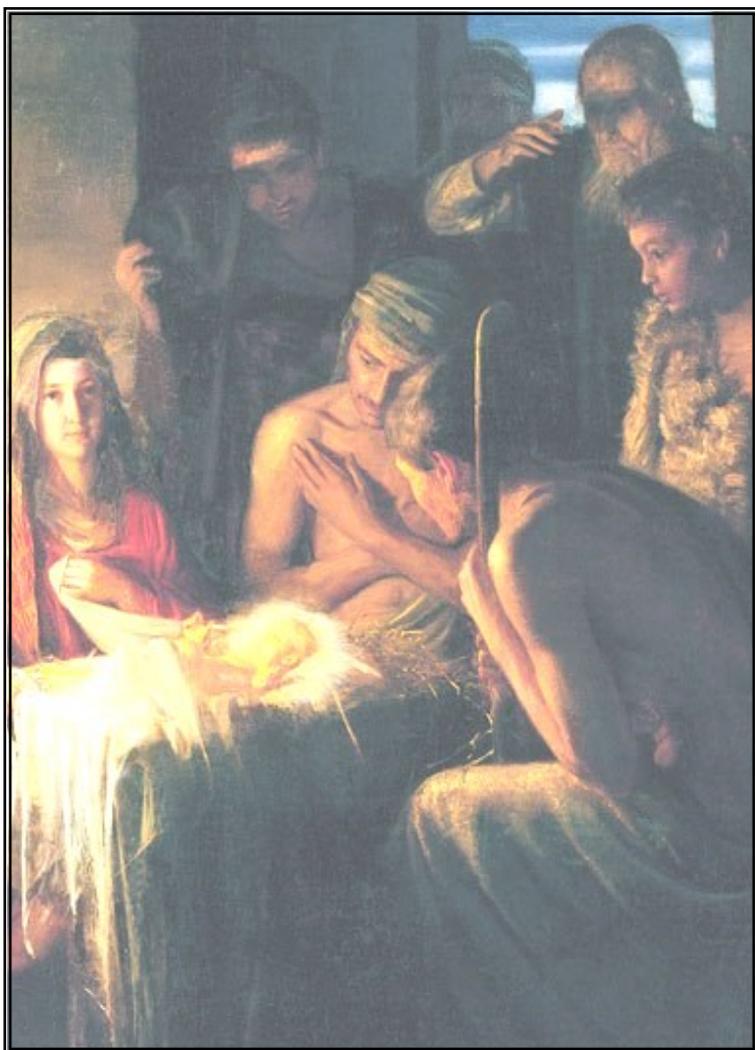


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The **SERAPH** seeks to serve and unite in spirit all Roman Catholics, faithful to tradition, and all men of good will, for the betterment of society according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi.

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*In essentia - Únitas. In dúbio - Libertas.
In ómnibus - Cáritas.*

PREPARE THE WAY

Bishop Giles, OFM



The season of Advent is here once again. It is the beginning of the Liturgical year and so, it is a time for us to re-enliven our souls. If we have wandered away from the path of our salvation, this season is the time to return. If we have not fallen away, this season is a time for us to advance and make even greater progress.

During the four weeks of Advent, we commemorate the years awaiting the coming of the Messiah. It is a time of great longing and anticipation. If we are to obtain the most benefit from this year's Advent, we must strive to enter into these sentiments of longing and anticipation. In his "Confessions," St. Augustine says: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in God." If we have driven God out of

our hearts and minds through sin, there is no doubt that our hearts are restless. When God is not with us, there is a terrible void in our souls, and we are ever in search of what may fill it.

Too often, we seek material or worldly things to try and fill this void, and we are only left feeling even emptier than before. These things frequently begin to fill us with disgust for them and for ourselves – and many do not know why. The answer is simple; our hearts were not made for these things. In the physical realm, it is as if we are starving from hunger, but instead of eating food, we only drink water. We may fill our bellies with water, but the hunger remains, and perhaps even intensifies. There is no

substituting the food that our bodies need with anything else. The same is true with our souls. Our souls need and desire God, all the material things, as well as all the demonic or false spiritual things, can never fill this need and desire. On the contrary, all that these things do is aggravate or frustrate us. There is bitterness in our lives without God's presence. Or there is despair and hopelessness that comes from the in-utility of anything to satisfy or give meaning and purpose to our lives. Rather than suffer this pain any longer, let us turn with ever-increasing longing for God to come and fill us again.

If we have not driven the Life of Christ from us, we have tasted how good God is, and we are ever longing for more. God is infinite, and we can always rise higher, or increase the love and graces in our souls. Having tasted how satisfying the life of grace is, we should always be seeking more. Our hunger or love can never be satisfied with saying, "It is enough." We can always love Him more; we can always draw nearer to Him. Our lives

can always enter into greater intimacy with Him – greater conformity with Him. Now is the time (this Advent) for us to fan the flames of this love and desire and prepare our souls to welcome Him even more intimately into our hearts and souls than we have ever done before.

Whatever the condition of our souls may be, Advent is the time of preparation of our hearts and souls. To attune ourselves to the needs and desires of our souls, we need to quiet or silence a little the whims and wants of our bodies. Through mortification and penance, we deny ourselves so many superfluous material things. We are not harming our health, but we are disciplining our passions, we are calming the incessant cries of the flesh against the spirit. When the body is trained in this self-denial and is thus brought into submission and quieted, the voice of our souls can then be heard. In this state, we begin to see and understand what it is we truly desire. Our hearts open up to the grace of God – love fills our hearts and souls and we long for ever-increasing unity

with God. We have come forth from the Hand of God, and we are happiest when we are truly on the path of returning to Him – entering into Him and becoming One with Him.

The first mode of penance is fasting, and it is the surest means to arrive at this bodily discipline or training that is necessary for us to be able to focus our attention upon the needs of our souls. When our bodies are made truly obedient and properly trained, there is a right order in our lives. Our bodies then begin to truly serve our souls. It may, at first, be a servile obedience, however as we advance in the spiritual life, the body experiences (perhaps for the first time) true happiness. The restlessness that St. Augustine spoke of is replaced by true peace and happiness.

This is the state of being that Our Holy Mother the Church invites us to long for during Advent. It is Jesus Who brings this peace into our souls, but He cannot enter into our hearts without our consent. He knocks at the door of our hearts, and will not force Himself in. If we do not quiet

the passions of the flesh, we cannot hear His knocking and so we never open the door to our hearts for Him. We may fill our hearts with many empty loves, but we can never be satisfied with any of them, or with any amount of them. The avaricious man never has enough money and always desires more. He can never be satisfied because his heart was not made for the love of money. The drunkard always seeks more drink, because his heart cannot be ever satisfied with a drink. We can go through every passion or desire – they are all empty – no matter how much of them or how many we may accumulate we are still empty. Only God can fill this void. We must silence these loud disordered clamorings of our flesh.

Fasting is the beginning key. We typically think of fasting as abstaining from food or drink. There are, however, many things that we may fast from. It is a kind of judicious pruning of the things that are stealing our attention away from the love of our hearts that belongs only to God. If moderate abstaining from food

and drink is not possible for us, then we should strive to do some other form of fasting or penance. Our goal in fasting is not only to deny ourselves some physical or material thing, but we are also to strive and deny ourselves the seeking of pleasure in these things. We begin with the material cutting away, but then we must cut even deeper. We must strive to cut away the inordinate love or attachment that we have for these things. For example, it is not enough that we physically abstain from alcoholic drinks if we keep alive a burning desire for them. To truly fast, we must root out the object, but even more importantly we must root out the affection or

spiritual attachment that we have for it. This is to be the goal of our spiritual lives during this penitential season of Advent.

May this Advent be especially fruitful for us in purifying our physical lives in preparation for Jesus, but even more so, may this Advent cleanse our hearts and souls of inordinate attachments. Let us purify our bodies, our hearts, and minds as well as our souls as we take stock and correct the thoughts and desires of our bodies and souls. Then may we welcome Jesus into our souls that were made only for Him and find true peace and happiness in this life as well as in the next.

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TO WHOM DO YOU SPEAK?

Bishop Giles, OFM

When we enter before the Divine Presence of Jesus Christ hidden in the Holy Eucharist, we should remember to pray. He wishes that we should recognize Him and speak to Him. If we fail to recognize Him, it seems logical that we do not know Him, and, therefore, we do not love Him. It is with the eyes of faith that we see Jesus in the Tabernacle. It is with this faith that we speak to Him and consider our outward behavior in His Presence.

When we are called forth to speak to others on important occasions or concerning important matters, we generally make it a point to prepare ahead of time what we are going to say. The dignity or the importance of those to whom we speak also bears upon the preparation we make before speaking. It is, therefore, wise to consider to Whom we are speaking when we pray. Our attitude, posture, dress, etc. are all very important considerations in this world when we present

ourselves before others that we owe honor and respect to – how much more so are these things important when we appear before God?

Before we consider so many of various motions and states of our bodies in His Presence, it seems best that we consider the interior state of our hearts and minds. It is in the interior that faith takes root and grows. It is within the depths of our souls that we truly pray. Prayers that do not come from within are usually empty, worthless, if not outright insulting. The rebuke of God against such empty prayers is clear enough when He said: “These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.” (St. Matthew 15:8)

Private or personal prayers can and do take many forms as well as various levels. We can speak to God in the quiet of our hearts with words (thoughts or ideas) that readily come to our minds as we speak to our friends – this is

true prayer. We can pray memorized prayers that have been approved and given to us through the Church. These offer us the opportunity to make these words our own as we enter into the spirit of them. We may also go over the words as we focus our attention on some other truth or mystery. We can reflect within ourselves of various truths or teachings of God and the Church – meditation. There are times when we may silence our hearts and minds and simply relish the beauty, majesty, power, glory, etc. of God. This type of prayer requires no words and words often get into the way as we open our hearts in a kind of loving embrace. There takes place in our hearts in these moments a communication that words cannot express. In these personal or private prayers, it is not necessary for us to make a sound or move our lips. These prayers can be made at any time and in any place. Simple short and powerful prayers are ejaculatory prayers and they are often called upon in various times of need such as trials or temptations. It is not necessary to speak these prayers and often it may not be convenient

to do so, but we can always call them forth in our hearts and minds and thus truly lift our hearts and minds to God – if only for that brief moment.

From the silent prayers of our hearts naturally, spring the prayers that come forth from our lips and tongues. It is natural that the faculty of speech is brought into the play when we honor God in prayer. We should always remember that what comes from our lips should have its roots in our hearts. If we recite prayers like robots or trained parrots, what have we done, or what have we gained? There are some who boast of saying many prayers a day. The question is not how many have we *said* but how many have we *prayed*. And even here, it is not a question of how many, but even more importantly, how well we have prayed. It is said that God is interested in quality rather than quantity.

We also have public prayers that are to be made aloud with the movement of our lips and tongues. The liturgical prayers of the Holy Mass and the Sacraments require that the priest vocalize these prayers

even if they are only barely audible to himself. The office of religious is, likewise, a public prayer offered in the name of the Church and is required to be a vocal prayer. All the indulgence prayers are required to be vocalized to gain the indulgence.

This brings us to community prayers, for example, when we pray the Holy Rosary together or make the Stations of the Cross together. In these prayers, our hearts and minds can be active in various ways. We can focus our attention upon the words of the prayer, or we may focus upon the specific mystery that is announced for the particular decade of the Rosary, or upon the particular Station of the Cross. If we are praying in a non-native language or even if we have trouble speaking in our own language, we can focus our attention upon the correct pronunciation of the words so that we give greater honor and glory to God.

We have written of praying within and of vocalizing our prayers. The next logical step in prayer is that of singing. In singing, we put forth the best

gifts or talents we have, to vocalize the sentiments of our hearts. Singing is not often considered as prayer, but it is actually a very high and noble form of prayer. The Psalms that the priests and religious pray every day, were written to be sung. The most beautiful music is without a doubt, the harmonious voices of a community lifting their prayers as one in song. On many occasions, everyone, who is able, should unite their voices with the others. Obviously, those whose voices are impaired by sickness or ill health or some other reason should refrain from joining in as it would create discord, disturb the harmony, and perhaps scandalize some. Then, instead of singing being a prayer and lifting our voices and hearts to God many are filled with harsh, evil, or even sinful thoughts. Also, we suggest that the vain and prideful should humble themselves not to become offended by the less perfect or untrained voices of the many. What makes the music truly beautiful is something much more important than the perfect note or tone – it is the union of voices melodically expressing as one

the profound sentiments of prayer. Jesus says: "For where two or three are gathered in My Name I am there with them." (St. Matthew 18:20) How much more so is this true when we sing our united prayer together?!

Whenever we pray together as a group, we should seek uniformity not only in the sentiments and prayers but also in our voices. When we pray the Rosary, our Hail Marys should not be said faster or slower than others, nor louder or softer than others. Slower is not necessarily better, nor is faster; or louder or softer. What is best

is not singularity, but rather the unity or oneness of the community prayer. We must seek to conform ourselves to the rest, rather than seek to have everyone else conform to us. Speed, cadence, rhythm, etc. are important only insofar as there are unity and conformity. There is no best way, except in humble modesty and conformity in our thoughts and desires as they are brought forth vocally.

In this manner we truly honor God, we edify our neighbors, and we draw ourselves into ever closer unity and love with Jesus.

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PRINCE OF PEACE

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

The world cares little for the Holy Seasons of the Church and less for the royal titles of Our Lord. It claims to want peace around the world but does everything possible to ensure continuous war. Much is made of the holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas, but only that which is necessary is mentioned concerning Our Lord's Birth. It promotes gift-giving for humanitarian or sentimental reasons but knows little of its relationship with Christ's Nativity. This is, indeed, a season filled with contradictions by those who are nothing but pretenders at best or in reality for the most, wolves in the red suit of the secular Santa.

Everyone, including those who do not have an understanding of a number of different things, wish to find what they believe is peace but fail because they do not use the correct means to accomplish this. The world is unable to provide peace because it is the world and knows nothing of this. Satan, and those who have evil intentions, only desire the damnation of souls which is the very opposite of peace.

This leaves us with the true and correct means of obtaining peace within the soul. It is only through and with Our Lord, the Prince of Peace. The vast majority of those living know little or nothing of Christ and many others reject Him. Their efforts to find a true peace will always be futile because they have refused the source and means by which we are able to obtain peace.

Only those who know and love Our Lord have an opportunity to find a true peace. It is not by accident that the title of Prince of Peace is used more at the time of Our Lord's Birth than at any other time.

Only those who consider the mysteries of the Manger will in any way understand what is required for peace. A sincere love of God and the desire to detach one's self from this world will provide a foundation for peace.

There was a reason why Our Lord was born in a manger. It was to teach the lesson that men are not able to find peace in this world through wealth, position or fame. To state this in another way, "the world cannot give what it does not have."

There have been few wars fought for just reasons. We may conclude that the objective of unjust wars is not peace, but other nefarious purposes, i.e., money, power or control. The greatest loss in wars, whether just or unjust, is souls. How many souls have been lost because of the evil of men in causing wars?

Informed Catholics know that the greatest single means of obtaining peace is being in the state of sanctifying grace. If all Catholics were in the state of grace, the world would be in a far greater spiritual state than that which it presently is. If there was a greater consideration for the state of grace and avoiding sin, wars could be avoided more easily and peace could be attained in many more places.

It flows from this thought that Our Lord, the Prince of Peace does have ALL of the answers needed for peace in the world. Don't expect governments to have the answers needed for peace especially if they are godless. They neither have the interest or means by which to establish a lasting peace.

The Catholic Church through the years has provided detailed guidelines for peace in the world, usually to prevent or

stop an existing war through the Principles of Just War. Unfortunately, in recent times the Zionist Jew or the Freemason who holds the reign of power is not interested in having the Church help negotiate peace. These godless men do not want a just peace particularly one that is defined with Catholic or ethical principles.

Herein lays the ongoing battle between good and evil. These enemies of the Prince of Peace do not want peace, for when there is peace their ability to influence the masses is limited to a great degree. Chaos and anarchy are the means through which these evil men work to gain control over an ever-increasing number of naïve people. Far too many people today have been influenced by these enemies but do not have any idea how they are being used by these experts of mind manipulation mixed with evil intentions.

The Holy Seasons of Advent and Christmas are prime examples of those feasts/events which occur each calendar year. Advent is meant to be a season of spiritual preparation for Our Lord's Birth. These godless men have purposely and successfully distorted the Advent and Christmas Seasons in such a way so as to have the non-

thinking masses begin to celebrate “Christmas” on the United States holiday of Thanksgiving! A thinking, reasonable person might wonder how it is that a person’s birth can begin to be celebrated about thirty days in advance. Frankly, this is the power of mass mind manipulation through lies and repetition over many years. It must be understood, though, this would not be possible if Catholics knew their faith and were willing to stand up for it.

The masses are not only celebrating the “holiday” during a penitential season, which undermines the spiritual preparation for the holy feast of Our Lord’s Nativity and the Holy Season itself, these human devils have also convinced too many Catholics that the Christmas Season ends a few days after His Birth. Where are the clergy who should be shouting from the pulpits about the purposeful distortion and undermining of the Faith? How many of them turned off their microphones on Sunday? How many have accepted the lies of the enemies of their Master?!

The end result is a nearly complete destruction of these Holy Seasons and the proper understanding of Our Lord’s royal title of Prince of Peace. Advent

has been nearly forgotten or purposely neglected and replaced with the celebration of Christmas out-of-season. The proper celebration of Christmas has been shortened and undermined. The Christmas Season begins on Christmas Eve and continues until January 13. Some will celebrate Christmas-tide until February 2.

All should celebrate Our Lord’s Birth during the Christmas Season. The Prince of Peace may then have the opportunity to reign in your heart as He should, and not only during the Holy Season. If the Prince reigns in the heart (and soul) of the individual, He will begin to have the intended effect in society. Let us be reminded that we will not have peace in our being if we do not go to the Proper Source of peace. We will not receive the effect if we do not go to the Proper Cause.

Let all celebrate the Birth of the Prince of Peace and do our part in bringing about peace in the world.



A CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Fr. Anthony Lentz, OFM

CONCLUSION

METHODS, CURRICULUM, AND AGENCIES OF EDUCATION

So far most of what has been covered, in regards to educating children, has applied to both informal and formal education. However, the final points which will be dealt with are educational methods, curriculum, and agencies of education. These are directed mostly towards formal education – the school and the Church. These will be defined and the Catholic interpretation and execution will be given.

Methods - There is no specific method which must be followed when educating a child. It will be good then to understand the definition of the educational method: *By method, it is meant the systematic way in which a teacher puts educative agents to work on human beings in order to produce certain desirable changes or results.* Several factors enter into the

choice and usage of any method. The authors list three of these important factors: “1) *the degree of physical, mental, and social maturity of the pupils;* 2) *the nature of the subject matter or activities;* and 3) *teacher and pupil purposes, one cannot speak of the best method.* They then continue to describe the importance of the teacher’s role, “*The most dynamic force in methods is the teacher. Desirable results are very often ascribed to a particular method or combination of methods when, in reality, they have come about mainly through ‘teacher personality.’ A method is often inert and fruitless until the human element in the situation, the teacher, has given it motion and direction. Every method needs a catalyzer.*” The teacher must be a positive example to the child; he should be a model of virtue. He should live the type of life which is admirable and the child should want to emulate. The teacher should remember two things when teaching: 1)

do not teach opinion as truth and 2) do not abuse your authority. If the teacher keeps in mind those fundamental principles and the true reality of man, then these abuses should not occur.

Curriculum – There is a difference between the terms curriculum and courses of study, so definitions of both will be wise. *Curriculum* may be defined as *all the experiences which pupils have while under the direction of the school; thus defined it includes both classroom and extra-classroom activities.* *Courses of study* may be defined as *that part of the curriculum which is organized for classroom use.* Both of these are related to a child's whole and entire educational experience in the school. Those things which must be taught to a child such as arithmetic, reading, and writing should have in them a practical application which the child will understand. This is why courses such as science (chemistry, physics, biology, etc.), social studies (properly assigned), history, and other supplemental courses need and should be given. All of these help the child in becoming a

well-rounded educated individual, who looks beyond himself and his self-needs. Although to be truly well-rounded, the child needs to have religion at the center. God must be the end of all the child learns and does.

Educational agents – There are four educational agents: *parents, the Church, the school, and the state.* What simply needs to be understood here are the rights and duties of each in relation to the child's education. The first point to mention is that they are not all equal. The *parents* are the first educators in the natural order. It is their duty to see that their children are well educated. Their intention should be to help the child develop into a well-balanced individual; always taking capabilities of the individual child into consideration. It should be a point of pride for a parent to see that their child becomes a good practicing Catholic and a good citizen. The *Church* is the first educator in the supernatural order and it's her duty to see that those under her care (baptized) are trained well in the school of Christ. It is the *school's* job to help the

parents in the education of their children; not to over-run it. Public schools are, for the most part, not the proper environment for educating a Catholic child, because they are usually guided by false principles of philosophy which either makes the child into a mere proverbial cog in the machine of society or it gives the child too much authority in his own education. Also, they lack the proper religious atmosphere which is needed to inspire students to sanctity. The cold and fallible use of human reason is their only guide. The *state* is not the end of a child's education. Its true position is very similar to the schools in that it is only meant to assist the parents and the Church. The state can, if it wishes, set certain guidelines so that the child's education is not neglected. It may step in if the parents are clearly neglecting their duties.

CONCLUSION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Drs. Redden and Ryan have touched upon many important facts concerning a Catholic Philosophy of Education. Their explanations have gone beyond the abstract idea of

education and are adaptable to the concrete experiences of education. The amount of material covered in their book is so vast that this paper only scratches its surface. The truth of the matter is that one has to take the more important points and try to explain them well. Also, there are other points which have left a profound impression and deserve to be mentioned. The one point which I personally found to be illuminating is the fact that while educating a child they should have "freedom of failure." This is truly a remarkable thought because many look upon failure as only a negative thing. Nobody likes to fail but the educational process is full of ups and downs and the child will fail from time to time. The thing that the child needs to understand is failure is part of learning. If the child grows up believing that he has to get everything right the first time every time, he may develop serious mental issues and may never fully recover. This is why encouragement and discipline must go hand in hand. It is not the job of the educator, whether parent or teacher, to harass the child, but

to help build him up to reach his full potential.

The final point is the subject of **religious education**. Religious education is that education which deals with divine revelation - all those truths which have been revealed to us by Christ and His Church. It has already been stated that the core curriculum of education is Christ – His life and teachings. Religious education begins at home. It should be taught as soon as the child is old enough to understand. The home must be a Catholic home where prayer and Catholic customs are encouraged early on. The child must not simply learn the facts about the Faith but must learn to love the faith. In the schoolroom, it is no different. Since religion must be at the center of a Catholic curriculum, it must be also in the atmosphere. Religious pictures, statues, and the crucifix must be displayed so

as to inspire devotion. Following the example of our Lord is the only way that the child's education will be a truly happy experience, and giving your children as complete of an education in the faith as possible will help them to become true imitators of Christ. The immortal words of His Holiness Pope Pius XI are just as fitting today as they were: *“The great, and wouldn't it be too much to say, the sole, purpose of Catholic education is simply this – the development of other Christ's. Christ came not to teach us the way to die, merely; but to teach us the way to live. That is platitude, of course; but the educated Catholic is merely a man who has learned how to live. And there is no way of Christian living except in imitation of Christ, the Son of God, and the most perfect of men ...”* (Pope Pius XI's Encyclical Letter *Divini Illius Magistri*)



Dear Friend,

We greet you during this beautiful season of Advent, to wish you a spiritually rich and blessed Holy Christmas. The peace and happiness that the Christmas Season offers us, is truly dependent upon the proper preparations we make during the Advent Season.

Advent is a time of penance and preparation. Our souls are longing for the coming of Jesus Christ. He comes for us all and to us all, but tragically not all receive Him. To many in the world, Christmas is a commercial holiday for buying and selling.

We cannot separate ourselves completely from the world in which we live, but we must strive to lessen the materialistic influences. The materialism of the world brings with it the many disturbances or frustrations and even depression, and this at a time when God offers us **His peace and His happiness.**

The riches of the world bring with them many burdens and difficulties, while poverty accepted out of resignation to the Will of God brings peace, calm and true freedom. Jesus Christ tells us clearly that the poor in spirit are truly blessed, and merit the Kingdom of Heaven. (St. Matthew 5:3)

If we cannot eliminate the material riches and cares of this world from our lives, we can, at least, detach our hearts from them and become truly poor in spirit. We can use the things of this world as if we used them not. (1 Corinthians 7:31)

The freedom, peace, and happiness that come from this detachment are made possible by the sacrifices that we make during this season. This is a time of giving and the Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi states most beautifully: "It is in giving that we receive." In more scriptural words, Jesus said that: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

The Franciscans humbly beg you to remember us in this time of sacrifice and giving. The winter time is financially burdensome for us, but through the kindness of benefactors, God provides. We regularly pray for our benefactors both living and deceased. God is never outdone in generosity. For even the smallest good that we do for the least of His brothers, He offers an eternal reward in Heaven.

May the peace of happiness that Jesus brings to us be yours as you imitate Him in experiencing the blessings of giving.

Humbly and gratefully praying that you may receive Jesus to the fullest this Christmas Season.

The Franciscans

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

“Be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.”

Romans 12:2

Do you love serving God and neighbor?

Do you find yourself increasingly unsatisfied by the life of the world?

Do you yearn for something more?

Not all of us are meant for marriage or a life in the world. Some souls are set aside by God for special tasks. These are the souls that find joy and contentment in the religious life or sacred priesthood.

Do not be deterred by what you think you know or by what the world tells you. Find out for yourself. If you feel called, then at least learn more.

Any happiness we may have on earth and all the joy we hope for in heaven depend on answering God’s individual call for us. The sooner we answer His call, the happier we will be.



Be Direct in Your Prayers

The word directness instead of simplicity is chosen here because, although both may come to much the same thing in the actual practice of prayer, the idea of simplicity is open to other suggestions besides that of nonelaboration. It is important to realize that just as we should be childlike and not childish in our relations with God, so we should be simple in the sense of direct—rather than simple in the sense of half-baked.

When the soul is urged to be direct with God, the meaning is more that merely the willingness to hide nothing from Him. (Everyone realizes that it would be absurd to try to hide anything from God.) It means that one must not sweep up a whole lot of artificialities on the one's way to Him. There are certain devices that help to recollect the mind and focus the attention on God, but they should be dropped as soon as the mind is recollected, and the attention fixed. They are devices only, and not end in themselves.

For example, there are those who find that it helps in the beginning to perform their various household duties in honor of one particular mystery or in the company of one particular saint. I know of an excellent person who lays table with great devotion while imagining himself in the holy house of Nazareth. I know of a woman who (laughingly, I am glad to say) remembers the forty martyrs of Sebaste every time she approaches the refrigerator. A certain priest, a learned man, once told me that every morning as he vested for Mass, he pictures St. Joseph helping him; and that when he proceeded from the sacristy to the altar, he did so with his guardian angel walking in front, clearing the way of any stray devils who might be around at the time. "This is," the priest assured me when he told me of his practice, "because I am so simple." By all means let him make use of the devotion. It is probably helping him to keep far more recollected than he would be otherwise, and if he feels an attraction for it, it is obviously the right thing for him. But let him not say that he goes in for the devotion because he is so simple. It is not at all because he is so simple. It is because he is so complicated.

Particularly in this awkward and analytical age, we cannot altogether help being complicated. We should try, nevertheless, to be direct. God is reached more directly by the will than by the memory and the imagination. Anything that savors of affectation or artificiality must go.

Certainly let us speak to God in our own way and using our own ideas about Him, but let us make quite sure that we are not doing so for our own entertainment instead of for His. God wants us to be natural, to be ourselves. If it is natural to visualize angels and saints, if it *is* sincere to speak to God in language used by children, then these are the means that we are intended—for as long as the attraction lasts—to employ. But the moment we feel drawn to more direct correspondence, we should pray without images and peculiarities of expression.

A soul can strike attitudes before itself, and never is it more in peril than when it does so. If there can be delusion in a little thing like building up a too elaborate devotion, there can be delusion of a far more serious kind in building up a false concept of oneself and of the role one is playing in the sight of God.

Directness in prayer leads to directness out of it. If one is eccentric, or worse still, egocentric, in prayer, one will be the same all along the line. In man's dealing with God, the first essential is that of worshiping "in spirit and in truth." There is all the more need, therefore, for the soul to go out from itself into God. While it stays behind with self, there will always be an element of untruth, indirectness, or artificiality. And for all this, the prayer of the will—dry and pictureless though it may be—is far, far safer than the prayer of the imagination.

Holiness for Housewives (and other working women)
Chapter 2, pp. 34-37

THE GIFT OF ONESELF

*From the French of
THE REVEREND JOSEPH
SCHRYVERS, C. SS. R.*

*Translated by a Religious of Carmel,
Bettendorf, Iowa*

PART ONE

The Principles of Self-Surrender

CHAPTER TWO

Article 5

**THE WORD OF GOD ALONE
CONTAINS THE MODEL FOR THE
SOUL'S SANCTITY**

The Word of God is the Model according to which all creatures should attain their perfection. In this Divine Intelligence each soul lives from all eternity with its particular beauty, with the personal characteristics which distinguish it.

But since this Model is an ideal infinitely exalted above our human nature, God has adapted it to our weakness. The Son of God became incarnate. He became the Firstborn of all creatures; and we have been



predestined by God to be conformed to the Image of His Divine Son.

He, then, is our Divine Exemplar, the Man-God, Jesus Christ, humanized, so to speak, according to Whom we are to sanctify ourselves. This Model, being infinitely perfect, is infinitely worthy of imitation; and God wishes that each one of us reproduce this Model in an original fashion.

It is likewise the constant occupation of Jesus to form in each of us His Image with the traits of particular beauty which should distinguish us from all others.

A skillful Artist, He disposes His colors and His brushes. Master of time, He makes use of it as He wills; if necessary, He takes years to accomplish His task. He alone knows this task; He alone can execute it. He will infallibly accomplish His work, at least if man does not disturb His action.

My soul, thou seest that it is wisdom to surrender thyself to thy Master. What dost Thou know of the Divine plan? What will it profit thee to inquire curiously into the Divine operation, to analyze it, to judge it, above all, to disapprove of it? Lovingly submit to it. Allow thyself to be formed by thy God.

And what will it profit us to know the works of God if this knowledge does not bring us to love Him? It is not by the intelligence that the soul is made perfect, but by the will, by the heart. If I were admitted to the heavenly workshops to contemplate all the masterpieces of the Divine Artist, if I learned in detail the marvels hidden in the life of each Saint, if I observed in them the admirable action of the Holy Spirit, what would this knowl-

edge avail me if I myself did not accept the form which the Divine Artist gives to me? It is not learning that is wanting to the earth; it is love, it is docility, it is surrender to the Divine operations.

Cease, O my soul, to torment thyself about thy sanctification. Cease to search feverishly for ways to advance in virtue. Thou art not charged with discovering them. God prepared them from eternity, when He conceived within Himself thy future beauty. Now He applies these means to thee, at each moment of the day, by the duties of thy vocation or thy state, by the little or great sufferings that He mingles with thy life. Accomplish the one and bear the other, loving God with thy whole heart. This is sanctity at the present moment. This is the gift of thyself renewed in each act, in each suffering of the day. All else belongs not to thee, and could only injure thee.

O Simplicity, existing in a soul thus surrendered, how little thou art appreciated! Thou appearest to be ignorance and awkwardness; in reality, thou

art skill and divine wisdom. Where others hesitate, embarrassed by their learning, thou walkest freely. Where others discover precipices, thou seest only a wide, straight path. Go on, O simple soul, go on without delaying! Thou art accompanied by a sure guide. All souls would arrive at sublime states, at extraordinary holiness, if they followed this guidance.

If there are few saints upon earth, the fault does not rest with God, but with souls themselves. Souls seem to be busied only in opposing the divine action. They wish to aid the Divine Worker, and succeed only in getting in His way; they aspire to correct His work; they find fault with all that He does. The work is not finished with sufficient promptness; the Worker does not consult the impatient desires of the souls; He does not accommodate Himself to their childish caprices. O Jesus! there are those who complain that they do not advance quickly enough and that they are always in the same place.

Article 6 **JESUS ALONE KNOWS THE** **PLACE WHICH THE SOUL** **OCCUPIES IN HIS MYSTICAL** **BODY**

Jesus! Thou art the center of the world. All things gravitate around Thee; all converge toward Thee. Thou art the focus of all truth, the source of all love, the model of all beauty. Thou art the link between the Father Who begets Thee and the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from Thee. Man-God, Thou dost unite in Thyself the Creator and the creature, the finite and the infinite. Savior, Thou art the Author of the world of grace which unites the order of nature to the order of glory.

In Thee, all sciences find their unity, all virtues their model, all arts their ideal. Thou art the key to the facts which have determined the history of nations. Thou alone dost explain the succession of empires, their overthrow, revolutions, and wars. Thou alone dost offer the solution of problems that agitate the human heart. In Thee, sorrow has a meaning, hope a foundation; and the longing for happiness has its fulfilment.

But, O Jesus, above all, Thou art the bond of hearts. Thou dost form, with all just souls, one single mystical Body of which Thou art the Head. And I am a member of this Body. From eternity, the Word of God set me apart, that I might belong to this Body. He saw and willed the exact place I was to occupy, the duty which I was to fulfil. In advance He determined the manner in which the divine life-stream was to flow in me, the different channels through which it was to pass before reaching me, its transformations in me before it should flow to other souls. He foresaw the maladies to which my spiritual organism would be exposed, the weaknesses it would feel, and the special remedies which He would use.

Nothing regarding me escaped His Divine solicitude. And what He has done for my soul He has done for every Christian, for all are members of His Body. The Divine Chief is occupied with each one as if that one were alone in the world. He indicates to each his place, assigns him the duty he is to fulfil. He aids, disposes, foresees, heals, according to the necessity of each.

Ah, how wise it is to allow the Divine Chief to act; how wise to remain in one's place, to accomplish one's obligations faithfully, to submit to His action, receive His graces, let oneself be transformed, fashioned, moved about, turned here and there, all according to the pleasure of Jesus!

Alas! How often I have wished to escape this Divine action, to determine my own duty, arrange my own movements, choose my occupations, and usurp the place of my Divine Chief! O my soul, for the future abandon thyself to Jesus; renounce thine own action! Thou art blind; thou dost not even understand the little place thou dost occupy in the Body of Christ. In acting to please thyself, following thy caprices, thou dost oppose the action of Jesus. If thou desirest to be the hand, while thou art only the foot, thou destroyest thy true character. The divine sap cannot circulate in thee; thou wilt become withered; thou wilt fall off; and a more docile soul will take thy place. O Jesus! preserve me from this evil. Divine Star, around Whom revolve all souls of good will, draw me after Thee in Thine orbit. Take me away

from myself, bear me into the infinite spaces where one breathes only love. Unceasingly my heart seeks for Thee; it would lose itself in Thee, would lead that life of which St. Paul speaks, a life hid with Christ in God. (Col. 3:3.) As the humble flower of the field extends its roots into the earth, so, good Master, I am rooted in Thy Sacred Heart. As the little bee clings to the flower, so do I cling to Thee, O divine Flower of Jesse. I bury myself in Thy chalice and drink long draughts of purity and love. Art Thou not shining

as the lily and ruddy as the rose? Do not Thy lips distil purest honey? What a life I shall lead in Jesus! He will charge Himself with my sanctification; and I pledge myself to love Him.

O good Mother! withdraw my eyes and my heart from all the seductions, all the allurements of earth. Bear me away in thine arms, thou who art the divine Chariot of Israel. I feel that we are entering higher spheres, regions filled with serenity and light.

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FRANCISCAN SAINTS

DECEMBER 9TH

Blessed Delphina

Virgin, Third Order

On the feast of St. Elzear, we learnt that Blessed Delphina was his chaste spouse. She was the only daughter of the wealthy Count William of Glandives in southern France. She lost both parents when she was seven years old, but the little orphan was received into a convent school where an aunt of hers was abbess. There she received an excellent education in the fear of the Lord and in everything pertaining to her eminent rank.

Delphina had already consecrated herself to God with the vow of virginity, when King Charles II chose her as Elzear's bride. Filled with consternation, Delphina had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, to whose motherly care she had entrusted herself. Our Lady appeared to her and calmed her fears. Delphina then consented to the marriage, which took place with great solemnity in the presence of the king and of the archbishop of Aix. But the holy innocence of his spouse filled

Elzear with such love of holy purity that he made a vow to act only as the protector of her virginity, and he was faithful to this pledge all his life. They lived together like two angels, the one ever encouraging the other in more ardent love of God.

Delphina devoted herself to the care of her household. The servants, whom she had to retain because of her high rank, she instructed in piety and the fear of God. She took great personal interest in them all, loving them as if they were her children. They in turn loved and honored her as their mother, young as she was.

Elzear died on an errand to Paris in the interests of the king. Delphina wept bitterly when she heard the news. Nevertheless, she prayed: "My God, may Thy most holy will be done!" Urged by the spirit of God toward still greater perfection, she presently renounced all temporal goods and added to her vow of chastity the vow of holy poverty.

The fame of Delphina's holy life induced Queen Eleonore of Sicily to appoint her mistress of the royal household. Delphina so transformed the easy morals of the court that the palace seemed changed into a sanctuary. She lived many years yet, edifying the nobility with the brilliant example of her virtue. She died a saintly death at the age of seventy-four. Her tomb is next to that of her husband in the city of Apt in southern France. Numerous miracles increased the devotion paid to her and Pope Urban V solemnly approved her veneration.

ON THE DUTIES OF HOUSEHOLDERS

1. Blessed Delphina is a model to all Christian householders. Like her, they must be interested in the corporal welfare of their domestics and servants. They are obliged to give them proper wages in due time for honest labor rendered, for "the hire of the laborers which by fraud hath been kept back, crieth into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (James 5:4). Householders must give their domestics wholesome and nourishing food in sufficient quantity. If an employer is so niggardly with wages and food that servants feel justified in helping themselves to what is necessary, that is neither a credit nor a benefit to any employer. Let them rather heed

the words of the Apostle: "Do to your servants that which is just and equal" (Col. 4:1). — Have you to reproach yourself in any way in this matter?

2. Consider, that providing for the corporal necessities of their employees does not make up all the obligation of a householder. Domestic animals require only care for their bodies. But servants and domestics have souls, and for them employers have greater responsibilities. First of all, they may never keep their servants from performing their religious duties. They must even see to it that their employees keep up their religious duties, that they attend holy Mass and receive the sacraments. They must protect them against occasions of sin, against evil association, and against the vices to which they may become addicted. If a servant is no longer faithful to his God, he cannot expect to be faithful to his employer. Delphina was deeply concerned about the spiritual welfare of her servants and even succeeded in turning the loose household at court into fervent Christians. — What efforts have you made with those whom you employ?

3. Consider the means Delphina used to achieve such success with her household. She gave her subjects the best example with her own conduct and loved them as if they were her children. If a

good example were constantly given, if masters had the heart of a father for their servants, and mistresses had the heart of a mother, there would certainly be more filial respect and obedience among servants and employees. "Know you not," asks the Apostle, "that the Lord of both them and you is in heaven?" (Eph. 6:9). In the eyes of God master and servant are brothers; then let masters have a heart for their servants. Without manifesting weakness of character or unbecoming familiarity, be kind in correcting them, do not overburden them with work, and take an interest in them in their needs and in sickness. The

centurion in the gospel, who came to our Lord pleading for his sick servant, is honored all over the world. — What a comfort to you if your servants, like Delphina's, love you as a father, as a mother!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, who in addition to other virtues didst adorn Blessed Delphina, Thy servant, with virginal purity in the married state, mercifully grant that we who devoutly celebrate her festival here on earth, may arrive safely in her blessed company. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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IN SEARCH OF STILLNESS

Sister Catherine, TOR

“Be still and see that I am God.” – Psalm 45:11

As we begin a new liturgical year, it would be well for us to reflect on where our priorities are placed and ask ourselves if God is at the top of the list. Whether we are single, married or a religious, it is quite easy to get caught up in the many tasks of the season and, as a result, neglect our spiritual needs. No doubt attending Mass regularly and saying prayers daily is a good sign that we have not forgotten our duty completely but in the throes of today’s world it is more than necessary to pause every now and then throughout our day to acknowledge God and His existence.

Due to the worldly aspect that is somewhat unavoidable this time of year, we tend to jump right in to our to-do lists for Christmas. This is understandable because we find there is a lot of fun and joy in them. However, in the midst of it all, we must embrace the slower pace of Advent. Our souls need quiet – we need to slow down, sanctify and simplify.

It is quite impossible to forgo many of these tasks and events completely as we have family and friends that have no knowledge of this precious time of waiting. Still we must do what we can. For example, we could plan a time in the day to pray, reflect and refocus. It need not take long and in the beginning, it would be best to just block out a few minutes. We need to remind ourselves that God gave us this day and He will get us through it – provided we don’t get in His way. If we can make it a habit to get up, make a cup of coffee and check in on social media before the daily schedule ensues, we can make it a habit to spend some quality time with God. A few minutes (add more as you go along) of prayer, spiritual reading, or simply thinking about the goodness of God. As you maintain this habit, you will find it easier to increase the amount of time spent. It is alright to increase gradually. God does not expect us to go from sinner to saint in an

instant. Sometimes, the best progress is slow and steady.

For example, many (if not most) of us, rely on technology for a lot of things. And while we might think that checking in on our social media outlet is only using up a few minutes, you might be surprised on how quickly those minutes add up. We shouldn't let the light of our electronics distract us from the One who is the true Light. "I am the light of the world: he that follows Me, walks not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:11

Recall, if you will, the rhythm of the hymn, O Come, O Come Emmanuel. It is about waiting but also joyful anticipation.

The movement of this hymn really reflects how we ought to feel during this season. If we take Advent at a slower pace, we may more thoroughly appreciate Christmas.

Another hymn, Silent Night, comes to mind. The first verse is very soft and quiet - "All is calm, all is bright." In the second verse we feel a rise in the momentum - "Shepherds quake, at the sight!" And finally, the third verse, the climax. - "Son of God, love's pure Light." Cold is the heart that is not moved by this. To love the Lord Jesus with our whole heart, mind and soul— isn't that what we really want?



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THE GREATEST TREASURE

Reverend L. Chiavarino



TO THE READER

“The Greatest Treasure” makes no pretense to a place with the many wonderful works extant which treat of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is hoped, however, that it may fill a small place in your home, that it may find its way into the pockets of our young people, that it may be within easy reach of all who are unable to receive deeper instruction or who do not find it possible to read a larger and better book.

Consequently, the book is very simple so that it may be readily understood. It is filled with stories so that it may not prove tiresome, but rather may be read and reread with pleasure. It comes from the

heart of the writer. May it speak more readily, therefore, to the heart of the reader and draw him to the practice of virtue.

Give it a real welcome. Read it with attention. Read it to those at home, to those who cannot read themselves. Distribute it among your friends. It is thus that you will aid in the work of good amidst the evil that goes on about us. Thus, you will help to dispel the ignorance, error and doubt which press upon the minds of many and prevent them from knowing the truth about the Real Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. And you will spread the knowledge of the unspeakable advantages which flow upon

the souls of men, living and dead, from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

May your ways be ways of peace and may God bring you to Paradise.

Father Joseph L. Chiavarino

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

In accordance with the Decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that all non-Biblical events narrated in this book deserve only the credence due to human testimony, and that this book is submitted in its entirety to Ecclesiastical Authority.

CHAPTER I THE GREATEST GIFT

My dear readers, would you like me to make you a beautiful gift? Beyond doubt, you will answer, "Certainly." Well then, pay careful attention to my words and I will point out to you a treasure of great price, of inestimable value, one which surpasses every other gift.

It is said that Charles IX of France possessed a precious

pearl of rare beauty, on which he had inscribed the words: "He who possesses me will never be poor." Now, if you learn to value properly the great gift that I wish to bestow upon you, and make use of it, you may be certain that you will never be poor in merit or in grace while you are in this life and will assuredly have heaven as your portion in the life to come.

What I wish to give you is nothing less than Jesus in His Body, His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity, in the merits of His Passion, Death, and His Redemption of man. If you ask where I shall find this beautiful gift, in which are contained all these wondrous things, I answer that I shall find them where they have always been - in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Yes, in the Mass, under the appearance of bread and wine, Jesus Christ is present, whole and entire, living, real, and substantial, as He was born in the stable of Bethlehem, as He died on the Cross, as He reigns in Paradise; in Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. This was defined by the

Council of Trent as taught by Sacred Scripture. In every Mass Jesus is sacrificed anew on the altar at the hands of the priest, without the actual shedding of blood. Yes, he really sacrifices Himself for us in order to render to God for us the honor due to Him, in order to procure for us by means of our contrition forgiveness of our sins, in order to pay with our co-operation the debts we have contracted with God, in order to obtain for us all graces and blessings; in a word, He sacrifices Himself that He may apply to each one of us the fruits of His Passion and Death.

One day, a man who doubted this truth met Blessed John of Mantova and asked him how it could be that the words of a priest should have power to change the substance of bread into the Body of Jesus Christ, and the substance of wine into His Blood.

"Come," said Blessed John, and led him to a fountain. Here he took a cup of water and told the unbeliever to drink. The man was surprised

to find that the water had changed to wine. When he had drunk it, he admitted that never in his life had he tasted such excellent wine. Then the Saint said: "If through me, a miserable man, the water is changed into wine by divine power, why will you not believe that by means of the words of the priest which are the divine words first spoken by Our Lord, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? This miracle was enough to convert the man. He believed and did penance for his sins.

Therefore, I say to you: If God can work the many miracles of which we know, why cannot He also work the miracle of being really present in the Mass? Do not doubt the truth. God can do all things, and every day, in every Mass, He works this greatest of miracles by means of the priest.

To be continued.

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