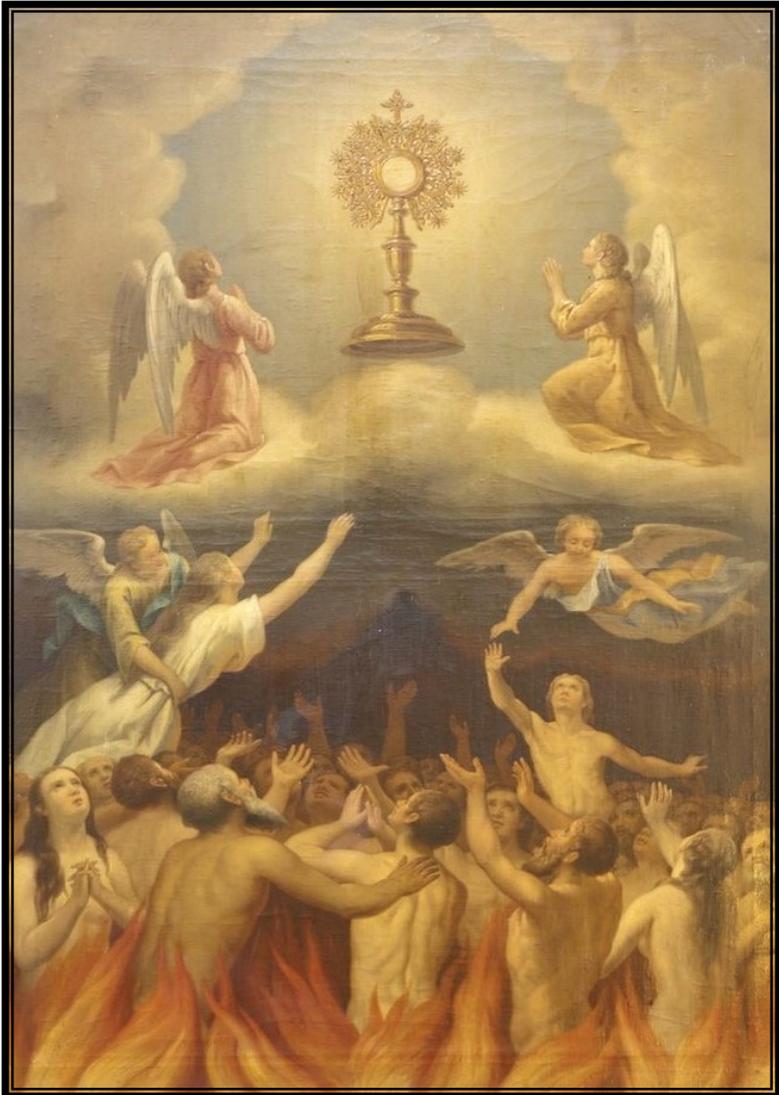


THE SERAPH

November 2020

Vol. XLI No. 3



PUBLISHED WITH EPISCOPAL AUTHORIZATION

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The **SERAPH** is published monthly, except in July and August, by the Franciscans in Rochester, NY.

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

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

USA: Free upon request.

Suggested donation - \$20.00.

FOREIGN: Air Mail - \$40.00 per year.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Articles dealing with Roman Catholic doctrine, morals, history and spirituality are welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit and/or use articles submitted. Manuscripts returned with SAE. Opinions expressed in The SERAPH are not necessarily those of the publishers.

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Publishers:

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

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

LIVE TO LOVE, LOVE TO DIE

Bishop Giles, OFM DD

St. John tells us that God is Love. We have been created to know, love, and serve God. Our principal duty, therefore, is to love God. The two Great Commandments are centered on love: Love God with our entire being and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. We are made to love and to be loved. This life, here on earth, is driven by love. Sometimes it is a misguided or false love that drives us, but it is love, nonetheless. We should strive to understand and correctly direct our lives based upon this simple principle of love.

The devils are constantly trying to manipulate this love and use it against us. When we turn this love inward, toward ourselves, we love nothingness, because we are dust and will return to dust. This was the sin of Lucifer when he was cast out of Heaven. He loved himself and focused upon his own beauty and power. Love of self is often distorted in this same way and makes us truly demonic.

The true fulfillment of love is only found outside of ourselves. We are incomplete by

ourselves. We need to find outside of ourselves everything that is needed to complete or fulfill our hearts and minds. When the evil spirits fail to get us to focus our love upon ourselves, they would have us seek this completeness in material things. In this temptation, we realize, perhaps only subconsciously, that we are incomplete, and we need something besides ourselves, but we mistakenly seek our completeness or fulfillment in this material world. St. Augustine speaks of this in his Confessions. *“Our hearts are restless O Lord until they rest in Thee.”* Having tasted all the material pleasures that he could, St. Augustine was forced to conclude that none of them could ever fully satisfy the need of his soul. The void in himself could not be filled by anything or even by everything.

All things have been made by God and all things are good and, therefore, desirable. None of these are desirable as an end in themselves, but only as a means to a greater love of God. Our mistake is in

believing that these things can satisfy our hearts or that we can find our fulfillment in loving them. St. Augustine speaks in his Confessions of the death of his youthful friend. This death was exceedingly painful to Augustine because he dearly loved his friend. It was as if half of his own self had died. All the world became bitter to him because his friend was not there. St. Augustine tells us that his fault was not in loving his friend, but in loving him as if he were everlasting – he loved him as if he were God. All created things and persons are unable to fill this void in our souls because our souls were made only for God.

We cannot fill our hearts with ourselves, we cannot fill them with things, and we cannot fill them with other people. If we could gather all of God's creation together, this would still not be enough to satisfy us. All of creation was brought forth from nothing. Our hearts seek that which is eternal. When we love creatures, we love nothingness. When we love God, we love Everything. In turning our hearts to God, we do not lose the material things, but we find that these are all included with the love of God. We love these things in God, for God, with God. The Gospel makes it clear that

when we seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and Its justice, everything else will be given us besides. We need not give our hearts to any one thing because when we give them to God, we love Him and all that is His. Everything is His and it all can be ours if we will only love Him. When we genuinely love God, we find that we love ourselves correctly and we love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Our love extends beyond this to love all of God's creation. It is all good and lovable. Perhaps in St. Francis of Assisi we see this best exemplified. He was a happy and contented person after his conversion. He loved all of God's creation; everyone and everything became to him his brother or sister because we all share the same common Father in Heaven.

This life that we now live in is only a temporary life. It is passing away. We are passing through this world. Either we will soon leave this world, or this world will soon end. In either case, it is not eternal and cannot satisfy our need to love. Yet, this life was given to us so that we may love God and God's Kingdom in Heaven. We have been made by God and for a specific

reason. In this life, we need to understand our purpose and then seek to fulfill it if we are to please Our Creator. We soon discover that we cannot lead ourselves. The man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client. The physician that treats himself has a fool for a patient. We need then a guide that sees and understands much better than we do. There is only one being that sees and understands everything and that is God. In turning to Him for guidance on what to do with the time we are given here on earth, we invariably hear that we are to love Him. We are to seek Him above everything else. When we seek to know His Will and to do His Will because we love Him, we find our hearts are filled with love. There are then, peace and happiness in this life as well as in the next.

Many seek happiness or peace in this life, but these are unattainable without love. There is false peace and false happiness that can deceive and captivate us for a time, but sooner or later we must learn with St. Augustine, that none of these can be obtained outside of God. Within the love of God, we truly obtain Him and everything else.

The grand question we must ask ourselves is the very one

Jesus put to St. Peter: Do we love God? If we genuinely love Him, we live for Him. All that the saints did to arrive at sanctity was to do all for the love of God. We live for His love. We live for Love.

To truly live to love, we must then love to die. We are not to desire complete destruction. That would be contrary to the Will of God because He made us not to annihilate us. This temporary life stands in the way of eternal happiness in loving God in Heaven. Our goal is to get into Heaven, and it is necessary to leave this world in order to enter the next one. This life is given for the progression or development of our hearts so that we may be eternally united to God. As a child might look forward to his birthday so every Catholic ought to look forward to his birthday in eternity when we can close our eyes to this temporary world and open them to an eternal one. The hints or tastes of love here on earth give way upon the death of the saints to Love Itself. Many of the martyrs went peacefully and joyfully to their martyrdom because they truly longed to be dissolved to this world so that they may live eternally in Heaven. As the seed is put in the ground and dies before it

rises again in a new life which produces abundant fruit, so must we die and be buried with Jesus so that we might rise with Him into the eternal glories of Heaven.

We must love and cherish this life that God has given us here on earth, but only with moderation or in all modesty. We should not strive to take our own lives or that of others. Our lives belong only to God and we must leave it to Him to decide when and how we leave this world. Our

suggestion is simply that we should be ready and willing to go to Him when He calls us.

Let us spend the rest of our lives preparing for our death to this world so that we can be as confident as the many martyrs who lovingly left this world so that they could enter the next. May we be able to say with St. Thomas Moore that we have trust and confidence because our love tells us that God cannot refuse one who loves Him so much and is so eager to be with Him.



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MARTHA & MARY

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD



It has been said that the incident recorded in the Bible of Martha being admonished by Jesus for her material solicitations is a cause of conflict for many people. Our earthly duties and obligations are important and should eagerly and joyfully be fulfilled for the love of God. Slothfulness, when there is work to be done, is sinful. Why then is Martha's industry censured, while Mary's physical idleness is praised?

First, we must understand that Mary was not idle as she sat at the feet of Our Lord. Though her body may have been still, her soul was active in receiving and retaining the Word of God. She was filling her soul with Love. Secondly, we know that Martha was anxious about many things. She obviously considered it especially important to have everything done well for God. All that we do should be done for the love of God and we

should always do our best. Jesus was not displeased with this industry, but rather with her placing this physical industry above spiritual industry.

We are instructed to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and Its justice. We need to clean our souls before we need to clean our bodies. The Pharisees kept the outward appearances but were unconcerned with the inner soul. Jesus referred to these as "whited sepulchers." Outwardly all white and clean but inwardly they are filled with death, filth, and decay. We must clean the inside of the cup as well as the outside of the cup. The place to begin is within.

The change or transformation that we desire must begin within our hearts and then progress to the outside physical body or material world. We should strive to get to the heart of the matter first. When we look at the heart of any concern, we will find God

there. Before we begin anything, we should first ask God's help and direction. Therefore, the Morning Offering is important. A day that begins with God is usually a day that goes so much better. There is peace and calm and joy in our hearts even when things do not go as we would like them. With God by our side, we find that nothing else is all that important. It is all good with Jesus by our side. There is no complaint about the weather. Rain or shine, hot or cold, it is accepted and loved because God has sent it. The same with sickness and health, poverty, and riches.

Without Jesus, we find fault in everything. The sun is too hot, the rain is too wet, our health is too poor, etc. Everything is frustrating and unsatisfying. It leaves us anxious or disturbed. Our prayers should come first as well as accompany us throughout the day. Whatever we do for the love of God will be done well, even if it fails in our expectations.

Martha was doing well, but Mary was doing better. The work in the kitchen or around the house is important, but the work of cleaning and feeding our souls essential. This is the one thing that is needed.

When God calls us to prayer or the Mass, we must avoid the temptation to do something else no matter how important it may be. Louise Summerhill wrote: *“Every once in a while I have to discover the decisive importance of prayer in my life, such as, when I find myself missing morning Mass and meditation to do a basket of laundry, missing the time God is asking me to listen to Him before listening to the world. The laundry will always, somehow, get done, but I am not able to re-live those lost moments with God when I have been led by worldly consideration, no matter how worthy, rather than by personal inspiration.”* (The Story of Birthright - An Alternative to Abortion.) Yes, the house and the dishes can wait, but the moment of grace will not wait. As St. Paul might instruct us: “Now is the acceptable time. Now is the hour of grace.” There might be other graces available to us, but the ones that were lost are gone.

God's inspirations are nothing to be scoffed at. When God calls, we must run to Him, and not ask Him to wait a minute. He calls at just the right moment even if we think it is the most inconvenient time. Those who are considering a

religious or priestly vocation are advised to act upon it at once before it is gone. Jesus told the young man to let the dead bury the dead and come and follow Him. There was no time for him to wait for his father to die and bury him. The grace of the vocation was now. This grace can continue and even increase when we are unavoidably impeded from answering God's call until another time, but if nothing is standing in our way, we need to answer God right away. Many saints were prevented by age or circumstances from serving God immediately in the religious or clerical life, but this too was God's Will. The desire burned with ever-increasing intensity in them. Sadly, for many others, grace is lost because they put God off.

We also need to be careful that we do not let imagination and laziness take over. There are many who would like people to believe that they are pious and prayerful when they are actually lazy and are trying to avoid their duties and responsibilities. The preference needs to be given to prayer, but we cannot neglect our physical obligations.

The late Bishop Louis Vezelis, OFM related a story of an orphanage run by religious sisters. A retreat master once encouraged the sisters not to waste the moment of Holy Communion by rushing back into the world, but rather to take some time and truly commune with Our Lord. The next morning, one old sister was left to change, feed, and care for many crying infants while the rest of the sisters remained in the chapel long after Holy Mass had ended. Our prayers must not cause us to neglect our duties. Babies need care, neglecting them in their need is sinful. Our labors, done for the love of God, are prayers in themselves. We can carry Jesus in our hearts as we fulfill many of our daily chores. A brief morning offering may be all that we can do, but this is what we should do. We must not seek to hide our laziness under the guise of piety, nor should we hide our lack of piety under the guise of duty and obligations. Both Martha and Mary are saints and we need to have both in our lives. We need to be faithful in our earthly concerns, but we must first be faithful in our spiritual concerns.

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 NECESSITY OF A CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

The Catholic Church teaches that Catholics are responsible for learning the Catholic Faith. This thought is so simple yet so significant that it can hardly be overstated.

Catholics have lived in all parts of the world. Some have had the luxury of having either Sisters, Priests or Brothers teach their children the Catholic Faith. In past years, many parishes in the United States had schools where children were taught catechism for eight years which was followed up with four years of high school Catholic education. For those who went to college, they could have received a total of sixteen years of Catholic education. When none of this was available, the parents were required to do their best and teach the Faith to their children.

Parents, according to Natural Law, are the first educators. They are the ones who will answer to God for what they teach their children as well as what they neglect to teach them. This is simply why it is said that no Catholic will be able to excuse himself before

God, claiming he did not know. The Church further states that all Catholics are obligated to know the Faith.

The enemies of the Church know well what they were doing when they changed the catechisms in the 1960s and took the Sisters out of the parish schools. They accomplished their diabolical goals in such a manner that generations of Catholics over the past fifty-five years know little or nothing of the One True Faith. Unless parents took the time to educate themselves in the Faith, they were truly the blind leading the blind. This explains why Catholic parents are too often little more than baptized pagans.

Too often Catholic homes know little of Catholic customs or practices. How many families pray together each day? How often do parents sit and discuss what the children are learning in their religion class? Do parents remind their children about the Friday abstinence or Ember Days? Do parents make sure the children are saying their morning and

evening prayers? How often is the father monitoring the modesty of his family?

When the religion class is taught in a school setting it should not be considered just another subject. This is yet another mistake made by both parents and teachers. Learning the Faith in a school environment was, and still is, setting the foundation for solid knowledge and practice of the Faith. The Faith is who we are. It determines how you think, how you act, who your friends are, and affects all major decisions in one's life. In a spiritual sense, it is your DNA. Yes, one's faith ought to be at the very center of one's life. All else should be secondary.

For many years, the clergy have either conducted or have had the laity teach weekly classes to the youth. These classes are quite necessary to teach the youth the basics in the Faith. They are not ideal. One hour a week is not really sufficient to teach the Faith well. If the child is attentive, he will learn the fundamentals, but there is so much that is missing. One hour a week does not compare with a class five days a week. It would be ideal to ask the parents to supplement the work in the

weekly or daily class, but this rarely happens. The desired destruction of the Faith by the enemies of the Church within its very structure has decimated the proper knowledge of the Faith among adults. Added to this is the lack of motivation of too many parents. Daily attention to the children in matters of Faith seems too often to take a backseat to sports, dance lessons, music lessons or other worldly distractions. One is grateful if the children say their nightly prayers faithfully.

Then there is the matter of vocations. After making observations of family life for several years, one concludes there are so few religious/clerical vocations because the family environment is less than ideal. The focus of the parents is too worldly and there is too little time spent on discussing the Mass, Sacraments, current religion class topics, etc.

It is assumed that parents have little trouble discussing a child's academic future and goals. How often do they present to their children the most important question of their youth? What is God's Will for me? Do I need to change my course in life to live according to God's Will and not my own?

The world promotes selfishness and hedonism. Many children grow up believing the way to success is to do whatever they want in life and God apparently will be pleased with their decision. Nothing could be further from the truth. Materialism and liberalism have engulfed the world for many years. Children are taught to be materialistic and too often this promotes selfishness that is spiritually harmful to the individual and has its effect upon those near to him. Taken to the extreme, the person becomes quite hedonistic. This sinful paganism has permeated the world in such a way that few families can escape its insidious claws.

When parents push children to succeed at all costs in some human endeavor, they are teaching them that this "interest" is the most important thing in the child's life. How often have I witnessed parents unwittingly "encourage" them down a path which costs the child his salvation? How often has the selfishness of the parents cost the child eternal life?

This is not to be misunderstood. God has given each child a set of talents. He expects the youth to make use of these gifts for His glory. Herein lies the key to properly

raising children with the correct supernatural attitude. Yes, the child may pursue a profession, trade, or technical field. He should do it, though, keeping in mind to give glory to God as he follows God's Holy Will.

How many families pray for religious vocations among the children? How often do parents discuss religious vocations with their Catholic children? Do parents provide a child with a book or pamphlet about vocations? Do parents teach the child that not all are meant to marry? When a mother "encourages" a daughter to have a boyfriend when she is not so inclined to do so, she makes a grave mistake. Worse yet, when the mother allows or encourages immodesty, especially among her daughters, she may be sending her children to Hell. If this sounds extreme look at the many women who lived a sinful life because of the bad example of their mothers. Yes, some daughters realize the sinfulness of their actions and change their lives, but how many are courageous enough to do this? Once the seed is planted, it becomes increasingly difficult to uproot sinful habits.

Catholic parents must take it upon themselves to educate

(catechize) their children. Their first concern must be the eternal salvation of their children. All else is secondary. It has been seen that too many Catholic parents do not have their priorities in order. Passing on their worldly ways and sinful habits is the wrong example and the worst kind of legacy for Catholic parents.

If parents wish to truly fulfill their Catholic responsibilities,

they will raise their children to become saints. The greatest gift parents can give their children is the One True Faith. This is true education. This is true knowledge. Children should be taught to always follow God's Holy Will, but the parents need to be their good example and do the same first.



WHAT IS IT THAT SECURES HAPPINESS IN A HOME?

Before everything religion. Let all love well Our good God; let all observe the commandments of God and the Church; let all say their prayers morning and night, let all put trust in Divine Providence. In the next place, union: let the members of the household be affectionate toward one another, having only one heart and one soul, not saying or doing anything that can pain any one of them. Then again, the spirit of sacrifice; we must be ready to do without something in order to make another member of the family enjoy it, we must give up our own personal tastes to conform to the tastes of others. Finally, pliancy of character; not to be hard to deal with, touchy, sour, proud; not to be obstinately rooted in one's ideas, not to grow impatient about mere nothings, but to have a large mind and a generous heart. The home of a family whose members possess these qualities is a paradise on earth.

~RUSSELL, *The Art of Being Happy*

THE LITURGICAL YEAR WITH ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

THE LITURGY OF THE DEAD

“Prayer for the dead has kept in Christian hearts the place that it has always occupied in the Church. It is the very expression of Christian hope, full of the conviction of immortality.” - (St. Andrew’s Daily Missal by Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B. — Introduction to the Liturgy of the Dead)

Our Holy Father St. Francis not only lived a life of charity towards the living but also towards the faithful departed. This devotion did not have a morbid tone to it, nor did it instill fear in the heart of St. Francis. Did he fear death? We can safely say he did not; the only thing he feared was offending God with his sins. This man who totally conformed himself to Christ, so much so as to be called the “Mirror Christ,” did not presume anything. Where there is no presumption, we find true Christian hope! It is by Christian hope that we trust that God will make good on His promises. Our Lord said that if anyone profess Him

before men, He will in turn profess that individual before His Father in Heaven. This promise is made good when we die. Christian hope filled St. Francis’ soul so much at the moment of his own death, that he was able to embrace it with joy. He was no longer a pilgrim on the earth, but now the Troubadour of Christ in Heaven!

Christian hope, which is the same as theological hope, gives us Catholics many spiritual comforts. A great comfort is the knowledge that as long as we do not die in the state of mortal sin we will not go to Hell. Of course, along with this, we must accept the reality that if we still have any venial sins remaining or the stains left over from sins already forgiven, that we must go to Purgatory to be purified. This purification is necessary, as we are told in Sacred Scripture: *“There shall not enter into it anything defiled, or that works abomination or makes a lie, but who are written in the book of Life of the Lamb.” (Apoc. 21, 27)*

The souls in Purgatory do not need hope for they know their fate, but what they have is a longing. They long to be united with God and to have the end of their suffering. It is interesting to consider that even though the souls in Purgatory are suffering, a suffering comparable to that of Hell, they are not complaining. They are united to the Divine Will and see clearly the justice of God. They want to be purified, so that they may be more like unto Him. Even though the suffering within the spiritual fire of Purgatory is almost indescribable, it is the longing to be with God which is most unbearable. Their hearts are ready, should not ours be ready to help them?

As individuals there are four ways that we can help the Poor Souls: 1) by prayer, 2) by gaining indulgences for them, 3) by our penances, and 4) by having Masses said for them. We should do all in our power to implement the first three things into our daily lives, and we should have Masses said for the Poor Souls as frequently as possible.

**HOW DOES THE CHURCH
ITSELF, WITHIN THE
LITURGICAL YEAR, PRAY FOR
THE DEAD?**

*“For the faithful departed, who almost all in leaving this world still stand in need of purification, the Church, as their mother, does not cease to pray. Every **Hour of Divine Office** concluded by a prayer in their behalf. At the Offertory of the Mass, in offering the host, the priest recalls that it is for the living and for the dead that he celebrates Mass, and at the very heart of the Mass, in a special **Memento of the Canon**, he recommends to God all those who are “asleep in Christ.” (taken from **St. Andrew’s Daily Missal** by Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B. – Introduction to the Liturgy of the Dead)*

Along with those mentioned above, there are other times when the Church remembers the faithful departed within her Liturgy. Examples are *Catholic Burial Services, Requiem Masses, and Votive Masses for the Dead*, but the most well-known is *All Soul’s Day (November 2nd)*. This is the yearly commemoration of all those souls who departed from this life in God’s grace but are still detained in Purgatory. When exactly this practice began we are not certain, but we do know that as early as the 2nd century Tertullian mentions a yearly

commemoration of the dead. It was towards the end of the 10th century that St. Odo, abbot of the Benedictines, at Cluny directed that this commemoration should be kept on November 2nd and by all the houses of the Order. By the 13th century, it was extended to the entire Christian Church. In the year 1915 Pope Benedict XV granted all the priests in the world permission to celebrate three Requiem Masses on Poor Soul's Day, so that the Poor Souls may receive more supernatural aid.

In his *Rule*, St. Francis instructed his brethren to pray for the dead: "*Clerics shall recite the Divine Office according to the order of the Holy Roman Church, except the psalter; wherefore they may have breviaries. But laics shall say twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins, five for Lauds, for Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None for each of these seven; for Vespers however twelve; for Compline seven; and let them pray for the dead.*" (*The Rule of the Friars Minor Chapter 3*)

You may recall in a previous article how St. Francis imitated the infrastructure of the Church when establishing the hierarchy within his Order. Here again, the Franciscan Order follows

the Church's example in praying for her deceased members. In imitation of *All Saints Day*, we celebrate on November 29th the feast of *All the Saints of the Seraphic Order* (*When this feast falls on the First Sunday of Advent it is then transferred to Tuesday, December 1st*) and in imitation of *All Soul's Day* we have the *Commemoration of all the Dead of the Three Orders of St. Francis* (our *Poor Soul's Day*), and it is kept on the day following. On this day the Office of the Dead is said and a *Requiem Mass* is celebrated. We take special care on this day to pray for all of our departed brothers and sister who have not been beatified or canonized, whether we personally know them or not. While this day stands out in our Franciscan Calendar this is not the only time we commemorate our dead. We maintain a wonderful custom which probably has been practiced by every religious order, that is, the *General Office for the Dead*. This custom most likely originated with the Benedictine Monks of Cluny around the time of St. Odo at the end of the 10th century, but I do not know this for certain. Four times during the calendar year we recite the *Office of the Dead* and celebrate votive *Requiem Masses*. They are separated by

the four seasons, one for each season. They are not said on days where there is a *Feast Day* but only take place on a *ferial day*. Three of these *General Office of the Dead* are said for *all the brethren, sisters, relatives, and benefactors of the Order*, and the fourth one is said for *the parents of all the brethren and sisters of the Order*.

In all of this, we are reminded of the fraternal charity, the Seraphic charity, we are supposed to have for one another! Let us take to heart, with Our Holy Father St. Francis, those immortal words of Sacred Scripture: *“It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed*

from their sins.” (2 *Machabees* 12: 46)

We have come to the end of this year-long series of articles about St. Francis and the Liturgical Year. I am reminded what Our Holy Father said to the brothers just before his death: *“I have done what is mine to do...now you must do what is yours.”* It is mine to instruct and I hope and pray that these articles have provided you with not only information but more importantly inspiration. The inspiration to start living out the Liturgical Year in your own lives, which is the same as living a life following in Our Lord Jesus’ footsteps.

Pax et Bonum!



“Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received - only what you have given: a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage. “

~St. Francis of Assisi

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Lubbock, Texas 79408

The Cherub is published quarterly by the Third Order of St. Francis.
Suggested donation—\$15.00 per year.



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ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

An Autobiography

CHAPTER FOUR

FIRST COMMUNION

The three months' preparation for my First Communion passed quickly; the time came for my retreat, and during it I stayed at the Abbey. What days of grace! I do not think such joys can be experienced outside a religious house; the number of children being comparatively small, each one can receive individual care. It is in a spirit of the deepest gratitude that I speak here of the true motherly affection our mistresses showed us; though I do not know why, it was nevertheless plain that they watched over me even more carefully than over my companions.

Every night, the first mistress, her little lamp in hand, softly drew aside my bed curtains and kissed me tenderly. She showed me such affection that, touched by her kindness, I said to her one night: "Mother, I love you so much that I am going to tell you a great secret." I then took from under my pillow the precious book you had given me and handed it to her. She opened it

with care, and, looking through it attentively, told me how privileged I was. Several times during the retreat, the truth came home to me that very few motherless children are as affectionately dealt with as I was then.

I followed most closely Father Domin's instructions, taking copious notes. As for my own thoughts, I did not put any of them in writing, for I knew I should remember them quite well. And so, it proved.

With what delight I followed the Divine Office, just as the nuns did! I was noticeable among my companions by a large crucifix, which, like the missionaries, I carried in my belt. The crucifix had been given me by Leonie, and it was thought that in wearing it as I did, I was simply imitating my Carmelite sister. And certainly, my heart was often in Carmel with my dear little Mother. I knew you were also in retreat, not to prepare for Jesus to give Himself to you, but to make ready to give yourself entirely to Him, and

that on my First Communion Day. This time of quiet waiting was therefore doubly dear to me.

At last there dawned the most beautiful day of all the days of my life. How perfectly I remember even the smallest details of those sacred hours! The joyful awakening, the reverent and tender embraces of my mistresses and older companions, the room filled with white frocks, like so many snowflakes, where each child was dressed in turn, and, above all, our entrance into the chapel and the melody of the morning hymn: "O Altar of God, where the Angels are hovering."

But I would not, and I could not tell you all. Some things lose their fragrance when exposed to the air, and one's innermost thoughts cannot be translated into earthly words without instantly losing their deep and heavenly meaning. How sweet was the first embrace of Jesus! It was indeed an embrace of love. I felt that I was loved, and I said: "I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee forever." Jesus asked nothing of me, and claimed no sacrifice; for a long time, He and little Thérèse had known and understood one another. That

day our meeting was more than simple recognition, it was perfect union. We were no longer two. Thérèse had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the immensity of the ocean; Jesus alone remained — He was the Master, the King. Had not Thérèse asked Him to take away the liberty which frightened her? She felt herself so weak and frail, that she wished to be forever united to the Divine Strength.

And then my joy became so intense, so deep, that it could not be restrained; tears of happiness welled up and overflowed. My companions were astonished, and asked each other afterwards: "Why did she cry? Had she anything on her conscience? . . . No, it is because she has not her Mother here, or the Carmelite sister of whom she is so fond." And no one understood that all the joy of Heaven had come down into one heart, and that that heart — exiled, weak, and mortal — could not contain it without tears.

How could our darling Mother's absence grieve me? Since Heaven itself dwelt in my soul, in receiving the visit of Jesus I received one from her as well. Nor were my tears

due to your being away, for we were even more closely united than before. No, I repeat it — joy alone, a joy too deep for words, overflowed within me.

In the afternoon, I read the Act of Consecration to Our Lady in the name of all the First Communicants. Probably the choice fell upon me because my own earthly Mother had been taken from me while I was still so young. I put my whole heart into the reading of the prayer and besought Our Blessed Lady always to watch over me. It seemed to me that she looked down lovingly, and once more smiled on her Little Flower.

I recalled the visible smile which had cured me, and my heart was full of all I now owed her, for it was no other than she who, on that very May morning, had placed in the garden of my soul her Son Jesus — “the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valleys.”¹

When evening came the little Queen walked hand in hand with Papa to Carmel, where I saw you, my beloved Pauline, now become the spouse of Christ and, like me, wearing a

white veil and a crown of roses. My happiness was without alloy, for I hoped soon to join you and at your side to wait for Heaven.

I was not indifferent to the feast prepared at home, and I was charmed with the watch presented to me by Papa. But my joy was a tranquil joy. No exterior thing could interfere with the inward peace of my soul. At last, night fell, bringing to a close that beautiful day. For even the brightest days are followed by darkness; one alone can have no setting — the day of the eternal Communion in our only true Home. The morrow seemed veiled in melancholy. The pretty clothes, the presents I had received, did not satisfy me. Henceforth Our Lord alone could fill my heart, and I longed only for the blissful moment when I should receive Him again.

I made my second Communion on Ascension Day, and I had the pleasure of kneeling at the rails between Papa and Marie. My tears flowed with inexpressible sweetness, while I recalled and repeated again and again the words of St. Paul: — “*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*”² After the second visit of Our Lord, my one desire was for Holy

¹*Canticles 2:1*

²*Galatians 2:20*

Communion, which was allowed to me on all the great feasts. Alas! how far apart they seemed!

On the eve of those happy days, Marie helped me to prepare, just as she had done for my First Communion. Once, I remember, she spoke of suffering, and said that in all probability, instead of making me walk by that road, God, in His goodness, would carry me always like a little child. The following day, after Communion, these words came back to me, bringing with them an ardent desire for suffering, as well as a conviction that I should have many a cross to bear. Then a wave of consolation swept over my soul — of such consolation as in all my life I have never known. Suffering became my treasure. I found in it charms that held me spellbound, though as yet I did not appreciate it to the full.

I had one other great wish: to love God only and to find my joy in Him alone. During my thanksgiving after Holy Communion, I often repeated this passage from the Imitation of Christ: “*O my God, who art*

unspeakable sweetness, turn for me into bitterness all the consolations of earth.”¹ These words rose to my lips naturally. I said them like a child who, without quite understanding, repeats what a friend may suggest. Later on, dear Mother, I will tell you how Our Lord has been pleased to fulfil my desire; how He, and He alone, has always been my joy. Were I to speak of it now, I should have to pass on to my girlhood, and there is still much to tell you of my earlier days.



¹*Imitation of Christ, Ch. 26:3*

To Be Continued

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 THREE

The Practice of Abandonment

CHAPTER ONE

The Life of Love



Article 1

Mutual love between Jesus and the soul

When the soul has surrendered herself, Jesus gives Himself in His turn. It is the law of all friendship, and there is no other such friend as Jesus.

The gift of the Divine Master is supernatural, even more supernatural than the soul's gift. It generally escapes the senses; reason can catch only a glimpse of it. Faith is certain of it; the pure heart, by a delicate attention on the part of Jesus, often experiences it with ineffable delight.

However, this pleasure constitutes neither its reality nor its value; for the pleasure is only the perfume of the celestial balm which envelops

and penetrates all the faculties of the soul.

As the heart gives itself completely, so God does not disdain to communicate Himself entirely. The Three Adorable Persons of the Holy Trinity come to dwell in the soul, infusing the gift of sanctifying grace which lifts the soul even unto God. This grace makes her the adopted daughter of the Father, the sister of Jesus, the spouse of the Holy Spirit. It makes her a sharer in the Divine Nature, heiress of the beatitude and the Kingdom of God.

One act of real surrender on the part of the soul has elicited this admirable generosity on the part of God; each new act, however fleeting and weak it be, will be followed by a new

outpouring of the Divinity upon the faithful soul.

The more she tries to give herself, the more Jesus, in turn, is pleased to be possessed by her. There is emulation, a contest of love. Jesus, being the richer and more faithful, always wins in generosity.

Moreover, He incites the soul to give herself. When she grows languid, He wounds her heart with love's arrow, and the soul is thrilled. When her ardor is lessening, Jesus casts upon her a spark of His Divine flame, and the soul is on fire.

Poor Jesus! What skill He must employ to keep our love active! Sometimes He touches our hearts, cradles us in His Arms. We imagine that this is a reward for our fidelity. Very often it is done only that we may escape a danger, avoid a fall, or be filled with aversion for the things of the world.

Sometimes He suspends His action. The divine life-stream in our veins seems rudely arrested. The soul is sad and disturbed. She believes that Jesus has gone, that He has fled from her. He has not abandoned her. He has only retired to the depths of the soul; He calls her from the senses to the interior; He causes her to enter into the cellar that He may set in order

charity within her by purifying her love from all alloy. Then Jesus is able to communicate Himself still more and to satisfy His need of giving.

For He feels this need. He desires hearts that are empty of self, for He would fill them with charity. He is an inexhaustible stream that seeks an abyss in order to be engulfed. He is a treasure that desires a field in which to be securely buried.

God is Goodness; His nature forces Him to communicate Himself. He is Charity; His Heart urges Him to set others aflame. He has come to cast fire upon the earth; and what can He desire, save that it be kindled?

O soul that art totally surrendered, between Jesus and thee there will henceforth be only one act, the gift of self. This act of love makes thee entirely His and makes Him entirely thine. Forget all else upon the earth. Drink long draughts of love; satiate thyself with thy God. Thy lips are pressed to His Divine Side: *ad ubera portabimini*.* From thence thou shalt draw life; there thou shalt be inebriated with love.

How happy art thou, child of the King! *Super genua blandientur*.* No longer look

toward earth; thou art too noble, too great, too rich. Thou art seated at the table of the King of kings; thou mayest walk in His domains, which are all thine.

**Ad ubera portabimini; super genua blandientur (Isaias 66:12).* You shall be carried at the breasts; upon the knees they shall caress you.

Article 2

The delicious meeting of Jesus and the soul in Holy Communion

The Most Holy Trinity makes the gift of Self to the loving soul. With this gift all treasures enter the soul and remain there. But this is so spiritual, so highly elevated above the senses; and alas, man lives so much in the world of things that may be perceived!

Jesus has found a way of overcoming this obstacle and of giving Himself even more completely. This altogether ineffable means is the Eucharist. How very tender is the Heart of Our Divine Master, to have thought of the Eucharist! How He must have shuddered at the inconceivable neglect to which He would be subjected in our Tabernacles! But, too, how He must have thrilled with joy as He foresaw

the souls that would be made happy by His Eucharistic love, even unto the end of ages!

O Jesus, what should we be without Thee, without Thy Real Presence? What a dreary, empty existence would be ours! In hours of weariness, where could we find repose? In moments of sadness, where could we look for consolation? And when dark melancholy, or homesickness for the distant heavenly Fatherland, came to torment us, where could we turn, without the Eucharist?

Oh, mayest Thou be blessed a thousand times, for giving Thyself to us in a manner so ineffable — we might say, so human, and so accessible to our poor hearts!

Thou dost share all our pain and all our joy. At every moment, our souls pour themselves out into Thy Heart. Each morning Thou comest to dwell within us, and, in a manner, Thou dost assimilate our flesh and our blood, dost mingle Thy Sacred Body with our clay and cause Thy Divine Blood to flow in our veins. Oh, marvelous and fruitful union in which Thy Heart purifies, transforms and divinizes ours!

O white Host! What intimate consolations Thou dost pour into souls; what ineffable

caresses Thou bestowest upon the children of men, to reward them, compensate, strengthen or forearm them! What acts of devotion, of heroism, Thou art continually inspiring!

Fervent Christian in the world, the object of sarcasm and of persecution, go to receive thy God in the Holy Eucharist, and thou shalt be strong. Thou shalt be enabled to face those who ridicule thee, to meet difficulty boldly in times of turmoil and vexation, that thou mayest extend the kingdom of thy beloved Christ.

Sister of Charity, always at the bedside of the sick, looking upon hideous wounds, frightful ulcers, repulsive maladies, first approach thy Jesus and receive Him with holy eagerness. Then, joyous and strong, continue thine admirable life of immolation for the love of the Master Whom thou bearest in thy heart.

Zealous Priest, intrepid missionary, in the midst of thine apostolic labors, far from those thou lovest and hast left, thou who art isolated, amidst the indifferent and unbelieving ones of this world, a prey to difficulties, anxieties, and contradictions of all kinds, remember that, each morning, at thy voice, Jesus comes down into thy consecrated

hands, to be given by thee to souls that are athirst for Him—and thou shalt be courageous and unwearied in thy work.

And thou, beloved soul, whoever thou art, ignored and hidden from the eyes of the world, bound to a hard and painful task, lift thine eyes to the Tabernacle. In hours of sadness, let it be thy refuge. Jesus is there for thee. When He instituted His Sacrament, His Divine Eye discerned thee — thee, among all souls. His Heart was touched at the sight of thy sufferings. Now that thou art here before Him, approach without fear. Thou hast a right to come for strength and consolation. Jesus knows thee and loves thee.

O Divine Friend of our souls! We adore Thee respectfully, and we love Thee ardently. We bow before Thee with reverence, and we embrace Thee with tenderness. At the sight of Thy Greatness and our nothingness, we humbly prostrate ourselves at Thy Feet. Confidently we lean our heads upon Thy Sacred Heart, for Thou art the Friend of our souls, our beloved Brother. O Jesus, we have given Thee our all! In return, we possess Thee entirely.



FRANCISCAN SAINTS

NOVEMBER 14TH

The Servant of God

Mary Chappotin of the Passion

Virgin, Third Order

Nantes in France is the native city of this religious foundress, who did so much for the foreign missions. She was born there in 1839. The Franciscan spirit of poverty and humility was evident in her at a very early age. It induced her to lay aside her expensive clothing, and in company with several associates, she donned the garments of the poor. Together they begged for their livelihood.

After overcoming many obstacles, Mary joined the Sisters of St. Mary, and was sent to India. Having labored with great success among the heathens there. Providence directed her to Rome. There at the bidding of Pope Pius IX, she called the congregation of the Missionaries of Mary into being. As a result of arrangements with the minister general of the

Franciscan Order, her foundation was affiliated with the Third Order of St. Francis and took the name of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

Truly Franciscan in spirit, the foundress urged her sisters to offer themselves as victims for the Church and for souls, to honor the Blessed Sacrament and the Immaculate Mother of God in a very special way, and in the heathen missions to employ their resources for the salvation of souls. With real Franciscan charity she devoted herself to the care of the lepers.

At her death in 1904, the congregation numbered eighty-six houses in all parts of the world. She was extremely happy when the news was conveyed to her in 1900 that seven sisters had been martyred for the Faith in China. She considered this the baptism of blood for her

congregation. On one occasion she made this statement: "I wish I had two lives: one with which I could always pray, the other, with which to perform all the duties God imposes on me." A cardinal once said: "Her very presence is somehow a power and an inspiration. Her example, her gifts and virtues are a continual lesson. Her maternal heart is a safe refuge for her daughters."

In the jubilee year of the Immaculate Conception, Mary passed on to the eternal vision of God. God glorified her with many signs and wonders shortly after her death, and so urgent were the petitions of her clients that the process of her beatification was soon introduced.

ON IMITATING MARY

1.) The Blessed Virgin Mary may well serve as our leader. The servant of God Mother Mary learned this by experience. She rose to virtue and saintliness by following in the footsteps of our dear Lady. The Blessed Virgin has given us an example in all the virtues we need to get to heaven. She proved her humble faith in the stable of Bethlehem and on the journey to Egypt. She

showed thoughtful charity on her visit to Elizabeth and at the wedding feast at Cana. We behold her unwavering patience amid suffering as she stands underneath the cross of Jesus. And sin had no part in her. With good reason Holy Church places on her lips the words: "Blessed is the man that heareth me" (*Prov. 8:34*). — Cling to Mary, and you will not go astray.

2.) We should put all our trust in imitating Mary. Let us take pleasure in honoring her in our hearts with frequent little acts of piety. In our external conduct, let us imitate her faith, her charity, her patience and her purity. Let us not only sing hymns of devotion to her but let us live so that we may never afflict her or cause her to be ashamed of us. We should make our words and actions co-operate in fulfilling the prophecy: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (*Luke 1:48*). — How practical is your veneration of the Mother of God?

3.) Fear may well form part of our veneration of Mary. We should fear to love her too little, especially since

everything we do for the love of the Mother of God reflects on her Divine Son. We should fear to be separated from Mary, which happens if we commit sin. May the words which Holy Mother Church places on the lips of the Blessed Virgin ever resound in our hearts: “He

that shall find me shall find life and shall have salvation from the Lord. But he that shall sin against me, shall hurt his own soul” (*Prov. 8:35, 36*). — Let us be mindful of the words of Holy Writ: “We follow thee with all our heart, and we fear thee” (*Dan. 3:41*).



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that we Thy servants may evermore enjoy health of mind and body, and at the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin be delivered from present sorrows and enjoy everlasting gladness. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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THE GREATEST TREASURE

Reverend L. Chiavarino



CHAPTER XX

LET US NOT GIVE UP TO SATAN THE FRUITS OF THE MASS

People who waste their time at Mass in gossiping or in continued and willful distractions lose the merit which they might obtain. In a book of devout anecdotes, a story is told of a woman who wished to obtain a certain grace from God. She therefore promised to attend a great number of Masses during the course of the year. Whenever she heard the church bell, she would immediately interrupt her work in order to go to church, even though the weather was bad. In order to keep an account of the Masses she had heard, she prepared a bag, and every time she heard Mass she dropped a bean into the bag. At the end of the year, she went, in great happiness

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and contentment, to open the bag; to her astonishment, it was empty. Stupefied and grieved, she told the story to her confessor. He asked in what manner she had assisted at Mass, and whether she had heard each of the Masses with attentive devotion. The woman had to admit that she was accustomed to chatter and jest on her way to church, and that when in church she had often spoken to one or another of her friends, and, above all, that her mind had been continually absorbed by thoughts of home cares.

“You, yourself, have expressed the reason why you lost the merit attached to the Masses you heard,” said the priest. “You have yielded up

to Satan their fruit. God wants you to understand by the disappearance of the beans that good works are lost unless they are done well."

Who knows, dear reader, how many Masses we have lost, who knows how many graces we have yielded up to the devil, because of gossip and willful distractions? Can we complain that God does not listen to us, if we, on our part, do not give Him the attention which is His due?

One of these Christians who never pray, once complained to a holy religious that God never did him any favors. In order to teach the man a lesson the religious said:

"Take this basket and fill it with water for me."

"But, surely, Father, you are joking. How do you expect me to carry water in a basket?"

"And how do you expect the Lord to grant you favors if you never ask for them?"

When we go to church let us take as much care as we would take going to fetch water; let us carry with us not a basket open to distractions and indifference, but rather a large bucket closed on its sides by firm walls of prayer and devotion in order that the graces of God may be

contained within it. Prayer has a value in proportion to the fervor with which we pray.

A certain devout religious was praying in a church where the faithful were gathered. He suddenly became aware of the presence of angels in the church, and he saw that they were intently writing in beautiful books. His astonishment was great, but it increased when he discovered that some wrote letters of gold, some letters of silver, others were using ordinary ink, while still others wrote in water.

He was made to understand that the reason for the different manner of writing was to be ascribed to the degree of devotion with which the different people prayed. "We write," said one of the angels, "according to the devotion of everyone: — in letters of gold we record the prayers of the fervent souls, in letters of silver those of the less fervent; in ink those of the tepid souls, and, as for the prayers of those who have no devotion, they are written in water."

Let us resolve that from this time forth our prayers will deserve to be recorded in letters of gold: then we may rest assured that they shall be answered.

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