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*The Children's Retreat at
St. Joseph's Mission in Union, KY
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*In essentia - Únitas. In dúbio - Libertas.
In ómnibus - Cáritas.*

THE GIFT OF A RETREAT

This past summer, St. Joseph's Mission in Union, Kentucky held its 5th Annual Children's Retreat. There were over thirty children in attendance plus parents and grandparents. The purpose of these retreats is to enrich the souls of Catholics – especially our youth - today. It is a time to leave all of our daily distractions behind and be a part of something far greater. For a children's retreat, it is a chance for the children to learn about God outside of their normal routine of Sunday Mass and catechism lessons. (Perhaps this is something most adults need to learn as well!) It is a chance to be with others who are of the same faith and discover that we can love God in everything we do – even when we play. Needless to say, the opportunity to participate in a retreat is truly a gift.

This year's theme was The Saints. Each morning, we began with Mass along with a short sermon from His Excellency, Most Reverend Giles Butler, OFM. After the Mass, the children played outdoors while breakfast was being prepared. After breakfast, the children split into groups to work on various activities tied into the theme. Some of the activities were:

*Painting their hands to make a shape of a bird on a t-shirt – this taught them the love St. Francis had for animals. (*The children are wearing these shirts in the picture on the cover.*)

*Making puppet saints out of paper bags.

*Playing matching games and a version of BINGO using images of the Saints.

*Making their own St. Francis birdfeeder.

*Coloring their own Saint coloring book.

*Going on a nature hike.



After some time spent with the activities, the children had a short conference with Bishop Giles. In one conference, he told them about St. Anthony and the many miracles God worked through him. In another conference, he took the children to the cemetery and showed them the marker of an infant saint. He told them how they could ask her to help them be good. *St. Lilyanna, pray for us!*

After the conferences, we said the Rosary followed by lunch. The afternoon activities included visiting a farm and swimming.

To hear the sermons given by His Excellency at Mass:

<http://friarsminor.org/audio/2020child1.mp3>

<http://friarsminor.org/audio/2020child2.mp3>

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If you would like more information about future retreats, please email: friar@friarsminor.org



“In every young person, a point of goodness is accessible and it is the primary duty of the educator to discover that sensitive cord of the heart so as to draw out the best in the young person.”

St. John Bosco

PROMISES

Bishop Giles, OFM DD

In the world today, we often find that the words and promises of people cannot be trusted. From the campaigning politicians making empty promises to the little child making a “pinky promise” over some insignificant matter, these vain promises seem to be everywhere. These promises from one man to another are serious and should be taken as such or not made at all. Some promises are much more serious because they are made to God, but it seems men give as little attention to these as they do to the other ones.

Marriage vows seem to be at the top of the list of serious promises that are made but are treated as insignificant by many. The marriage promises are often seen as promises from husband to wife and from wife to husband, but this is not everything. These vows are made to God. Our marriage vows are not just from one person to another but are solemn promises made to God.

In marriage the man vows to God: “I, *N.N.*, take thee, *N.N.*, for my lawful wife, to have

and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.” The woman then vows to God: “I, *N.N.*, take thee, *N.N.*, for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.”

These promises to God are life long and are only broken by death (as was explicitly stated in the vows). However, many men have attempted to set these vows aside and break their promises to God. God is eternally patient. He may not strike them immediately because of the sacrilegious breaking of their vows, but they will one day stand before Him and be required to give an account of their broken promises. To add, as it were, an insult to injury, these same people often make new vows to God that are in direct violation of the first vows they made by entering into subsequent “marriages.”

Priests and religious also make vows to God, and often

they end up scandalously living in open defiance of their promises made to God. God will not be mocked. These will one day answer for unkept or broken promises and vows. It would have been better had they not made these promises at all rather than to have made them and not fulfilled them.

When these vows made to God are treated as nothing and of no consequence, we should not be surprised to find that the promises of men to other men carry absolutely no weight at all.

There are serious vows that every Christian has made to God, though many seldom think of them. And often these are broken in daily life. These vows to God were made when we were baptized. We vowed: "*I renounce Satan. I renounce all his works. I renounce all his pomps.*" We professed undying faith by vowing: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born, and who suffered for us. I also believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the

resurrection of the body, and life everlasting." With those promises clearly made and confirmed we were admitted to the sacrament of Baptism where we received the Holy Ghost into our bodies and souls. God was and is faithful in holding up His side by giving us grace and supernatural life. Now, we must be likewise truthful and faithful on our side.

In our daily lives, we must constantly turn away from the temptations of the devils, the world, and our passions, because this is what we have vowed to God to do. We must hold steadfastly to the true Faith that we have professed even when we see that the rest of the world has rejected or renounced the true Faith.

We must first of all be true to our word to God and then be true to our fellow men. When promises, no matter how solemn or serious, are not kept, society quickly degenerates into anarchy. Instead of spreading grace and virtue, it seems all Hell has broken loose. This appears to be the situation in the world today. People are not trusted or believed. Their words mean nothing unless they are backed up by their actions. Our civil lives and

our civil courts are overflowing with broken promises and violated contracts. Political campaigns are discounted and given very little attention because it is known that they will say anything to get themselves elected – lying, and perjury not excluded.

Considering all these things we may be tempted to refrain from ever making promises to others, but especially to God. It is indeed better not to make a promise than it is to make one and then break it. It would be better never to have made marriage vows than it would be to make them and then defiantly break them. It is better that men and women never make religious or clerical vows than to make them and then to renounce them either in word or deed. It is better for those who have never been baptized when they enter into Hell than it is for those who have been baptized, but then renounce their promises to God and return to their disordered passions, the world, and the devils; and ultimately find themselves in a worse place in Hell.

But a world filled with no promises is actually worse than one filled with broken

ones. Promises and Vows are testimonies of faith – faith in God and faith in one another. When we accept someone's promise, we show that we believe in him and we trust him. It shows respect for him and allows him to reciprocate this trust and respect by fulfilling his promise to us. Vows made to God are open declarations of our faith and trust in God and are a testimony to those around us of our faith in God. It is scandalous to give the bad example of breaking our promises to God, but it is a great good to give others the positive example of making promises to God and keeping them especially when it becomes very difficult to do so.

We should not take vows lightly, but at the same time, we should never be afraid to make serious and well-considered vows to God either. We know that of ourselves, we are incapable of truly fulfilling our vows, so with the vows are the accompanying expectation of the graces given by God so that we may be true and faithful to Him. With the help of God's grace, we can do all things. When we rely upon ourselves and our own strength we will fail and fall.

With our baptismal vows, God fills us with all the graces we need to keep these vows and to advance in virtue and grace. He comes to live within us, and our very bodies become Temples of the Holy Ghost. We fall into sin and break our promises when we fail to cooperate with the graces God has given us. Baptism cleanses our souls of all that is displeasing to God and fills them with all that is pleasing to Him. It is the key that opens the gates of Heaven to us. Baptism is the beginning of an endless stream of God's help wherein we continually draw nearer and more intimately advance in the love of God.

In marriage, God gives us all the necessary help we need to cooperate with a spouse and advance together towards greater love and intimacy with Him. Often, God also sends children to those in marriage so that entire families may work together and advance in love and virtue. Every child is a gift from God, and every parent

will be required to give an account of the souls that God has entrusted to him. These vows are a very heavy burden to bear, but they are more than amply rewarded with true joy and love. God is faithful on His part. We will be blessed and ultimately enter into Heaven with Him if we will only become true and faithful on our side.

In the clerical and religious state. The vows taken are rewarded far and above what any man can imagine if only, we are faithful on our part. The sacrifices made are soon turned into the sources of the greatest peace, tranquility, joy, happiness, but especially the grace and virtue of love. God is the true Spouse of every baptized soul, but He is much more so in the souls of the faithful religious and clergy.

We must not rush in like fools where even angels fear to tread, but we should not hesitate to thoughtfully and seriously consider and give ourselves to God through holy and pleasing vows.



GODPARENTS

Bishop Giles, OFM DD

The importance of Baptism is often spoken of, but we seldom consider the obligations that are associated with Baptism. Baptism is a grace from God. Another word for grace is a gift. It is a gift from God, and it is freely given to us. However, there are some obligations and some rules that accompany this gift.

We cannot be saved without Baptism, but baptism alone will not get us into Heaven. We must have faith even before we receive Baptism. Baptism then increases and strengthens faith. Jesus makes it clear that only those who believe and are baptized will be saved. He, has also, given us many other things that must be done or fulfilled by us. For example, We are called upon to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily and follow Him. We are commanded to receive Him in Holy Communion. Unless we eat His Flesh, we cannot have Life within us. Unless our justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. We must learn of Him and become meek and humble of heart.

Baptism is not an empty ceremony or a silly initiation.

This is a serious beginning to our eternal destiny. It is, however, only the beginning. With the renunciation of the devil and the espousal of our souls to God, we have a long way to go to reach the true and proper end of our baptism – eternal happiness in Heaven.

Baptism can only be received once because it places an indelible mark upon our souls. This is a real and true mark that will remain with us forever. It will be a mark of honor and glory if we enter into the eternal glory of Heaven; it will be a mark of disgrace if we fail to cooperate with God's grace and forfeit our place in Heaven and enter eternal misery in Hell. We are bound to observe the Ten Commandments that God has given us through Moses and the six Laws of the Church.

These duties and obligations are required of us from the time that we receive the Sacrament of Baptism. This is a heavy burden that is impossible to carry without the Grace of God. A big part of God's supporting grace comes to us through our Godparents. Godparents take upon themselves a very

serious obligation, that few people ever consider. This is not just an honorary title but comes with some profoundly serious duties. When they have stood for an infant, they have answered for the child and even made vows on behalf of the child. They now have a duty to help the child understand the graces he has received but also the duties and obligations that he now must keep because of his vows to God.

Godparents contract a real relationship with the person they sponsor. This relationship impedes marriage between Godparent and Godchild. Godparents often shower their Godchildren with worldly gifts on birthdays and other important dates in the lives of the Godchildren. Sometimes they even give them spiritual objects. The seriousness of teaching and guiding their souls to God is seldom considered.

Godparents are supposed to be God's instrument in bringing these souls to Him in Heaven. They have assumed this responsibility for themselves when they accepted to be Godparents. If the souls of Godchildren are lost because of the negligence of Godparents, then they will have much to answer for this on the

Day of Judgment. Parents must answer for the spiritual and material welfare of their children. Godparents are asked to join them in the spiritual aspect of training and inspiring these children to walk in the path of virtue.

Parents are often overwhelmed with providing for the material needs of their children, then the spiritual education and training often suffers. This is where Godparents need to step in (when they can). Godparents are required to pray for their Godchildren. They are supposed to live a spiritual life that their Godchildren can safely emulate. They should be ready to give of their time and efforts in teaching their Godchildren about God and the Church. Their instructions should be motivated by the love of God and love of their spiritual children. Religious instruction should not be dry and boring, but should be lively and interesting as well as motivating. This should be the goal in everyone given the duty of providing spiritual instruction, but it is especially the duty of Godparents. We all need inspiration and Godparents can do this in a way like none other – if they will only cooperate with the graces God has given them in this vocation.

Children need to hear but also see that loving and serving God and the Church is a joy. Yes, it is hard work and very difficult at times, but every cross is truly made sweet and pleasant when embraced for the love of God. The example of Godparents speaks more clearly and forcefully than mere words ever can.

The evil or bad example of others is especially dangerous to the souls of children. Jesus has severely condemned this. It is better that a man have a millstone tied around his neck and be cast into the sea than that he should ever scandalize one of His children. It would be better for a man that he had never been born than that he should ever scandalize one of

God's little ones. Scandal is leading or tempting to sin, either by our words or actions. If this is the case with those who have no relationship to the child, how much more terrible is scandal coming from a Godparent?!

God gives us the graces we need, but we must do our part in cooperating with Him. Godparents must work with God and the Church for the salvation of these souls. The duties and obligations of Baptism are serious and eternal. The aid of good Godparents is essential. The duty of Godparents is a most serious obligation, but it can be done if we pray, diligently apply ourselves, and cooperate with the graces God gives us.



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FAITH AND DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

The practicing Catholic will, through the course of his life, hear numerous sermons preached and read articles on Faith and Divine Providence. The two topics are not necessarily spoken of together, but often that is the case.

With supernatural faith, we come to understand the necessity of accepting matters of faith and morals without fully understanding all aspects of the topic. This is, indeed, what it means to have a supernatural faith as compared to a natural faith.

Placing one's faith specifically in Divine Providence ought to be the desire of all True Catholics. On the other hand, refusing to accept that which Providence gives us will prove to be disastrous. Additionally, some have little or no understanding of Divine Providence. These poor souls live a purely natural life with little knowledge of eternity. They may be baptized, but they live as pagans.

An essential problem when considering Divine Providence is the correct understanding of it. Divine Providence means that God is constantly caring

for all of His creation in all possible ways. The thought which many accept of God having created man and since then is indifferent to his life and events is not only a grave error but is quite misleading to those who adhere to it.

Then, some believe that God directly wills all which occurs each day. This grave error can easily be disproven by demonstrating that God does not will the sins of men. He allows sin, but does not desire (will) it directly.

A common problem among otherwise good people is how to correctly react to unusual circumstances or events. Too often people are puzzled as to why "God would allow" such an event to occur. They fail to realize that men, too often, are the cause of these "terrible" events. God allows these situations, providing men with an opportunity to react to them that is spiritually beneficial to them.

This is the key to correctly understanding a part of the providence of God. Do we understand that how we react to circumstances is how God provides for us? He wants us

to react so we may gain the graces which are available to us. Over time if one learns to react correctly, or nearly so, then one is better able to understand how the providence of God works in one's life. This explains why the saints generally did not get upset over the events of their times. They looked at all occasions through the eyes of Providence.

When one applies these ideas to current events you will find that nothing has changed. There is nothing new here.

In the early part of 2020, the world began to be affected by a corona virus. As this virus spread from one continent to the next, the world was affected in a manner that had never been seen before. Most of the world was brought to a standstill. Nations closed their schools and most businesses. The world as it was known just one year ago ceased to exist. Decisions by politicians were often socialist in nature. It seemed as though the air was filled with devils.

To those who look at events merely through the eyes of the natural, this is simply a pandemic that would require several decisions on their part to survive this virus. To others, there was a greater

understanding that these matters were something more than the natural occurrence of a virus.

The point to be made here is the understanding of Divine Providence in an atmosphere that seems to be unprecedented. The spiritual principles are the same. Nothing in this regard has changed.

The problem is the environment that has been artificially created. The most noteworthy is the unnecessary panic and fear which has been created by the media and their hidden masters. A second created problem is the loss of work for millions and all of the chaos which accompanied it.

It would be understandable, humanly speaking, that one would think that God was not watching over us in recent months. One knows, though, that this is not the case. God is always watching over us at all times, in all places, and all circumstances. It is only the soul that lacks faith which would doubt His providence over us.

Sometimes one needs to be reminded of the obvious; God is always in control. It does not matter what it looks like.

The reality is, if God's Providence stopped, the world would cease to exist as one knows it.

The disruption and chaos of 2020 is unlike anything one has seen before. One must filter through the disinformation of the media and evil politicians to discern the truth. Would it be an exaggeration to conclude that the minds of many have been conditioned or brainwashed to make it unlikely that they would have the ability to discern the objective truth? There seems to be spiritual blindness among far too many people. Is this due to the influence of a legion of devils?

Perhaps many need to be reminded that God is ever-present and through His Providence, He is always watching out over His loved ones. Too many are under the impression that because the world is currently suffering, He has abandoned us. Nothing could be further from the truth. Keep in mind what was said earlier. God is always in control.

One must have a supernatural faith to remain calm in the middle of a storm. God either allows or directly wills the events of each day. Not every day will be pleasant and sunny. The world is currently passing through some exceedingly difficult days. Only those who look at each day filled with faith and confidence in Almighty God will be able to find some sense of peace and calm in his soul. The turmoil which surrounds him has little effect upon him. The saints are good models in this regard.

It is helpful to explain what has been said here to others. Most are not equipped to comprehend these things from a spiritual perspective; too many have panicked and committed suicide.

Each day when one prays, finish the prayer with resignation to God's Holy Will. Let your prayer be "not my will, O Lord, but Your Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.



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 LITURGICAL YEAR WITH ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

THE TIME AFTER PENTECOST FEASTS OF OUR LORD

In the Liturgical Year, there are two continuous cycles operating side by side of each other. They are the *temporal cycle* and the *sanctoral cycle*. The temporal cycle is made up of seven different seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Septuagesima, Lent, Paschal, and Time after Pentecost. This cycle relives the very life of Our Lord and its Sundays follow the appropriate theme of the season. What is the reason for this continuous sequence? Pope Pius XII explains in his encyclical *Mediator Dei* that: “*Throughout the entire year, the Mass and the Divine Office center especially around the person of Jesus: this arrangement is so suitably disposed that Our Savior dominates the scene in the mysteries of His humiliation, of His redemption and triumph.*” He continues: “*While the sacred Liturgy calls to mind the mysteries of Jesus Christ, it strives to make all believers take their part in them so that the divine Head of the Mystical Body may live in all the members with the fulness of His holiness. Let the souls of*

Christians be like altars on each one of which a different phase of the Sacrifice, offered by the High Priest, comes to life again, as it were:- pains and tears which wipe away and expiate sin; supplication to God which pierces heaven; dedication and even immolation of oneself made promptly, generously and earnestly; and finally that intimate union by which we commit ourselves and all we have to God, in whom we find our rest: ‘the perfection of religion is to imitate whom you adore.’” (Pages 53 & 54) Therefore the purpose of this cycle is to aid us in our imitation of Christ and the proper adoration we owe to the Most Holy Trinity. It helps us to keep the sacred mysteries alive and so we may constantly walk in Christ’s footsteps. To put it even more simply, the adoration of God and our sanctification is the purpose of the entire Liturgical Year.

The *sanctoral cycle*, which is also continuous, deals with the various feasts of the saints. Those saints whom we honor and whom we strive to imitate. We honor them because they have achieved that for which we all strive: the Beatific Vision in

Heaven. We imitate them because they imitated Christ. Their holy lives show us how to make practical use of God's graces, and if we also cooperate with those graces then, we too, can become saints.

The focus of the last eight articles has been the *temporal cycle*, where we examined the different seasons through the eyes of Poverello [St. Francis of Assisi]. Next month's article we will examine the *sanctoral cycle* in greater depth, with an emphasis upon Franciscan Saints and special Franciscan Feasts. This article, however, we are going to discuss a sort of *anomaly* that occurs during the Liturgical Year. It is where the two cycles, side by side of each other, do in fact, cross over.

The first example of this happens during the Sundays after Pentecost, when a *first-class feast* occurs on a Sunday and is celebrated instead of the propers of the Sunday (examples: the Nativity of St. John the Baptist [June 24th]; St. Michael the Archangel [September 29th]; and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin [July 2nd]). Also as Franciscans, we have certain feasts which according to the Roman Calendar may be listed as a merely *double*, but according to the Franciscan Calendar they are raised up to a *first-class* feast: St. Paschal Baylon [May 17th]; St. Anthony of Padua [June

13th]; St. Bonaventure [July 14th]; St. Clare of Assisi [August 12th]; the Stigmata of St. Francis [September 17th]; and Our Holy Father St. Francis of Assisi [October 4th]).

The second example is when those particular feasts that are proper to the temporal cycle, which does not have fixed dates upon the calendar year, occur. These are mainly Feasts of Our Lord, (although there are some of the Blessed Virgin): the Ascension of Our Lord (the 40th day after Easter and a Holy of Obligation); the Feast of Corpus Christi (the Thursday after Trinity Sunday) and the Feast of the Sacred Heart (the third Friday after Pentecost). I should also note that there are some feasts of Our Lord contained within the *sanctoral cycle* that do have fixed dates, such as: the Most Precious Blood (July 1st) and the Transfiguration of Our Lord (August 6th).

Now that we have set forth our basic premise, which will be elaborated upon next month, let us again turn our attention towards St. Francis.

It would take up too much space for us to delve into how St. Francis would have celebrated each of these feasts, and we would risk not doing each one justice (**Note:** *I purposely wrote "would have" because some of these feasts were instituted after St. Francis' death. Knowing St. Francis that would not have*

stopped him from honoring Our Lord in any of these special ways). So we must pick the one that stands out above the rest. One that would have been the primary focus of St. Francis' devotion. In my opinion, this would be the *Feast of Corpus Christi*. Why do I conclude this feast would have greater importance to St. Francis? The answer is simple, because of St. Francis' great love for the *Holy Eucharist*. Father Hilarin Felder O.F.M. Cap. in his famous work, *The Ideals of St. Francis*, a work that was required reading during my novitiate, explains that: "*When Francis speaks of the Savior, he has, above all, the Eucharist in mind. His knightly service, his imitation, and his love of Christ were so fervent, so real and living for the very reason that they did not refer to the Savior distant in time or place, but to the immediate Person of Christ in the Holy Sacrament. Crib and cross, both he found here present. Here his divine Master lived and breathed. Here the knight of Christ stood guard day by day in the court and at the throne of His Most High King. The altar was for him the hearth of his faith, of his hope and his love, the goal of his thoughts and actions. In the Eucharist, and through the Eucharist, Christ became to him a living reality. The Eucharist was the focus of his entire religious life.*" (*Ideals of the St. Francis*, page 38)

This wonderful and truly inspired explanation is confirmed over and over again by St. Francis' early biographers and various quotes of Our Seraphic Father himself. Here are a few examples.

The first example is shown by St. Francis' love for the country of France. There are many reasons for him to have a predilection to this country: his mother was of French descent, it was the home of true knighthood and the troubadours, and he was actually named after the country by his father. These reasons, however sentimental, are not the main reason why he loved France so much, it was because it was known as the "*Friend of the Eucharist.*" Father Hilarion recounts: "*When he (Francis) therefore resolved one day to take up his abode in a distant province, he said to his brothers: 'In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the glorious Virgin Mary, His Mother, I choose the province of France, where there is a Catholic people who more than other Catholics greatly reverence the Body of Christ, which is to me a great joy, and therefore do I desire to converse with them.'*" (*Ideals of St. Francis*, page 39; taken from the *Speculum Perfectionis*)

The second example is shown by his love for church buildings, the places where his Eucharistic Lord resides. He writes in his *Testament*: "*And the Lord gave*

me such faith in His churches that I was wont thus simply to adore and say: 'We adore Thee Most Holy Lord Jesus Christ here and in all churches which are in the whole world, and we bless Thee because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.'" Here St. Francis recognizes the realities of the Real Presence and of the Redemption. The sons and daughters of St. Francis imitated his devotion and continued this recognition by reciting the same prayer every time upon entering and leaving a church. This devotion is continued even to the present day!

The third example is found in his great reverence for the *sacred priesthood*. Continuing from the previous text, he writes: "*And afterwards the Lord gave me so great faith in priests who live according to the form of the Holy Roman Church, on account of their order, that if they were to persecute me, I should wish to have recourse to them. If I should have as great a wisdom as Solomon had, and I should find poor priests of this world. I do not wish to preach against their will in the parishes which they live. And I wish to fear, love, and honor them and all others as my masters: and I do not wish to consider sin in them, because I discern the Son of God in them and they are my masters. And I do this because, in this world, I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of*

God Himself except His most sacred Body and His most holy Blood, which they consecrate and which they alone administer to others." St. Francis looked upon the priest as truly the *alter Christus*, and such childlike devotion should inspire all priests to live up to their sacred calling.

St. Francis' love for the Eucharist is his greatest legacy to his spiritual children. Many saints of the Franciscan Order have demonstrated their father's devotion. One among the thousands was St. Paschal of Baylon, the simple lay-brother, who on account of his own great devotion to the Eucharist was named "Patron of Eucharistic Congresses and Societies." Would St. Paschal have had such a strong "seraphic" devotion if St. Francis did not inspire it?

My dear reader, I hope this article inspires your devotion; because the truly beautiful thing about devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist is that It encompasses all other devotions to Our Lord. He is truly present in the Eucharist and when we receive Him, as true Catholics, like St. Francis, we are all encompassed in His Divine Love!

Pax et Bonum!

ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

An Autobiography

CHAPTER THREE

PAULINE ENTERS CARMEL

On reaching *Les Buissonnets*, I was put to bed, though I felt no trace of fatigue. On the morrow, however, I had a serious relapse, and I became so ill that, humanly speaking, there was no hope of recovery. I do not know how to describe this extraordinary illness. I said things which I did not think, and I did things as though I were forced to do them in spite of myself. Most of the time I appeared delirious, and yet I am quite certain I was never for one moment deprived of my reason. Sometimes for hours together I remained in a strange kind of swoon, unable to make the slightest movement, and yet hearing everything that was said around me, even when spoken in a whisper. I remember it all so well.

What fears, too, the devil inspired! Everything frightened me. The bed seemed to be surrounded by awful precipices, and nails in the wall would assume the ghastly appearance of huge, coal-black fingers, filling me with terror and at times making me cry out with fright. Once, whilst Papa

stood looking at me in silence, the hat in his hand was suddenly transformed into some horrible shape, and I showed such fear that he turned away sobbing.

But if God allowed the devil to approach in this open way, He also sent His angels of earth to console and to strengthen me. Marie rarely left my side, and, notwithstanding all the trouble I gave, she never once betrayed the least sign of weariness. I could not rest while she was away; and during meals, when Victoire took care of me, I cried continually and never ceased calling "Marie, Marie!" It was only if she were going to Mass or to visit you that I would allow her to leave me. On these occasions I did not complain. Leonie, too, and my little Celine, could not do enough for me. On Sundays, they would remain for hours shut up with a poor child who seemed almost to have lost her reason. My own dear sisters, how much I made you suffer!

Uncle and aunt were also full of affection, and every day, when my aunt came to see me,

she would bring me some little gift.¹ During this illness, my love for these dear ones increased more than I can possibly say, and I understood better than ever what our good Father so often said: “Always remember, children, that your uncle and aunt are devoted to you in quite an exceptional way.” In his old age, he himself experienced that devotedness, and now in his turn he will protect and bless those who showed him such care. In the hours when the pain was less acute, it was my delight to weave garlands of daisies and forget-me-nots for Our Lady’s statue. We were then in the lovely month of May, and the

¹ Soeur Thérèse repaid her from Heaven. During Madame Guerin’s last illness, she made her presence felt on several occasions. One morning the invalid was found very peaceful and happy: — “I have suffered a great deal,” she said, “but Thérèse watched tenderly by me all night. I felt her near my bed, and she encouraged me frequently by her caresses.” Madame Guerin had lived a most holy life, and her last words were: “Jesus, I love Thee, I offer Thee my life for Thy priests as did my little Thérèse.” She died on February 13, 1900, aged fifty-two. M. Guerin, who had for many years used his pen in defense of the Church and his fortune in support of good works, also died a holy death, as a Carmelite Tertiary, on September 28, 1909. He was in his sixty-ninth year. [CARMEL.]

earth was adorned with the flowers of Spring. Only the Little Flower drooped and seemed to have faded forever. But close beside her was a radiant Sun, the miraculous statue of the Queen of Heaven, and towards that glorious Sun the Flower would often turn.

Papa came into my room one morning, evidently in the deepest distress. Going up to Marie, he gave her some gold pieces, and bade her write to Paris for a novena of Masses to be said at the shrine of Our Lady of Victories² to obtain the cure of his poor little Queen. His faith and love touched me to the quick, and I longed to get up and tell him I was cured. Alas! my wishes could not work a miracle, and an extraordinary miracle was necessary if I were to be restored to health. But it was wrought, and my recovery made complete, by the intercession of Our Lady of Victories. One Sunday during the novena Marie went into the garden, leaving me with Leonie

² It was in this small church—once deserted and to-day perhaps the most frequented in Paris—that the saintly Abbe Desgenettes was inspired by Our Lady, in 1836, to establish the Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners. (*Reverend Thomas N. Taylor, Editor*)

who was reading by the window. After a while I began to call in a low voice: "Marie, Marie!" Accustomed to hearing me fret in this way, Leonie took no notice, so I called out louder and Marie came back to me. I distinctly saw her enter, but for the first time I failed to recognize her. I looked piteously round the room and towards the garden, crying again and again: "Marie! Marie!" Words cannot convey the agony of that moment, and Marie's suffering was perhaps greater than mine. At last, after many fruitless efforts to make me recognize her, she whispered to Leonie and went away, pale and trembling.

A few minutes later, Leonie carried me to the window overlooking the garden, where I could see Marie walking slowly up and down. She held out her arms to me with a smile, and called tenderly: "Thérèse, my little Thérèse!" but still I did not know her. This last effort failing, she returned to my room and knelt in tears at the foot of the bed. Then, looking towards the statue, she implored Our Lady's assistance with all the fervor of a mother who begs the life of her child and will not be refused. Leonie and Celine joined in her prayer, and that cry of faith forced the gates of Heaven.

Utterly exhausted, and finding no help on earth, I too sought my heavenly Mother's aid, and

entreated her with all my heart to have pity on me. Suddenly the statue became animated and radiantly beautiful — with a divine beauty that no words of mine can ever convey. The look upon Our Lady's face was unspeakably kind and sweet and compassionate, but what penetrated to the very depths of my soul was her gracious smile. Instantly all my pain vanished, my eyes filled, and big tears fell silently, tears of purest heavenly joy.

"Our Blessed Lady has come to me; she has smiled on me! How happy I feel! but I shall tell no one, for if I do my happiness will leave me." Then, I looked down and recognized Marie, who was watching me lovingly and seemed overcome with emotion, as though she guessed the great favor I had just received. It was indeed to her and her earnest prayer I owed that wonderful grace—a smile from the Blessed Virgin. When Marie saw me gaze fixedly on the statue, she said to herself: "Thérèse is cured!"³ It was true. The Little Flower had come

³ At that moment, her face became as though transfigured. Her whole attitude, as well as her supernatural expression, filled those present with wonder and admiration, leaving no doubt on their minds to what had taken place—Our Blessed Lady had really appeared to Thérèse during those moments of ecstasy.

back to life. A bright ray from her glorious Sun had brought warmth and light, and had delivered her forever from the cruel enemy: “The dark winter was now passed, the rain was over and gone,” and Our Lady’s Flower gathered such strength that five years later she unfolded her petals on the fertile mountain of Carmel.

Marie, as I have said, was fully convinced that the Blessed Virgin, while restoring my bodily health, had granted me some hidden grace; and when we were alone together, I was unable to resist her tender and pressing enquiries. Astonished to find my secret already known without my having said a word, I told her everything, and, as I had foreseen, my happiness was changed, alas! into sorrow. For four years the remembrance of the great favor caused me real pain, and it was only in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Victories, at my Mother’s feet, that once again peace was restored to me in all its fullness, as I will tell you later.

The change came about in this way. After Marie had heard my simple and sincere account of the grace I had received, she begged leave to tell the nuns at Carmel, and I did not like to refuse. My first visit there, after my illness, was one of joy at seeing you, my little Mother, clothed in the habit of Our Lady

of Carmel. It was a time of bliss for us both, so intensely had we suffered, but although there was much to say, my heart was too full, and I could hardly speak.

Mother Mary of Gonzaga was present, and she gave me many proofs of affection. I saw several other members of the community as well, and all of them, as you will remember, dear Mother, questioned me on my miraculous cure. Some asked if Our Lady had the Infant Jesus in her arms; others wished to know if Angels were with her. These and further questions troubled and grieved me, and I could only make one answer: “Our Lady looked very beautiful; I saw her come towards me and smile.”

Noticing that the nuns thought something quite different had happened, I imagined that I had, perhaps, been guilty of an untruth. Had I only kept my secret, my happiness, too, would have been secure. But Our Lady allowed this trouble to befall me for the good of my soul; without it, vanity might have crept into my heart, whereas now I was humbled, and looked on myself with profound contempt. My God, Thou alone knowest all that I suffered.⁴

⁴ This painful trial could only have been the result of a mysterious permission on the part of Almighty God. [CARMEL.]

End of Chapter Three

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 4

The conduct of the soul at the time of persecution

The soul must not be astonished when she encounters persecution, even if it comes from good people. She ought to be convinced that this misery is a fatal consequence of the narrowness of the human mind and the natural egoism of the heart of man.

If all men had broad and lofty ideas, all would be tolerant. They would respect one another's viewpoint and manner of acting. They would not easily condemn the intentions and the deeds of others. No one is more indulgent than God toward irregularities of mind, defects of character, strangeness of humor, or even moral faults, because the views of God are infinitely

large. He is satisfied with the good will of His creatures. It is according to this that He forms His judgment.

Man, limited in every way, does not act thus. He regards appearances, judges by the exterior, follows his own impressions, his sympathies or antipathies, and condemns and desires to correct all that is not in accordance with his own ideas and his own way of acting.

The soul must be fully persuaded of this fact: here upon earth she will never find anyone upon whose approbation and support she may count unreservedly. The most faithful friend, the most highly esteemed director, the most intimate confidant, the most benevolent superior may fail her at the very time that she counts

upon advice or the support of authority.

As long as the soul lacks the rooted conviction that she must not seek anywhere upon earth for support, she is not preserved from painful disillusionment and cutting disappointment. This must be taken for certain. Human nature is so made that one cannot, with complete safety, rely entirely upon any man. God has willed it so, in order that the soul may possess Him alone and finally repose only in Him. The soul that is completely persuaded of this truth should then resolve not to fear persecution under whatever form it presents itself.

When one is definitely surrendered to God, one sets no more value upon the esteem of men. Their criticism, their violence, their ridicule, have no further power to disturb us. It is not to please them, nor to win their esteem, that one renounces all.

If the whole world were to rise against the soul that is given to God, how could it harm her? The soul has no need of the world or its approval. She knows that the opinion of men has no value before God. If the entire universe were in league against her, it could not take from her the merit of one single action. The world has power only over those who fear it. Those who bravely face its

menaces and its outcries find it powerless.

One must often say in the depths of the heart: "A time will come when I shall be forsaken by all the world, deprived of counsel and encouragement, suspected by my superiors and condemned by my equals. I do not fear this situation, for I have need only of Jesus. In advance I make the sacrifice of the esteem, the affection and the confidence of all those who are dear to me. I desire only that I may never turn aside from obedience. The more I am repulsed by creatures, the more shall I press close to Jesus. He alone knows the uprightness of my intentions, the simplicity of my heart." This act, frequently renewed in time of prayer, creates a great liberty of heart, a holy independence of all human valuations.

Let there be persecution, disparagement, abandonment by friends, distrust on the part of superiors; the soul is no longer affected by them. She has risen above the sphere where clouds can obscure her sky. She lives in the serene regions where the sun is always shining. Contradiction is powerless, persecution is disarmed before this serenity, this imperturbable calm, this unalterable equality of humor.

Moreover, God does not leave the soul defenseless. The more

she abandons herself to Him, the more completely does He take her under His direction. The more she neglects her own interests and her personal justification; the more God concerns Himself with her defense and her spiritual advancement.

For this purpose, He makes use of her very enemies. Their calumnies, their malicious reports, their violence, or their artifices serve to bring into stronger light the innocence and the justice of the persecuted soul.

Oh, admirable secret of being always avenged for all injury or injustice! The soul has only to give herself to God, to make over to Him all her cares and her interests, to give her attention to loving Him—and at

once all Heaven is at her side and has undertaken her defense.

O Jesus! my line of conduct in persecutions and contradictions is then very simple. I have only to throw myself into Thine Arms, to entrust my defense to Thee, and to love Thee. Heaven and earth will perish sooner than the soul that confides herself to Thee.

Thus, the procedure of the interior soul never changes. In the midst of wealth, success, consolation, light, the approval of men, she makes but one act, the gift of her whole self to Jesus. In the midst of darkness, misery, criticism, adversity, she still has but one act—surrender to God in an ardent transport of love. This is her whole secret, all her wisdom.



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FRANCISCAN SAINTS

SEPTEMBER 4TH
St. Rose of Viterbo
Virgin, Third Order

Almighty God did marvelous things in St. Rose. It appears that her parents gave her that name by divine inspiration, for it was symbolic of her entire career. As long as she lived, she bloomed like a sweet-scented rose in the garden of the Church, and in full bloom was she transplanted to Paradise. Before she was able to speak, Rose attempted to pronounce the sweet names of Jesus and Mary; and as soon as she had learnt to walk, she asked to be taken to church and to other retired and quiet places to pray. If religious discourses were being given, she would listen with the greatest attention.

When Rose was only three years old, our Lord manifested her sanctity in a most wonderful way. One of her maternal aunts died. The family were standing around the bier weeping aloud. Deeply moved by the sorrow of her relatives, little Rose

went to the coffin, raised her eyes to heaven, and prayed silently. Then she placed her little hand on the body of her deceased aunt and called her by name. The dead woman immediately opened her eyes and reached out to embrace her little niece, who had raised her to life again.

The child entertained a great compassion for the poor; she always tried to save some of her food to give it to the poor. One day when she left the house with some bread in her apron, she met her father, who asked her in curt fashion what she was carrying off now. The affrighted child opened her apron and fragrant roses were found in it.

When she was seven years old, Rose retired to a little cell in her father's house. There she spent almost all her time in contemplation and in practicing rigorous penance. She prayed much for the conversion of sinners. Meanwhile

Our Dear Lord was preparing her for an extraordinary mission.

Rose was not yet ten years old when the Blessed Mother of God instructed her to join the Third Order of St. Francis. Shortly after, Our Lord appeared to her on the cross, wearing the crown of thorns on His head and bleeding profusely from all His wounds. Rose, aghast at the sight, called out: "O my Lord, who has reduced Thee to this state?" Our Lord replied: "My love, my deep love for men has done this." "But," asked Rose, "who has so pierced and torn Thee?" "The sins of men have done it," was Our Lord's answer. "Sin, sin!" cried the saint, and then she lashed her body in holy indignation against herself.

Then, by divine inspiration. Rose took a cross in hand and went up and down the streets and public squares of her city telling the people of the terrible tortures our Lord suffered and of the heinousness of sin. Every now and then she would emerge from her solitude to entreat the people to do penance and be converted.

The town of Viterbo, which belonged to the Papal States, had revolted against the

authority of the pope. Disregard for religion and moral degradation were the order of the day there. But the sermons of this little missionary had marvelous results. The people came in crowds to hear her. The stone on which she stood was seen to rise in the air, and she was sustained there by a miracle while burning words issued from her lips. The greater part of the citizenry had already resolved to do penance and to return to the legitimate papal allegiance when Rose and her parents were expelled by the civil authorities.

The result was that she now had a wider field of activity. At Soriano and later at Vitorchiano, her preaching had the same blessed results. In the latter place, a sorceress had done much harm among the inhabitants. Fearing that after her departure this woman would undo the good effected there, Rose was desirous of her conversion. Her initial efforts failed. Then our saint had an immense pile of wood prepared in the public square; fire was set to it, and Rose stepped into the fire to the top of the pile. She remained untouched for three hours in the midst of the flames, singing the praises of God. The sorceress now cast herself

at Rose's feet and was sincerely converted.

Meanwhile the rightful authority of the pope had been re-established in Viterbo, and Rose could return. She was now fifteen years old and anxious to enter the convent of the Poor Clares. As she had no dowry, she could not be admitted. "Well," said Rose, "you will not receive me while I am alive, but you will receive me after I am dead." Together with a few companions she repaired to a secluded dwelling, where they intended to live in community. The ecclesiastical authorities, however, did not approve of the plan, and Rose returned home. She died two years later, filled with the joyous desire to be united with her God.

Two and a half years after her death she appeared three times to Pope Alexander IV, who was in Viterbo at the time, and enjoined him to have her body removed to the convent of the Poor Clares. Her body was found incorrupt and has remained in that condition to this day. Miracles are constantly occurring at her tomb. Pope Callistus III canonized her in 1457.

ON THE OPERATIONS OF MAN

1.) Consider the marvelous operations of God in St. Rose.

Entire cities that had fallen away from God and the Church and of whose conversion the greatest missionaries might have doubted, were won to a change of heart by means of a child, and a girl at that. It has often pleased God to reveal His might and wisdom by means of lowly and unimportant creatures. Thus, at Milan in a trying period, when it seemed impossible to come to a decision regarding the choice of a bishop, an infant pointed out St. Ambrose as the chosen bishop, and his life story shows in what a holy way he governed the Church at Milan. "But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong. That no flesh shall glory in his sight. But that he that glorieth, may glory in the Lord" (*1 Cor. 1:27, 29, 31*). — Have you ever given thought to it that it is God who works through human beings?

2.) Consider that the operations of grace which God manifests so extraordinarily in children are also effective, generally speaking, in adults. At such times God uses the natural powers and abilities of men in order to effect good. It

is not man, though, that produces the good results, but God Himself. The Prophet speaks thus to the Lord: 'For thou hast wrought all our works for us' (*Is. 26:12*). "God giveth the increase" (*1 Cor. 3:7*). Whatever good, therefore, is done by men, we must recognize as the work of God and thank Him for it. In like manner, we may not ascribe to ourselves the good that we do, nor think well of ourselves on that account, but we must rather give thanks to God who has done this good through us. — Have you done this in the past?

3.) Consider that in spite of the fact that God uses men to accomplish His works here on earth, He still leaves them free in their acts. If man resists, He gives him over to his own will. But he who submits himself as a useful implement for anything God wants of him is "as the clay in the hands of the

potter, who will fashion it according to his ordering" (*Ecclus. 33:13*). He will be an instrument of much blessing. Thus, it was with St. Rose. When God called her to solitude, she withdrew to her little cell; when He sent her out, she went into the streets and the market places; when He commissioned her to teach others, she undertook the work; and when, despite the fact that He had formerly permitted her to work miracles. He opposed her pious design, she willingly withdrew. — How often have we opposed the operation of God's grace, and instead of doing His holy will, used all our efforts to serve our ends! Such a course is more apt to invite the curse of God than His blessing, and guilt instead of merit. May the intercession of St. Rose obtain pardon for us, and her example convert us into more useful tools in the hands of God.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, Who didst deign to admit St. Rose to the company of Thy holy virgins, grant, we beseech Thee, that at her intercession and by her merits we may be cleansed from all guilt and may be admitted to the eternal presence of Thy majesty. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

THE GREATEST TREASURE

Reverend L. Chiavarino



CHAPTER XVIII

HOW WE SHOULD PREPARE FOR MASS

We should go to church decently and neatly attired, but we should be careful to avoid ostentation in our dress.

Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, noticed one day that a woman dressed in an excessively luxurious manner was about to enter the church for Mass. He went forth to meet her, and in a severe tone he said: "Do you think, madam, that you are coming to a ball or to the theatre? Is that why you are so attired? Depart from this place and repent of your shortcomings."

How many are the Christians who deserve to be reprimanded with like severity! How many are there in our own

time, in small towns as well as in cities, who go to Mass chiefly to show off their finery that others may admire them. Especially worthy of reprimand are those women who go to Mass in extravagant hats, merely to inspire others to envy; likewise, those who dress immodestly and who fail to cover their heads. These God cannot tolerate; He turns His eyes from them. Often, He visits chastisements upon them.

A few years back, the following story appeared in an Italian newspaper: A large city church was full of people assembled for Sunday Mass. Suddenly there came through

the door a perfumed young woman, dressed with but little regard for decency. She made neither genuflection nor sign of the Cross but was no sooner in her place than she began to turn this way and that way as if to receive the admiration of the congregation. The people were scandalized; but God's punishment was not long delayed; the unfortunate girl turned pale, shrieked loudly, and fell to the ground and died, the victim of an apoplectic seizure.

On a feast of great solemnity, St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, went to church adorned with the crown and robes of state. While she was at prayer her eyes fell upon the Crucifix, and she was moved to consider how God was crowned with thorns, wounded and covered with blood, while she was crowned with gold and attired in silken purple. She was so greatly impressed by the thought, that she burst into tears and fainted at the feet of her courtiers. After that day she no longer went to Church in her regal robes.

What a beautiful example this should be to all Christian women, especially to women of means.

The famous Frederic Ozanam, founder of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a Professor at the Sorbone, and one of the greatest glories of France during the last century, was ordered by the doctors to go to Antignano near Livorno. Here his condition was such that he began to prepare himself for death.

On the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, Ozanam expressed a desire to go to Mass and to receive Holy Communion. His wife ordered a carriage to take him to church, but he refused to make use of it, saying: "This may be the last journey that I shall make, and I desire to make it on foot in order to render honor to God and to His Blessed Mother." So, he went, leaning on the arm of his wife whom he called his "angel." The country people, learning of his approach, met him near the church. When he, pale and worn, appeared and passed through the crowd, they all bowed respectfully and bared their heads. The women and children were moved to tears as they greeted him.

This was, in fact, the last Mass which Ozanam attended here on earth.

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