, prepared each moment to receive our visits, anxious to

come into our hearts daily. In gratitude for this greater love, we lose our reverence, allow our enthusiasm to grow cold, and look upon Thy graciousness as something common! We return the greatest love, just because it is so great, with the greatest indifference.

We must not imagine, however, that Our Saviour expects us to live in a state of perpetual excitement and ecstasy because of His Sacramental Presence. We could not do this even if we would, nor does He demand it of us. What He does demand is our good will, a lively faith, and conduct in conformity with our faith. This lively faith in the Real Presence will prompt us to think of Him often, visit Him frequently in the Sacrament of His love, and comport ourselves in His presence with the reverence that is due the King of Heaven and earth. If we compare His dignity and majesty with the conduct of many Christians while in church, we must admit that the efficacy of their faith leaves much to be desired. Look at them as they enter the church where their God dwells in the tabernacle. They know how to make the deepest and most captivating courtesies before

men of high station. But do they make a real genuflection before their Saviour? No, either they consider all external marks of reverence superfluous, or they make any sort of awkward gesture by bending one knee almost imperceptibly, which at best might pass as a vague suggestion of a genuflection, but one which they would certainly deem unworthy in the presence of any man of high station. During the divine service they permit not only their thoughts, but their eyes as well to wander about, because many things seem to them more worthy of attention than their God present on the altar. Is the number of those perhaps small who look upon (or at least accept) divine worship as an excellent opportunity to see others and to be seen by them? Some cannot even control their tongue for so short a time for love of their Saviour,

but must make inane remarks to their neighbors. During the consecration they bow a bit perhaps, and make some motions with the hand which remotely resemble striking of the breast. When Mass is almost over, an exodus from the church begins as though every moment were lost that is spent in church beyond what is absolutely



necessary.

This general sketch indicates that the complaint of our Saviour for the irreverence, indifference, and coldness which men exhibit toward Him in the Sacrament of His love is just. There are probably few Catholics who have

nothing to reproach themselves with on this score. We shall no doubt one day be surprised at the extent of the punishment we shall have to endure in Purgatory because of our lack of reverence in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The most profound mysteries of our faith cease to make an impression on us if we do not constantly renew our faith and fervor. This is the reason why Our Saviour revealed the devotion to His Sacred Heart. He wanted to remind us again and again of His love and of the ingratitude of men, and thus enkindle anew our fervor.

3. *Why is this coldness on the part of men so disagreeable and painful to our Lord?* Does it detract perhaps from His happiness? When we speak of His loneliness in the Blessed Sacrament and of the inconsiderate conduct of Christians, do we wish to imply that His condition is that of a man who is bored because of isolation and loneliness? Certainly not. Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament enjoys all the bliss of heaven; He is perfectly self-sufficient, and needs no creature to make Him happy. Besides, legions of angels always surround the tabernacle in reverence and devotion.

It is not His own advantage, therefore, which urges Him to demand gratitude, esteem, reverence, and fervor from us, but solely His love for us. In the Blessed Sacrament He keeps open court, invites us all to come to Him, and offers us as much grace as our souls are capable of receiving.

Against our will or without our consent no grace is forced upon us. Because it conduces to our greater merit and honor that we, as rational creatures, co-operate in the shaping of our eternal destiny, Our Saviour demands that we come to Him with love, gratitude, reverence, and ardent desires, ask Him for His graces, and prepare and enlarge our souls for their reception. Our Saviour does not want to carve His friends, to speak figuratively, out of blocks of wood, but wishes to establish a living relationship of friendship between His heart and theirs.

Nevertheless, many Christians pay no attention to His invitation, as though it were not worthwhile to acquire such treasures, or they bring such lack of comprehension, such narrow and cold hearts that they are hardly able to receive small graces. Our Saviour's

love of friendship which would so gladly be divinely generous, is constrained by the coldness of those who wish to be His friends. This it is that saddens and tortures His loving heart.

O Jesus, Thou art that Eternal Wisdom, which has prepared a banquet and invites us all: "Come, eat My Bread, and drink the Wine which I have mingled for you, that you may forsake your spiritual childishness and walk by the ways of prudence. For the fear of the Lord is the

beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is prudence" (cf. Prov. 9:5, 6, 10). O Lord grant us an understanding heart that we may come to Thee, to Thy tabernacle, to Thy table with that reverent desire which is due the dignity and excellence of Thy person and of Thy gifts, and with that ardent love which is ever more enkindled by Thy love and preserves us from all coldness in dealing with Thee, until at length we become one heart and one soul with Thee.

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