

# THE SERAPH

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*Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
Have Mercy on me...*

PUBLISHED WITH EPISCOPAL AUTHORIZATION

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*In essentia - Unitas. In dubio - Libertas.  
In omnibus - Caritas.*

# LORD, TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

*Bishop Giles, OFM DD*



Prayer should be quite easy and natural to us, but it seldom is. Once we have mastered the art of speaking, we seldom consider how to speak. We form the idea in our mind and the words flow naturally from our lips. Having learned to speak we effortlessly communicate our thoughts and desires to others. Prayer is speaking to God and this should be even easier than speaking to others because we do not need to speak audibly. God sees our thoughts and desires even more clearly than we do.

The problems associated with prayer are probably many and varied. The major problem appears to be a lack of faith. We do not speak to people who are not present, so we do not speak to God unless we recognize that He is present. One of the tactics of the devils is to get us to forget about God. We are very susceptible to becoming so

absorbed with the gifts that God has given us that we forget about the One who has given them to us. We become spoiled, self-centered, inconsiderate, and ungrateful. When things are taken away from us then we are forced to think of God. The devils suggest to us that God is unfair or unjust, as if God exists only to please us.

The saints learned to see God everywhere all the time. They lived in constant awareness of the Presence of God. When we are conscious of God's presence, we find it much easier to speak to Him. But what are we to say? There is nothing to say because God already knows what is in our hearts and minds before we ever open our mouths. It is God Who is ultimately responsible for the good thoughts that we will express to Him. This fact opens another demonic suggestion that if we fail to pray it is

because God has not given us the grace of prayer. It is, therefore, God's fault and not our own. Our laziness and indifference are masked by our pride as a defect in God or defect in the grace He gives us.

Perhaps the problem is that we allow ourselves to get carried away by the material world or virtual reality that we live in and we thus grow blind to the real-life that God has given us to share with Him. We live in a material world that is made and manipulated by God and by spiritual realities. In forgetting God, we also forget our own souls. Our souls, which were made in the image and likeness of God, are forgotten. If we forget the reflection of God, we easily forget God Himself. We spend time in our imaginations wandering about as undisciplined or irrational as a chicken with its head cut off. Tragically, many think this material world is all there is, or they only think of their virtual reality. In either case, the demons have succeeded. The devils do not care what we think about or do, so long as we do not think of God or live for Him. They constantly try to distract us this way or that way, and at times the

thoughts become so multiplied and varied that we are overwhelmed, and we do not want to think of anything – not even God.

To pray well, we must first put ourselves in the presence of God. We are always in the presence of God and can never escape this Presence. What we are speaking of, is making ourselves aware or conscious of being in His company. He is not spying on us, nor should we think that we can hide anything from Him. He is the very life of our souls. We have come forth from Him and are created to return to Him. Our material bodies have been taken from the earth that He made, but our lives and our souls are directly from God. We exist in Him, and by Him, and through Him.

We are limited in our capacity to understand, so Jesus, the Son of God, has come to offer us help and show us the way. He would have us think of God as our Loving Father. We live and work with God by our side. Or rather, it is we who exist next to Him. He provides all that we have and all that we need. When we pick up a piece of bread, we should realize that we are doing so in the presence of

God, but also that it is God Who has given us this bread. When we truly understand this, we naturally look up to Him and thank Him. We are drawn to Him. When we are in want of anything, we naturally turn to Him. This is what Jesus said when He taught us to pray: “give us this day our daily bread.” This physical and spiritual dependence upon God somehow lifts our hearts to love Him. Or, perhaps, it is our love of God that inspires us to live in this dependence? Which comes first or whether they are received simul-taneously is another matter.

In loving dependence and submission to God, we naturally praise Him, thank Him, we seek His holy Will, as well as ask for what we need or desire in conformity to His Will. We need not fear and cower as slaves, nor should we become proud and arrogant as if God were our servant. The image Jesus would have us turn to is that of children genuinely loving and honoring their Father. They seek to know His holy Will and to follow it in all things.

The words of the Lord’s Prayer put the vital words in our mouths, but these words

and sentiments must enter our hearts and minds as well. This prayer is the starting point for us in prayer, but it is also the goal for which we should be striving. It is the prayer of simple loving children to their loving Father, honoring Him and praising Him, seeking to know and do His holy Will, asking Him for our wants and needs, as well as being grateful for what we have been given. We express our contrition for our offenses as well as beg His forgiveness. We profess our love and goodwill to all our siblings throughout the world, forgiving them as we have been forgiven.

This is the perfect prayer for beginners and experts alike. Starting with the “Our Father,” beginners can expand and develop each of these sentiments. We can then use our own words and speak from the heart without fear or trepidation. The advanced who have already expanded these sentiments and have filled their hearts and minds with practical applications and examples of these ideas will find that they can all be nicely and easily brought back together and simply and concisely expressed in the very same words that they began with.

It is recorded that St. Francis of Assisi once spent the entire night repeating the prayer, “My Lord, and My God!” How boring or empty these words appear to so many souls because they have not entered into them and opened up the wealth of love and beauty contained in them. Even if we could unpack all the meaning they have for St. Francis, we would also conclude that these simple words are the best to express everything that is in his heart for God.

The simplest words contain the most profound meaning and the most profound thoughts are best expressed in the simplest words. May we frequently, and even always, see ourselves in His presence and open our hearts to God in love, even if all we have is the awkward lisping of an infant. The love coming forth from the heart is essential, the words used are just an expression of that love and can never be a substitute for it.



“As one friend often visits another, going to bid him good morning and good night, and looking upon him at times during the day; so should you often visit Jesus in His Sacrament, and offer His Precious Blood many times in each visit to the Eternal Father, and you will see that your love will increase marvelously by these visits.”

*~St. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi*

# THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE

*Bishop Giles, OFM DD*

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The works of God are always and everywhere before us. Everything in this world spoke to St. Francis of Assisi of God. In today's world, it appears that men see extraordinarily little of God in their daily lives. God is relegated to church on Sunday. Outside of church or Sunday, many live as if God does not even exist.

On a theoretical level, we do believe what we learned in Catechism — that God made everything; but on a practical level, many live, work, and play as atheists. In denying God, the atheist looks for the origin of things in “nature” and strives to develop a “rational” explanation for the world and all that is in it. The poor atheist is trying to deny the existence of God, yet he makes “nature” and “reason” (sometimes “accidents” or “chances”) to be his god. There is no getting away from God. To deny Him, we end up making a false god instead.

The problem of evil in the world presents us with a little difficulty, but that is only because of our limited vision or understanding. The atheistic denier of God will try, in his faulty reason, to show that

God cannot be all-powerful and all-good, otherwise, there would not be evil in this world. His argument might go something like this: If God is all-good, He cannot make evil, but if God cannot make evil then God is not all-powerful. From these false premises, the atheist concludes that there cannot be a god.

The early Catholic philosophers dealt with the problem of evil. They have shown us that evil is not a positive or tangible thing but is rather the absence of something. We are given a few examples. Darkness is the absence of light. Darkness is not something that we can see or touch, but the light is. When we take away that which God has made, in this case, light, we end up with nothingness. This emptiness or nothingness created by the absence of light we call darkness. A hole or tear in an object is not something positive but is rather the absence of the object that normally would occupy the space that is now empty of the material that should be there.

The only real evil in this world is sin, and sin is not something

that exists but is rather the absence of virtue that should be there. In the Creed, we profess that God is the Creator of all things visible and invisible. Therefore, we must conclude that all things are good. Evil is not made by God but is rather the absence of something that God made that should be there and is not. When there is an evil darkness and emptiness in our hearts minds and souls this is sin. When the will of man turns away from God in sin, he turns away from light and finds darkness, he turns away from everything and finds nothingness.

St. Augustine, in his "Confessions," recognized that there is an emptiness in our hearts that longs to be filled. He felt this very acutely and sought to fill this void in his heart with material things, with pleasure, and with intellectual pursuits of wisdom or understanding. None of these things can fill or satisfy the heart because the heart was made for God and can only rest in God. It is only God that can fill this void in our hearts or satisfy the needs of our hearts.

Pantheism is the idea of making gods of all creatures. The earth, the sun, the moon and stars, the water, plants,

animals, etc. are all considered as gods or even collectively as a single god. This is idolatry and is true darkness and emptiness. It is like confusing a photo of a man for the living man. The photo may look like or resemble the man, but it is not the man it represents or reflects. We do see reflections of God in all His creation in the same way that we might see reflections of a particular artist in his work. The personalities of artists invariably show through in their works and are discernable to those who are trained to see them. For example, a musician can often listen to an unfamiliar piece of music and still be able to tell who the composer of the music was. An educated art critic can look at a painting and identify the author from his work. He can even discern an original piece from a replica.

St. Francis of Assisi and many other saints looked at all of creation and identified it as the creation of God. The tree is beautiful and even perfect in its place, but this beauty is not of itself, it is the reflection of its creator. St. Francis saw God in nature, but he never considered that nature was God. This earth and everything in, on, or around it came into being and will soon cease to

be. These things cannot be God because they are not eternal.

When we recognize that all things are given to us by God, we then understand that all things are good. Some may be better than others, but they are all good. This applies to events and situations as well as to material objects – they are all relatively good. Everything comes to us from the hands of our Loving Father in Heaven – God. Both feast and famine are given to us by God because He loves us. Pleasure and pain are also good and are given to us from God. The same with health and sickness, riches, and poverty.

In our material lives, we can understand that a loving father gives material good things to his children because he loves them. He also punishes them or deprives them of these things from time to time for the same reason – because he loves them. He pleases them when he can, but he also inflicts pain when necessary – because he loves them. He respects their free wills and allows them to reject him and turn away from him causing him great suffering and pain – because he loves them. Good children realize that reward and punishment are both good and necessary. They are grate-

ful to their father regardless of whichever they receive from him.

Good Christians are likewise grateful to God for everything in their lives. They see crosses and sufferings as precious gifts from God. Often these are even more precious than riches and health. Persecution, imprisonment, and death are welcomed as they allow us to follow Jesus ever more closely. When the dawn breaks and the weather is fine, we should think of God and thank Him for this precious day. When the dawn breaks and the weather is foul, we should be just as thankful and realize that this day is just as precious and just as necessary. We may not see or understand it now but through faith we one day will. Rain is just as necessary as sunshine; heat as cold; and night as day. In the hardest times, we must strive to understand and accept this. Imprisonment is just as necessary as freedom; poverty as riches; labor as capital; sickness as health; old age as youth.

In all situations and times, we must love, thank, and praise God. Every day is truly the day the Lord has made. It is His gift to us, let us rejoice and be glad.



# THE SUNDAY SERMON

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# NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

*Bishop Giles, OFM DD*

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All our sins begin in our thoughts. Our evil words are first formed in our thoughts. Our evil deeds are first formed in thought. If we would only control our thoughts, then we would have a handle on all the other sins. The temptation is that we consider our thoughts as secret and even harmless. When we give this little bit to sin, it is not long before we find ourselves guilty of much more than evil thoughts.

As we consider sins of thought as indifferent or harmless, we, also, frequently think that our hidden sins do not hurt anyone. We imagine that they are “victimless crimes.” From here we soon begin to assume that children are too young to understand or to know, so we feel free to sin in front of them. Then, it is not long before we feel no fear or trepidation to sin boldly and even to justify ourselves before our neighbors.

Our secret sins, as well as our sins of thought, are not truly hidden or unknown. God sees and knows everything. These are not harmless but are as seeds that grow and reproduce exponentially. These crimes are not victimless, the very perpetrator is the first and primary victim. The harm that

is done, is done to ourselves first and foremost. These hidden sins are like open wounds hidden from the doctor. The wounds may be hidden from our fellow men, but they are not hidden from infection, and it is not long before the untreated infection spreads and kills the whole body. The cure for a physical wound is to have it cleaned and bandaged to allow it to heal. The same is true for the wounds of our souls caused by sins. We should show these to the priest in the confessional to be cleaned and bandaged so that we may heal.

If we do not take the steps necessary to heal hidden sins, or sins of thoughts, it is not long before the infection begins to show itself to those around us. A hidden and untreated wound spreads infection throughout the body and soon those around us see that we have grown weaker, feverish, and are generally not well. When our souls are burdened with sin it is not long before the signs and symptoms begin to manifest themselves to those around us. The joy of a clear conscience fades and dies away. Sadness or moroseness takes over our attitude and comportment. The spiritual

infection that is ravishing our soul is soon spreading the germs of sin to everyone around us.

Babies and young children are often considered somehow immune to these infections. The sins of the adults are often thought to be matters of indifference to the young. They are too young to know or understand. Parents take great care to keep physical contagion far from their children and their homes, but they are often the very ones to carry spiritual contagion and infect their own beloved children.

Science has shown that the brains of infants and children are developing at an extraordinary rate. They are taking in everything around them, storing and processing all the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and temperatures. Even what may not presently be understood is stored and processed and becomes part of the foundation of their understanding of the world around them and even of their own selves. In the debate between nurture and nature, much has been shown to develop from the environment. Childhood fears are not genetically encoded in our minds but are often the result of learning these fears from those around us, principally from parents. A mother's fear of insects is not

genetically passed on to her child. Rather, the child has learned to fear insects by observing his mother. He has made these observations from the time he was a newborn and perhaps even from within her womb. Her reactions have been encoded and emulated by her child. This is how mothers teach their children what to fear and what not to fear, what is good and what is bad. A fearful mother will very likely raise a fearful child. An anxious mother will most likely raise an anxious child. Not so much genetically, as environmentally.

Everything the mother feels, says, and does is the example given to her child to emulate. St. Augustine tells us that he never took any pleasure from a book (even in his years outside the faith) unless he found the name of Jesus in it. He tells us that the reason for this was because he sucked in the sweetness of this Holy Name with his mother's milk. His mother, St. Monica, had this love for the Holy Name of Jesus and her love created, formed, and nurtured this very love in her infant son even before he could speak.

Children repeat the sins of their parents because this is what they have learned. They have learned love or hatred, patience or impatience, forgiveness or revenge and anger. The

emotions, words, and actions of a mother create the blueprint that lays the foundation for the life and soul of her child. We should note that what is here said of mothers applies to everyone involved in the child's life – father as well as mother, siblings, babysitter, daycare people, etc. These formative years begin at least from the time of birth if not even far earlier.

If we have no concern for our own souls, then we should avoid evil for the sake of our children. What have they done to deserve to be saddled with the evil influence of our sinful lives?

This does not end with infancy or even childhood. All of us are influenced by the environment in which we live. The constant example of the adulterers divorcing and remarrying becomes more than a temptation to others. The star actors, actresses, athletes, and businessmen are held up as inspiration, role models, and even guides for the rest of the world to imitate. Tragically, their immoralities are also seen, spoken of, and even published. The obvious implication is that their sins did not hurt them. Lightning did not strike them dead. There is the suggestion that to become successful it is necessary to indulge in the like sins. A young woman was once

overheard planning her future life. She was looking forward to meeting a good man, getting married, and having children, then, after the children were raised, she would get a divorce and travel around the world. This poor girl has obviously in her mind processed divorce as an integral part of a “good” life or at least a “normal” life. I doubt anyone has openly promoted this idea to her, but rather it is something that she has developed from the countless examples of others that she had been exposed to in her short life. Maybe her own parents were divorced. If not her parents, quite probably, other relatives were, parents of friends, celebrities. Divorce is ubiquitous and is easily assimilated into the hearts and souls as something that is not so bad, maybe okay, and possibly as something good and desirable.

In a very real sense, we create the world in which we live. If we choose to live in sin, the world around us quickly becomes a world of sin. Our sins teach others to sin or at least tempt others to sin. We should frequently recall what Jesus thinks of those who scandalize (teach to sin) little children. It would be better for them to never have been born. They not only harm themselves, but they corrupt and destroy those around them,

even the most innocent and vulnerable.

Even if we could keep our sins hidden from those around us, the very fact that we are devoid of grace is a harm to them. We are not able to give or share what we do not have. If our lives are devoid of virtue and grace, we deprive those around us of the influences that grace and virtue would have upon their lives.

The adage “tell me who you associate with and I will tell

you who you are,” or “birds of a feather flock together,” is very true. Adults are free to choose who they associate with, good or bad, but our children are not free to choose their own environment. That is the job of the parents.

May each and every one of us, especially parents, strive to live virtuously and thus create a better world around us and our children.



# The Catholic Faith

## RADIO PROGRAM

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# A WARNING FROM HEAVEN?

*Father Joseph Noonan, OFM*

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Through the course of time, God has seen fit to warn and punish men because of their many sins. There have been times when men have responded to God's warnings and made the necessary spiritual corrections. The evidence is clear to those who are willing to see clearly and conclude rightly that men have not always heeded the warnings from Heaven.

There are two well-known examples when God severely punished men because of the serious offenses committed against Him. The first was Sodom and Gomorrah. The sins of these two cities are known well-enough (homosexuality, adultery, fornication, etc.). God was so angered by the sins of these people that He rained down fire and brimstone from Heaven. These cities were annihilated. It should be noted that the punishment was so severe that God did not want anyone to witness the destruction. When Lot's wife disobeyed the Divine order, she was turned into a pillar of salt.

The Divine retribution was a local punishment. In other words, He punished the people of these two cities for their sins and not a larger region of the Mid East or the world.

The second example of God's justice is quite clear as to His intentions. His Will is detailed in the Scriptures (Genesis, Chapter 6). This historical event is well-known by many in this world. The reason or cause for the Flood is also well-known. God clearly states that the sins of men have caused Him to punish them most severely.

As all know, this was a world-wide event. No part of the earth was spared, and only eight people were allowed to live. This is a clear message from God of just how severely He desired to punish men for their sins. There has not been a similar punishment from God since the Flood. The effect was so terrible that God promised to never punish men again with a world-wide flood.

God has punished people many times who have offended Him in a variety of different ways. Too often those who do not observe these things through "spiritual eyes" are not aware that God is punishing those who have offended Him. They simply make conclusions on a natural level which is quite insufficient when attempting to find the cause of these punishments. God has used

nature to punish sinful people through earthquakes, volcanic activity, hurricanes, tornadoes, famines, etc. Plagues, epidemics, flu, and other diseases and illnesses and war are the result of Fallen Man and have also been used to punish men.

Yes, it is quite clear that God has used nature and illness to punish men. Is this what has occurred in this present situation with the coronavirus? It would seem as though one ought to answer this question carefully. How does one clearly know the mind of God? No one can answer this question in a clear and definite manner unless God has personally spoken to him.

What one can do, though, in responding to this question is to deduce from those things which one knows about God and how He has acted in the past.

As of April 2020, 184 countries out of 195 have been affected by the corona virus. One is clearly able to conclude this is a world-wide crisis, depending upon how you wish to define what a crisis is. This situation has also brought the world to a stand-still. When was the last time the world was brought to a stand-still?

There have been events in man's history that have had the attention of the world. Some have involved a continent or

larger region of the world, but to my knowledge, there has never been an event that has involved the entire world and brought it to a stand-still since the Great Flood.

Let the reader consider that thought. The corona virus event is comparable in some ways to the Flood! Yes, there will be those who refuse to accept this consideration. The world has always had its doubting Thomases. It is no different at this present time.

To understand this, we must look at the current situation through "spiritual" glasses, certainly not through the super-hype of the con-trolled media, who have a political agenda. Otherwise, the intended goal (point) will be missed or misunderstood.

Perhaps a personal observation made in March about the events as they were occurring will help those who are overly-panicked or fearful. How is it that such an event would have the ability to "lockdown" the United States, Europe, Australia, and other various parts of the world? In my mind, the thought was, "This isn't a fight against a virus, but a spiritual war against the diabolical." To some, this sounds crazy or fanatical; to others, it is the only thing that makes sense in a world that more closely

resembles “the Twilight Zone” than just another day on this earth.

Please explain to me how in March and April the amount of control that was exhibited by those in authority (whether intended or not) and the effect it had upon the greater mass of Americans and perhaps many others around the world. The world seemed to be a giant laboratory where billions were the experiments conducted by a clever legion of devils. Millions were ordered to remain in their homes. The effect was visualized online with the help of drones which flew over Los Angeles, CA and Madrid, Spain. Two major metropolitan cities were a little more than ghost towns during their daylight hours. The scene could be repeated in cities across the globe.

There have been many wars and conflicts through centuries where greedy and evil men have killed millions, but never with the effect this virus has had. There have been epidemics of different types, killing at times tens of millions of people around the world. The Black Plague in the 14<sup>th</sup> century killed millions in Europe alone. These events certainly changed life in different regions of the world, but never has one event changed the world all at once.

Yes, air travel has indeed changed this situation in a manner unlike anything in the past. One can spread deadly contagious germs faster than ever before to places around the world in a matter of hours or days. The hyped media has caused panic and fear, unlike anything one has ever seen, even in the most tragic of situations.

Spiritually speaking, what could have caused this? The simple answer is sin. Since the Fall of Man, the Human Race has dealt with sickness and death. As detailed above, God has often punished men for their sinful offenses. He does not turn a blind eye to our bad behavior, poor judgment, and wrong decisions. Eventually, God will punish us.

It should not be necessary to list in detail the sinful world in which we live. The level of sin is such that one wonders how God has withheld His justice for so long. Good people wonder how much worse the world can get, and the sinful people (those who are guilty of vice and have no intention of correcting it) would seem to not care about their coming damnation.

One is left to wonder about the degree of sin at the time of the Flood and compare it with today. Sodom and Gomorrah were but two cities and God’s

justice destroyed them in such a devastating manner that no one could live in this region for thousands of years. What does this say about the current spiritual status of today's world?

One does not believe it is an exaggeration or hyperbole to ask that when the time comes for God's justice to be made known to all men, who will live, and what will be left?

Being able now to look back over the past several weeks does provide a better perspective. One now knows the virus is not nearly as serious we were previously told. The data is proof of this. Society is considerably more fragile than most would have thought. We truly are only a few hours away from chaos. One is also able to observe that many people are filled with panic and fear far beyond that which is reasonable. The

economies of many nations will need to restart, not knowing what the future holds. There are as many doomsday theories as there are people.

In all this one sees the mercy of God for it would have been understandable for God to have allowed a virus to totally destroy all men. This we truly deserve. Therefore, one concludes this is the "shot across the bow", i.e., a warning shot for those who will heed God's message. It is to be seen how many will react accordingly and pray and do penance.

To conclude with an example from history: we are Ninevah when Jonah was warning them to put on sackcloth and ashes or God would destroy them. To their credit, they listened to Jonah and were spared. Will today's world follow the example of Ninevah or Sodom and Gomorrah?

## **PLEASE NOTE:**

***THE SERAPH is not published in July and August.***

***We wish all our readers a most blessed Summer, and look forward to being with you again in September in our 41st year of publication.***

# THE LITURGICAL YEAR WITH ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Father Anthony Lentz, OFM*

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## PENTECOST

### AND THE TIME AFTER

*Finally, during the time of Pentecost, the Church by her precept and practice urges us to be more docile to the action of the Holy Spirit who wishes us to be on fire with divine love so that we may daily strive to advance more in virtue and thus become holy as Christ our Lord and His Father are holy. – Pope Pius XII in His Encyclical Letter **Mediator Dei** (1947)*

During the Season of Pentecost the Church reminds the faithful that through Holy Baptism they have all become *temples of the Holy Ghost*. The Holy Ghost provides those baptized with a basic blue-print, but He expects those who have obtained the age of reason to renovate and expand it. As a Catholic, you should want to make the temple of your soul more spacious. You should strive to fill it with a greater amount of love for both God and neighbor. In order to do this you must open the ears of your soul and listen to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. It is He who inspires you with the desire to imitate Christ. It is He that makes your prayers and good works supernaturally

meritorious. Remember the road to sanctification is a daily struggle, so you must place your complete faith in the Holy Ghost. Pray to Him! Beseech Him to guide you through life as He has guided the Catholic Church through all these centuries. Remember that God loves one individual as if he were the whole world, and he loves the whole world with the same intimacy, care and attention that He gives the individual. Never doubt Divine Providence and use those gifts which the Holy Ghost provides you.

Let us now return to St. Francis and his Order of Friars Minor.

St. Francis of Assisi has been rightfully called the complete “Catholic and apostolic man.” The apostolic aspect of St. Francis is clearly shown by his imitation of the Gospels and the Apostles in their labors for souls. When St. Francis wrote the *Rule of the Friars Minor* he made it clear that he received no inspiration about what to write than that which was given to him by Our Lord Himself. This is why he was so protective of the *Rule* and would at times even disagree

with the Church hierarchy. Note well that this should not be taken as defiance to Church authority. It was quite the contrary. St. Francis was called by God to revive the apostolic life, and bring about the spiritual renewal of society. In this he was as much of an educator of the hierarchy, as he was their pupil. When it came to evangelical counsels – poverty, chastity, and obedience – St. Francis was immovable, but in everything else he was extremely flexible. For instance when it came to the government of his order and other matters of importance, he would often seek the counsel of bishops, cardinals, and popes. Here we now see the “catholic” aspect unfolding, for when it came to the infrastructure of his Order, St. Francis used no better model than the Church of Rome Itself.

The Catholic Church is separated into two parts *the learning church* and *the teaching church*. The laity comprises most of the *learning church*. We may even include those who have taken ecclesiastical and/or religious vows, for when it comes to learning perfection everyone is a student. Now, the hierarchy comprises the *Teaching Church*, and it has the duty to see to the instruction, government, and sanctification of all the faithful. The hierarchy may be listed as follows *priests* (**note**: some may argue that the

simple priest should not be included in the Church hierarchy, but since their authority to preach and administer the sacraments has been delegated to them by the bishops they should be included); *bishops*; *archbishops*; *cardinals*; and the *pope*. Using this as the model let us make the comparison between the Church Hierarchy and the various offices within the Franciscan Order. These offices are: *custos*, *provincial ministers*, *Vicar-General*, and *the Minister General*.

Please keep in mind that this is meant to be primarily an allegorical connection, but it can help us to also see the mystical imitation.

First, let us consider the *brothers*. The brothers of the Order may be compared to the laity, because they owe obedience towards their superiors. The *custos* or *father guardian* may be compared to the parish priest. The *custos* is the head of the friary and it is he who oversees to the immediate spiritual and temporal cares and needs of the brothers living there. The *provincial minister* maybe compared with the bishops and arch-bishops. Just as the bishop oversees a diocese and the archbishop oversees multiple dioceses, the provincial minister oversees the cares and needs of the entire province. The *vicar-general*, who is the second-in-command

for the whole order, may be compared to the *College of Cardinals*. This one is a little bit of a stretch but he, like the cardinals, shares an important role in the government of the entire Franciscan Order. The final comparison is between the *Minister-General* and the *Pope*. Where as the Pope oversees the entire Catholic world, the Minister-General oversees the entire Franciscan Order. One of the most endearing titles given to the popes is "Servant of the servants of God." This aspect of servitude was embraced by St. Francis, as made clear with how he describes the role of the Minister General in his *Rule*: "All friars are bound always to have one of the friars of this religion as Minister General and servant of the whole Fraternity, and they are strictly bound to obey him." (*Rule of the Friars Minor, Chap. 8*)

If we go further St. Francis allows us to delve even deeper into this comparison. Whereas the popes are the vicars of Christ upon earth; minister-generals may be considered, in as far as it deals with the Franciscan Order, the vicars of the Holy Ghost. St. Francis said: "God is no respecter of persons: and the minister general of this Order, the Holy Ghost, alights on a poor and plain man just as on any other." (*The Second Life of St. Francis, 193*) It should be made

clear that the pope being the vicar of Christ is a dogmatic teaching, whereas this is not. All St. Francis wanted to convey here is that his Order is thoroughly Catholic, and by remaining subject to Rome it is also guided by the Holy Ghost. St. Francis placed great importance upon this in the *Rule*: "Friar Francis promises obedience to the Lord Pope Honorius and to His successors canonically elected and to the Roman Church. And the other friars are bound to obey Friar Francis and his successors." (*The Rule of the Friars Minor, Chap. 1*)

Who better to entrust the government of the Order to than the Holy Ghost? This is why the man who is elected as Minister General should possess certain qualities that would make him a worthy candidate. Firstly, he must be a solemnly professed member of the Order. Secondly, he must have experience in care of souls and in the direct guidance of other friars, such as being a custos or a provincial minister. In later centuries the Minister General was at least a priest, but he has been a bishop or even a cardinal-bishop. Thirdly, a reputation for holiness and unflinching devotion to the *Rule*. The final requirement naturally flows from the third which is a regular prayer life. It is through silent prayer that the Minister will be

able to hear the inspirations of the Holy Ghost about how to best direct the Order.

Next to St. Francis himself, the best example we have of a minister general is St. Bonaventure, cardinal-bishop of Albano. St. Bonaventure led the Order through a very difficult time, where controversy was being stirred. From this there sprung two factions - the *Spirituales* and the *Relaxi*. The former insisted upon the literal observance of the original Rule, especially in regard to poverty, while the latter wished to introduce innovations and mitigations. These two extremes led not only to this division but also led some to heresy. It takes a very holy and erudite mind to sort through all of this and find the middle path. The reality was that the Order was constantly growing and a more stable method of enrollment and training was required. This meant that living in small huts and caves, like the *Spirituales* wanted, would no longer be conducive for the bigger picture. St. Bonaventure understood that the essential quality of evangelical poverty was the detachment from earthly things and to only use them when the need arose. Here he had to find the delicate balance, so he would not unintentionally go the way of the *Relaxi* and mitigate the spirit of the *Rule*. St. Francis as

the founder presented us with the ideal. Whereas, St. Bonaventure presented us with its practical application. This is why he has been referred to as the Second Founder of the Order.

St. Bonaventure would most certainly have caved under the pressure if he did not exemplify the necessary qualities of a Minister General, as listed above. He faithfully executed the duties of his office; becoming an inspiration and model to his successors. By his holiness of life he was habitually in sync with the movements of the Holy Ghost, Who whispered only true Catholic and Franciscan wisdom.



*“Oh, St. Bonaventure! Help me by your intercession to find and keep on the middle path of virtue. May I, as you did, use as my book of instruction the Crucifix, and learn its lessons of spiritual wisdom. May I also learn obedience and perform my duties to the best of my ability. May I humble myself to the movements of divine grace, as you did, and listen to the Advocate of my soul, the Holy Ghost. Amen.”*

# 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?*

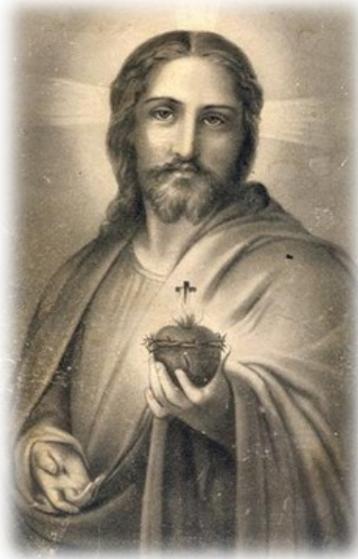
*Not all of us are meant for marriage or a life in the world. Some souls are set aside by God for special tasks. These are the souls that find joy and contentment in the religious life or sacred priesthood.*

*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 do His Will, the happier we will be.*



## THE SACRED HEART POEM



BY ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER

WHAT wouldst thou have, O  
soul

Thou weary soul?  
Lo! I have sought for rest  
On the Earth's heaving breast  
From pole to pole.  
Sleep — I have been with her,  
But she gave dreams;  
Death — nay, the rest he gives  
Rest only seems.  
Fair nature knows it not —  
The grass is growing;  
The blue air knows it not —

The winds are blowing:  
Not in the changing sky,  
The stormy sea —  
Yet somewhere in God's wide  
world

Rest there must be.  
Within thy Saviour's Heart  
Place all thy care,  
And learn, O weary soul,  
Thy Rest is there.

What wouldst thou, trembling  
soul?

Strength for the strife —  
Strength for this fiery war  
That we call Life.  
Fears gather thickly round;  
Shadowy foes,  
Like unto armed men,  
Around me close.  
What am I, frail and poor,  
When griefs arise?  
No help from the weak earth,  
Or the cold skies.  
Lo! I can find no guards,  
No weapons borrow,  
Shrinking, alone I stand,  
With mighty sorrow.  
Courage, thou trembling soul,  
Grief thou must bear,  
Yet thou canst find a strength  
Will match despair:  
Within thy Saviour's Heart —  
Seek for it there.  
What wouldst thou have, sad  
soul,

Oppressed with grief? —  
Comfort: I seek in vain,  
Nor find relief.  
Nature, all pitiless,  
Smiles on my pain;  
I ask my fellow-men,  
They give disdain.  
I asked the babbling streams,  
But they flowed on;  
I asked the wise and good,  
But they gave none.  
Though I have asked the stars,  
Coldly they shine,  
They are too bright to know  
Grief such as mine.  
I asked for comfort still,  
And I found tears,  
And I have sought in vain  
Long, weary years.  
Listen, thou mournful soul,  
Thy pain shall cease;  
Deep in His Sacred Heart,  
Dwells joy and peace.  
Yes, in that Heart divine,  
The Angels bright  
Find, through eternal years,

Still new delight.  
From thence his constancy  
The martyr drew,  
And there the virgin band  
Their refuge knew.  
There, racked by pain without,  
And dread within,  
How many souls have found  
Heaven's bliss begin.  
Then leave thy vain attempts  
To seek for peace;  
The world can never give  
One soul release:  
But in thy Saviour's Heart  
Securely dwell,  
No pain can harm thee, hid  
In that sweet cell.  
Then fly, O coward soul,  
Delay no more,  
What words can speak the joy  
For thee in store?  
What smiles of earth can tell  
Of peace like thine?  
Silence and tears are best  
For things divine.

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# ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

## *An Autobiography*

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### CHAPTER THREE

#### PAULINE ENTERS CARMEL

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In the afternoon of the same day, October the second, 1882, I saw you behind the parlour grating of Carmel. My dear Pauline was now Sister Agnes of Jesus. How much I suffered in that parlour! It seems to me that because this is the story of my soul, I ought to tell you everything. I must therefore acknowledge that the first pain of our parting was as nothing when compared with what followed. I, who had been accustomed to perfect freedom of intercourse with my little Mother, heart to heart, could now scarcely snatch two or three minutes with Sister Agnes of Jesus at the end of the family visits. I spent these minutes in tears; then, still in tears, I would come away. I did not realize that it was impossible to give one half-hour to each of us, and that naturally Papa and Marie must have the largest share. I could not understand this, and my heart cried out: "Pauline is lost to me!"

My mind developed too rapidly under the strain, and I soon fell dangerously ill. It was an illness in which Satan assuredly had a hand. Enraged no doubt at this first entry into Carmel, he wished in his jealousy to avenge himself on me for the grave mischief my family was to do him in the

future. He little knew, how-ever, that the Queen of Heaven was keeping a faithful and affectionate watch from above over her Little Flower and was making ready to still the tempest just as the frail and delicate stem was on the point of breaking.

At the close of the year 1882, I began to suffer from constant headache, but it was bearable and did not prevent me from continuing my studies, until Easter, 1883, when Papa went to Paris with Marie and Leonie, having confided Celine and myself to the care of our uncle and aunt. One evening, while I was alone with my uncle, he spoke so touchingly of Mamma and of bygone days that I was deeply moved, and my tears began to flow. My sensitive-ness went to his heart, and, surprised that anyone of my age should speak and feel as I did, he determined to do all in his power to divert my mind during the holidays.

But God had ruled otherwise. That very evening my headache became extremely acute, and I was seized with a strange shivering which lasted all night. My aunt, like a real mother, never left me for a moment, and

indeed all through my illness she nursed me with the most tender affection.

How shall I describe our poor Father's grief, when he returned from Paris to find me in this hopeless state? Soon he was convinced that I was going to die; but Our Lord might have said to him: "*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.*" (John, 11:4) For God was glorified in our affliction through the wonderful resignation of our dear Father and sisters, and especially of Marie. How she suffered on my account, and how grateful I am! It was her heart that guided her in forestalling my every need, and truly the wisdom of a motherly heart is far beyond that of the most skillful doctor. Meanwhile, dear little Mother, your clothing day was drawing near. It was taken for granted that I should not be well enough to attend the ceremony, so, fearing

to distress me, no one ever mentioned the matter in my presence. Deep down in my heart, however, I felt that God would on that day vouchsafe me the consolation of being with you again once more. I knew this feast would pass without a cloud, and that Our Lord would not try His spouse by depriving her of the presence of the child whose illness had caused her such sorrow.

And so, it fell out. I was able to embrace you, to sit on your knee, to hide myself under your veil, to receive your loving caresses. I feasted my eyes on my dear little Mother, so lovely in her snow-white bridal dress. It was a bright day in a time of dark trial, but the day—or rather the hour—passed all too quickly, and I was soon in the carriage which was to take me away.

*To Be Continued.....*

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# THE GIFT OF ONESELF

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

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

## PART TWO

### *The Practice of Abandonment*

#### CHAPTER THREE

*The Practice of Self-Abandonment  
in Crisis*



### ARTICLE 3

#### THE SURRENDERED SOUL MUST EXPECT PERSECUTION

“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”  
“*Qui pie volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur.*” (II Tim. 3:12.) It is St. Paul who speaks under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In the beginning, the soul that is naturally good imagines that all in life is smiling upon her. Without further thought, she may give herself to what pleases and attracts her. She thinks that all men are as upright and simple as she. Alas! this illusion is short-lived. Soon she perceives that the love, which is bestowed upon her, the kindness which is shown her, is not unmixed, that often it is only a veneer, an appearance, or, let us say, a veil,

under which vile selfishness is hidden.

The more she deals with men, the more she discovers, in the greater number, coldness of heart, narrowness of opinion, littleness of mind. She finds these faults even in those whom she thinks virtuous and learned. And indeed, after a succession of experiences, she ends by finding these faults in herself. And she is not mistaken. Every man is extremely limited by nature: limited in intelligence and prudence, limited in reason and counsel.

The human heart is excessively restricted by self-love, and the mind by ambition. Alas! Meanness, narrow views, obstinacy of opinion disfigure even the best souls. It is often true that these faults are not to be imputed to us; but they are real; and more than

once they have rendered difficult a prolonged intercourse between even spiritual men.

It may be well known that the intentions on both sides are excellent; but views and temperaments differ. In both parties the will is good; but the conclusions reached are diverse, often contradictory.

If the difficulty were limited to this friction, this incompatibility of mood and judgment, it might be borne. Merely ordinary virtue would be required to overcome it. But it sometimes happens that this secret divergence of sentiments and of judgment results in avowed opposition, open disapproval, conflict, or persecution.

The well-meaning soul sees that she is suspected, contradicted, and opposed in her best enterprises. The simple soul, desirous of going straight to God by a movement of the heart, sees that she is the object of surmises, inquiries, censures. People cannot endure that she acts differently from others, that she withdraws from society and the commerce of men, that she prescribes for herself hours of prayer, that she deprives herself of relaxations or breaks ties which they judge necessary.

The soul which is animated by great zeal finds herself thwarted in her plans, forsaken by her best friends, criticized by most competent judges, betrayed by most discreet confidants. People

think that this zeal is badly regulated, this activity excessive, this application and this care exaggerated. Her firmness is treated as obstinacy, her humility as hypocrisy, her resolution as pride, her perseverance as disguised ambition.

And people do not stop at judgments and words. If the soul persists in her line of conduct, persecution begins, sometimes in disguise, sometimes openly. All sorts of stratagems are attempted to seize the soul and render her helpless: ridicule, unfavorable reports, sometimes calumny. Who, better than the soul that has been the victim, knows how many means human malice can invent, how many arrows it can shoot, how many snares it can lay to injure one whom it pretends to regard as an adversary?

Persecution does not always go to this extreme. Often it remains dormant and concealed. It is even true that there are souls whom it never touches, either because their position, their exterior merit and the superiority of their virtue disarm the enemy or render him powerless, or because their hidden and solitary life sets them apart from these attacks.

Nevertheless, it remains certain that the generality of interior souls must, sooner or later, reckon with the trial of persecution under one form or another, and must be ready to turn it to good account.



# FRANCISCAN SAINTS

JUNE 20TH

**Blessed Michelina**  
*Widow, Third Order*

The town of Pesaro is situated on the shores of the Adriatic in Italy, not far from the famous shrine of Loreto. There, in 1300, a daughter was born to the wealthy and noble Metelli family, who received the name Michelina in Baptism. The child was endowed with superior natural gifts, and in accordance with the pious tradition of the family she was reared in the fear of the Lord.

When she was twelve years old, she was married to a nobleman of the powerful family of Malatesta. Although Michelina was good and pious, it is said that her heart was divided between creatures and the Creator, as is often the case. Her husband and a son, with whom the marriage was blessed, occupied her heart more than was becoming to a Christian woman.

The Lord severed one of these ties by taking her husband to Himself when Michelina was only twenty years old. This was a severe trial for the young wife, but she did not yet recognize the higher designs of God. Her

maternal affections were now still more bound up in the child, her son was a little idol.

About this time a pious Tertiary from Syria came to Pesaro, who edified the entire town by her fervor at prayer and the holiness of her life. Michelina also conceived a great veneration for this pious person and invited her to take up her abode in her palace, promising to provide for all her needs so that she could serve God alone. The stranger gratefully accepted this hospitality, and almighty God rewarded Michelina by permitting her to learn to love God above all things, and all other things only in God.

Once on the feast of Pentecost she spoke to the pious Tertiary on abandoning one's heart to God. The latter spoke of it in glowing terms and declared it necessary. "That may be true," said Michelina, "but I cannot aspire to such perfection. My son, the tenderest object of my affections, occupies my heart too much, and my earthly possessions do not leave me free enough to offer my heart to God." "Let us then," replied the

Tertiary, “pray together that God may disengage your heart from those things which are an obstacle to your salvation and perfection.” The grace of the Holy Spirit seconded the words, and Michelina answered: “Yes, let us. I, too, desire to serve God better than I have heretofore.”

The next morning both attended Holy Mass and prayed fervently for the intention. At the close of Mass Michelina interiorly heard the voice of Our Lord: “I will set you free. I will take your son to myself, and you shall henceforth belong to me alone.” When they arrived at home, they found the child sick, and soon God took him from this world, in which he would have been in great danger, due to the inordinate tenderness of his mother. The two women saw how the holy angels carried his soul to heaven.

The mother was now like one transformed. Her heart was no longer attached to temporal goods. She distributed them lavishly among the poor in spite of the remonstrances of her relatives. After a while she entered the Third Order of St. Francis and received the afflicted and the indigent as her new family, whom she loved only in God. She became a mother to the orphans, the support of poor widows, the nurse of the sick, the comfort of the sorrowful; her house was the refuge of all unfortunate persons. She also practiced severe acts of penance in order to atone for her former sentiments.

Towards the end of her life she made a pilgrimage to the holy places, where she venerated the mysteries of Christ’s suffering so fervently that in the presence of everyone, she went into ecstasy on Mount Calvary. Upon her return to her native country, she redoubled her prayers, practices of penance, and works of charity, until our Lord called her to Himself on June 19, 1356.

Her tomb in the Franciscan church was made glorious with numerous miracles. The Apostolic See approved her public veneration in 1737, whereupon the town of Pesaro chose their erstwhile citizen as their special patron.

#### ON COMPLETE SURRENDER TO GOD

1.) Consider how dangerous it was for Blessed Michelina that her heart was divided between the Creator and His creatures. Almighty God, whose actions are always marked with mercy and who has only our welfare in mind, had to deprive her of what was dearest to her here on earth, her husband and her son, in order to rescue her from this danger. God wants the whole heart, not only of religious, but also of every Christian, since the words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart” (*Mark 12:30*), apply to everyone. At the same time the Lord gives the warning, “Thou shalt not have strange gods before me” (*Exod. 20:2*). But how many Christians there are, even among such that

consider themselves pious, who carry about in their hearts, next to God, an attachment to some creature to an extent that, like Blessed Michelina, they must admit it keeps them from belonging entirely to God! The words of the Prophet may be applied to them: "Their heart is divided," and perhaps also the added judgment: "Now they shall perish" (*Osee 10:2*).

2.) Consider why a divided heart is so easily led to destruction. Following its natural propensity, the heart of man is more inclined toward creatures than toward God, its Creator. If one has already offered half of it to creatures, they easily cause it to forget God and to offend Him on their account, as for example, in granting a favorite child something which according to God's will should not be granted, or burdening one's conscience to please a beloved husband, or for the love of temporal goods disregarding mercy and even justice. But if, as in the case of Michelina, God in His mercy tears the object of their earthly affections from such divided hearts, how few of them follow

the sentiments of Michelina! Rather, they become bitter toward God and do not want to serve Him at all anymore. They perish because their hearts were divided. — Do you too, perhaps, have to fear such ruin?

3.) Consider how one can and must forestall the misfortune. Often reflect that all the blessings that you possess, and that are dear and precious to your heart, have been given to you by God. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (*1 Cor. 4:7*). Thank God for it, and in gratitude love Him all the more on that account. But always remember that it is His property, which He has lent you in His goodness, and which He can reclaim whenever it pleases Him. Often acknowledge this before God and let Him govern as He wishes; yes, beg Him even to take it from you, should it become harmful to you. Then your heart will ever remain God's whole and undivided. You will serve God in His creatures, in the poor and neglected, as Michelina did after her conversion, and you will grow in His love.

### ***PRAYER OF THE CHURCH***

O God, Who in a remarkable way didst detach Blessed Michelina from earthly affections and didst lead her to love Thee, we beseech Thee, vouchsafe to us that, freed from harmful attachment, we may, through her merits and in imitation of her, accomplish with free hearts what is pleasing to Thee. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

# THE GREATEST TREASURE

*Reverend L. Chiavarino*

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## CHAPTER XVII WE DERIVE UNTOLD BENEFITS FROM ASSISTING AT DAILY MASS

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The importance of assisting at daily Mass is a truth which has been understood not only by the saints but by many other great men.

Constantine the Great used to attend Mass every morning, and when he went into battle he brought with him a portable altar that the Sacrifice might be offered each day amid the tumult of war and the clash of arms. Living in this manner, he gained numerous victories.

The Emperor Lothaire satisfied his piety by attending not one but three Masses, in times of peace and war alike. The pious King of England, Henry III, who did likewise, was rewarded by God with a reign of fifty-six years.

St. Louis IX, King of France, was accustomed to assist at several Masses each day. St. Wences-

laus, King of Bohemia also used to hear several Masses every day, and he would often serve them himself to the great edification of all. His veneration for the Holy Sacrifice was so great that he, himself, sowed the grain and pressed the grapes which were used to provide the bread and wine for Mass. To this end he had set aside a special field and vineyard which he cultivated with great humility and diligence.

The great St. Thomas More who was High Chancellor of the Kingdom of England, and so charged with great affairs, still found time to attend Mass daily. One day, during the Mass, a message from the King arrived, requesting his presence. With humble respect and Christian courage he sent back word asking that the King be pleased to wait until Mass would be over. On

examining the schedule of the famous Conservatory at Ecomen, Napoleon I observed an article stating that the boarders "will attend Mass on Sundays and Thursdays." Napoleon became impatient and, calling for a pen, corrected the article to require them to assist at Mass every day.

Later, as an exile at St. Helena, he asked for a priest to offer the Holy Sacrifice for him every day. One evening, being alone with General Montholon, the Emperor ordered the General to make preparations for the Mass of the next day. Montholon showed some wonder, and Napoleon said to him: "I confess that while I occupied my throne, while I was surrounded with people who lacked faith, I was a victim of human respect; but now, why should I conceal my belief? I want the Mass... I will go to Mass. I do not force anyone to accompany me, but he who loves me will follow."

Garcia Moreno, President of the Republic of Ecuador, where he accomplished untold good in the improvement of civil, moral, and religious affairs, used to rise each morning at five and, going to the Chapel, would prepare for Mass, which he himself was accustomed to serve in the presence of the entire household. Hated by the enemies of Jesus Christ, he was attacked and mortally wounded by order of the Free Masons. On his person was found a copy of "The Imitation of Christ." He had written his resolutions on the fly-leaf and

among them was this one: "I will assist at Mass every day." It would be well for every one of us if we would make this resolution ourselves.

Saint Augustine testifies that his mother never permitted a day to pass without assisting at Holy Mass. Saint Omobono, a tailor, and Saint Oddone, a shoemaker, each found time in the midst of his daily tasks to attend Mass every day. God rewarded them with health, work, and good fortune. Why should we not follow the example which these friends of God give us? Let us not proffer the excuse that we lack time, or that it would be inconvenient; we can be assured that while we are attending Mass God will bless our work, and that our good angels will labor for us and with us.

Saint Isidore was a poor farmer who never failed to attend Mass daily. His employer did not approve of this practice, and he often went so far as to reprimand him. At the same time, he was obliged to admit with amazement that Isidore's work was always accomplished on time, and that he did it even more efficiently than the others. One day, his curiosity to see what was going on drew him to visit the fields to see what Isidore was doing. To his astonishment he saw an angel tilling the soil with a magnificent yoke of oxen while Isidore was in church assisting at the Holy Sacrifice.

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