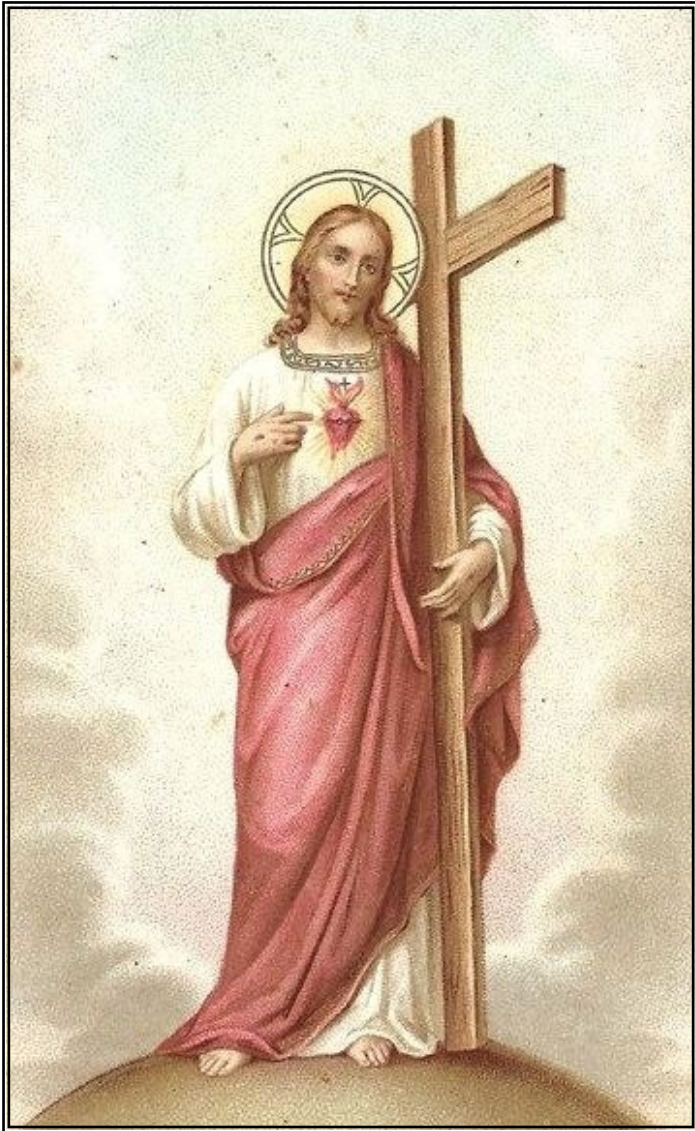


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The **SERAPH** seeks to serve and unite in spirit all Roman Catholics, faithful to tradition, and all men of good will, for the betterment of society according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi.

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

VIRTUAL REALITY

Bishop Giles, OFM DD

Our modern culture today has turned reality upside down. Society is putting pressure upon us to accept delusions or fantasies as reality. The feminist movement wishes us to believe that men and women are equal. This is very far from the truth. We do not need a college degree in biology, anatomy, psychology, or any other science to see that God has created the human race as male and female. Reason shows us that we are not created to compete but rather to complement one another. Women were not created to do all men do, and men were not created to do all that women do. True beauty is found when the diversity of humanity joins together as one. Each part of a machine is different from the others, but when they remain in their proper place and perform their true task, the entire machine works well and harmoniously. In society, we each have different roles to perform.

Adding more confusion to the mix, there are elements in society trying to convince us that there is an infinity of variations between the two sexes.

This is another angle of assault upon the complementariness and harmony of the two sexes created by God. The fantasies or illusions of non-conforming personalities tear away at the unity and harmony of God's design. They vainly assault His design of male and female. They assault this complementariness to cooperate with God to create new life to populate Heaven with saints.

There is no denying that there are variations of masculinity and femininity. Some men possess a more gentlemanly masculinity, and others have a more brutish or crude masculinity. Some women possess a very fair or gentle femininity, and others possess a very strong and even rugged femininity. Between either extreme, there is room for many degrees or variations. These variations of masculinity and femininity do not deny the fact that there are biologically only two sexes – male and female.

There appear to be two opposite and opposing positions or theories, but both aim against one essential thing – Truth. To posit an infinite range of genders or sexes or deny all dif-

ferences attacks truth and reality. Because God is the author of Truth, this attack upon truth is an attack upon God. These fashionable positions are atheistic at their core.

To emasculate men or masculinate women is an insult to God. The hormonal or mechanical means to destroy what God has created is a demonic insult. It is as if to say that God does not know what He is doing or got it wrong. In the least, it suggests that we know better than God. If we take this to its logical conclusion, then we end in demonic atheism or with Pagan god(s) that are fallible, imperfect, or weak.

There is a logical progression of degradation if we care to look a little deeper. Indeed, correlation is not necessarily causation, but it is hard to deny the gradual progression from bad to worse. While it may not be direct causation, it at least prepares society to become more accepting of greater evils. The boundary of risqué is gradually pushed further and further into the dark realm of the demonic. What is happening and has happened is very similar to the political principles we find in promoting Communism – “dialectic dualism” – or “two steps forward, then one step back-

ward.” The extreme evil is presented then when shock settles into society, the fashions pull back just a little – not to the original position, but just a little closer to the evil than had initially been the case. In this manner, fashions and society gradually move from bad to worse, and then to worst.

The shock of the original evil hardens us or makes us insensitive to lesser evils. The sexual degradation can be seen in this light. There is a logical progression from fornication, adultery, divorce, contraceptives, abortion, and homosexuality. The following generations grow to become indifferent or callous to these sins. So, the devils pushed the envelope a little further into the dark with “cross-dressing,” then transsexuality with all its assaults upon bodily chemistry and anatomy. The demons push us to either deny the distinctions God has created or seek to develop endless differences that render all distinctions meaningless.

In another realm, we see a fashion of establishing group or collective guilt. “Intellectuals” teaching in our colleges and universities are actively indoctrinating our children into condemning all Western culture and development. His-

tory must be rewritten, and all development needs to be condemned and undone. Western (Catholic/Christian) progress is taught to be evil and must be condemned. There is no need to read or study Western literature, art, or science. Biological science must be ignored and destroyed because it undeniably shows only two sexes – male and female. The only possible reproduction in humans and all mammalian creatures is accomplished by the sexual union of distinctly male and female.

Western culture is blamed for every injustice that modern fashion perceives or imagines. How many times do we hear of the evil of the German Nazis and that Adolf Hitler was an Altar Boy in the Catholic Church? What was the crime of the Nazis? They established and acted upon the concept of collective guilt. The Nazis blamed entire groups of people for the evils that the Germans were experiencing. We cannot help but wonder if today's fashion and "politically correct" mores are any different from Germany's Nazi and pre-Nazi eras.

Our free speech rights cause us to allow the dissident and immoral voices to be heard, but strangely the moral majority has not felt the need to

speaking the truth. We assume that the truth is self-evident and needs no explanation or defense. We believe that common sense is common. Society is teaching us that such assumptions are wrong.

The promoters of these evils only believe in free speech when it permits them to promote their perversities. They do not want to allow or even hear any condemnation of their perversions. History, literature, and art must all be redone (destroyed) to allow the reign of devils to rise to apocalyptic proportions. They seem to believe that the rule of Jesus Christ has failed when they have never really given it a chance. Therefore, the reign of Satan is their solution. Society has failed to rise to the heights held out for us by Jesus Christ, and so it has turned instead to Satan as the ultimate solution.

The Catholic/Christian world has, on many levels (individually to societally), failed to cooperate with the graces God has showered upon us. The devils hold out an easier path in this life that promises utopias that will only end in dystopia. They can offer us pleasures on an animalistic level, but true happiness and joy they can never deliver. They cause confusion in us

between pleasure and happiness. They promise happiness but can only deliver momentary pleasures. We are promised peace, but it is a peace in slavery and suffering.

We must not allow ourselves to fall for these demonic lies. There is no peace in denying truth and reality; there is only slavery and eternal death. Standing up and speaking out for truth and reality is not

easy, and it may cost us dearly, but it will end in freedom and eternal life. This is what Jesus is telling us when He invites us to deny ourselves, take up our daily crosses and follow Him. The cross is death to this world; it is bitter and burdensome, but He will make it light and sweet when we carry it out of love for Him. In the end, our cross will lead us into eternal happiness, light, love, and life.



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LAICISM IN THE VATICAN

Bishop Giles, OFM DD

For many years, THE SERAPH has pointed out that the Vatican and most once Catholic places and properties have been taken over or usurped by the Modernist Church. The man alleging to be and commonly accepted as “the Pope” is not Catholic and therefore can hold no position in the true Catholic Church. The Modernist Church insists that it is the Catholic Church. Still, to honest observers, it is clear that this “Church” and its leaders hold a very different doctrinal position than the Catholic Church holds and has held previous to the alleged “Vatican II Council.” The Modernist Vatican II Church is more in line with mainstream Protestantism than true Catholicism.

Mainstream Protestantism denies the need for the hierarchy and the priesthood. It is becoming ever more self-evident that the Modernist Vatican II Church, likewise, negates the need for the Sacramental priesthood and Apostolic power and authority to govern the Church. This Pentecost is the date scheduled for significant changes in the

“Roman Curia.” It is a complete restructuring of the various congregations. An almost wholly overlooked point that we should consider is that the heads of these new offices are open to the laity and are not reserved for bishops with Apostolic Authority or even reserved for priests but are available to be headed by any qualified baptized person (male or female). This is very Protestant sounding to any ear accustomed to Catholic teachings.

Below are a few quotes from the (online) “National Catholic Register” April 6, 2022, written by Edward Pentin. (<https://www.ncregister.com/news/praedicate-evangelium-poses-problems-some-church-analysts-warn>)

“VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis’ recently announced reform of the Roman Curia introduces some sweeping changes aimed at aiding the Church’s mission of evangelization, but critics have warned that some key reforms show a poor understanding of theology, canon law and ecclesiology

that threaten to undermine the Church's authority."

"Among the innovations of *Praedicate Evangelium*, so far only published in Italian and which comes into force on June 5, the Solemnity of Pentecost, is that the main Vatican departments, currently known as congregations and pontifical councils, will become 'dicasteries.' With the exceptions of the Dicastery for Bishops and the Dicastery for the Clergy, these dicasteries may be headed by an appropriately suited baptized lay Catholic."

"A further change is that clergy and religious will only be allowed to serve a maximum of two five-year terms, after which they must return to their dioceses or communities of origin."

"Regarding changing the departmental names to dicasteries able to be headed by laity, the German cardinal [Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF)] told the Register that, as far as he was concerned, this was tantamount to trans-

forming the Curia 'from an ecclesial entity of the Holy Roman Church into a worldly administrative apparatus.'"

We wish to sound the alarm, but it seems the alarm has been sounded so long and so often that it has become almost meaningless. (I am reminded again of the words of the late Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM when he explained to a young priest that he was sent to preach in season and out of season. Jesus did not promise that anyone would listen. We must do our job whether anyone pays attention or not.)

Jesus Christ entrusted the sanctifying, guiding, teaching, and ruling of the Church to His Apostles and their successors, true bishops. The bishops give the power of orders to true priests to assist the bishops in the realm of sanctifying, teaching, and guiding souls to Heaven. The power of ruling over the flock of Jesus Christ remains in the bishops. Bishops exercise authority in their own names, and priests only exercise this authority by delegation from their bishops. Laity does not have any authority from God to sanctify, guide, teach or rule over the flock of the Church. They do not possess the power of orders and therefore cannot administer the sacraments that

require the ability to confer them. (Anyone can administer baptism, and the husband and wife administer matrimony, but Holy Orders [episcopal or priestly orders] are required for the other Sacraments.) We can say that parents do have from God the power and authority to teach, govern, rule, and guide their children in the way of holiness. Still, they do not have this authority over others, nor do they have the power to confer sacramental graces to their children.

Condemned Protestant religions deny the priesthood and the necessity for ordained priests. Their “ministers” or “preachers” are chosen or elected (hired and fired) by the members. It is from those “ministered” to that the “ministers” receive their commissions. They generally only recognize one or two sacraments, and these, according to their teachings, do not require an “ordained” priest or even an “ordained” minister.

The Modernist movement in the New Order Church (Vatican II Church) emulates the condemned Protestant teachings. A true Catholic priest is chosen (called) by God, not by any group or committee. He administers the Sacraments in the Name of Jesus Christ. He is Jesus

Christ’s delegate and answers to the bishop God has placed over him. He does not answer to his assigned flock or any lay group or committee.

Another interesting point presented in the “National Catholic Register” is the term limits on any clergy or religious chosen to head the various dicasteries. What is implied is that these term limits are not applied to the laity heading any of the dicasteries. Is this just another way to ensure that, with time, these dicasteries will only be led by lay men and women?

Gradually, it is becoming even more evident that priesthood is superfluous in the Modern Novus Ordo Vatican II Church. This essentially declares that the Church does not need any Sacraments that depend upon Holy Orders. It does not want or need these Sacramental Graces. Ultimately, with the Protestants, they are saying that these Sacramental Graces do not even exist. That Jesus did not ever institute these Sacraments.

We have feared this conclusion for many years, but our fears are proving to be well-founded with time. Shortly after “Vatican Council II,” the Mass underwent drastic changes, and the very de-

finition of the Mass was changed. Before the “Council,” the Mass is dogmatically defined as one and the same Sacrifice with the Sacrifice of Calvary. The Mass is the unbloody renewal in our time of the bloody Sacrifice of Calvary. Jesus is truly made present and offered in Sacrifice to His Father in Heaven on our altars. After the “Council,” the Mass was called a “Memorial Meal,” the recreating of the “Last Supper.”

While the institution of the priesthood and the Holy Eucharist did take place shortly after the supper, we must not confuse the two. It was after they had eaten that Jesus gave us the Holy Eucharist. The Mass is not the supper or the meal, but rather the Sacrifice. While this is not a significant point to many, it is essential. An ordained priest speaking and standing in the place of Jesus Christ is necessary for the miracle of Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice. A true priest is unnecessary or excessive for a Memorial Meal. Anyone may serve at a table for supper; a priest is only needed for a Sacrifice upon an altar.

With the deliberate shortage of priests, we see that they are unnecessary because the laity

can read the scripture passages and even distribute their “communion.” Or the laity can help themselves to the wafers and wine if they like. An ordained priest with consecrated hands is not necessary to handle the “communion” because the “communion” is not the Sacred Body and Blood of Jesus Christ but only symbolizes The Flesh of Jesus as in so many Protestant denominations. The mere symbol can be held and distributed by anyone because it is not Sacred.

With the modern “Reconciliation,” we see that it is not a matter of an ordained priest forgiving sins in the Name of Christ, but rather someone listening to and encouraging those who are struggling. There are no sins, but there are perhaps some weaknesses that need help and lifting up. Any qualified layperson can hold this position of a psychiatrist. Holy Orders are not required. Priests, therefore, are not ordained to forgive sins. How can he forgive what does not exist?

In the Protestant Churches, faithful priests are not needed or wanted. In the Modernist Novus Ordo Church, we see the direct progression towards completely incorporating these

heresies into their teachings. Official teachers are not necessary where the Scriptures can be self-interpreted. Consecrated hands are not required to give us food that is mere symbolism. Priests are not needed to forgive sins where we only need counsel or guidance. Ultimately, all the Modernist Novus Ordo Church needs are charismatic elected (hired) leaders to make everyone feel good and, as Luther would say: “sin on bravely.”

The “Roman Curia” of the New Church is becoming (if it is not so already) a secular body of a secular church. The New Church is not the Church and faith given us by Our Lord Jesus Christ but is instead the product or latent fruit of the Protestant Revolution. The direct hatred of the priesthood established by God is not as blatant as in some Protestant sects, but it is progressing rather rapidly in the Modernist Novus Ordo Church.

OMNIA PRO TE, COR JESU

Life on earth is all warfare —
Foes within and foes without.
Jesus! Jesus! Lo, the tempter
Flees before that battle shout.
In the fierce, unceasing combats
Let our tranquil war-cry be: —
Omina pro te, Cor Jesu! —
“Heart of Jesus! All for Thee.”
This shall nerve the arm that’s weary,
This shall dry the tear that steals,
This shall sooth the wasting anguish
That the heart in secret feels.
Ever in my heart ‘twill slumber,
Often to my lips, ‘twill start:
Omnia pro Te, Cor Jesu! —
“All for Thee! O Sacred Heart.”

GOD IS ALWAYS IN CONTROL

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

The question of Divine Providence is really no question at all. Through the course of time, there are a continuous number of events. Most of these events, which we usually think of as daily events, go unnoticed and are certainly not recorded in history. From time to time, though, certain events stand out because of their importance to those living at that time and usually affect the next generation or two. Some events produce a lasting effect and memory over many centuries and throughout all cultures worldwide.

One of the more common mistakes many make is when a sad or tragic event occurs. It usually involves the loss of many lives or causes great hardship for millions of people.

The mistake usually comes in the form of a question. Why would God allow such a thing to happen? This question is always asked by someone who does not understand why events have occurred since the Fall of Man. The first mistake is thinking that God directly

will all circumstances, good or bad, to take place.

God may will certain events to take place, but He may also allow other events to take place. What is the difference between these two distinctions? The difference is that all events occur according to God's Direct Will or His Permissive Will. In other words, God wants certain things to happen (His Direct Will), or He allows (permits) events to happen.

Those events which happen because God has directly willed them may have little to do with the decisions of men. On the other hand, many events are the direct result of the decisions of men. Too often, terrible events occur because of the poor choices of men. However, some events are not simply bad decisions but evil decisions.

The evil decisions of men are not always known, at least not in the present time. It is difficult for those who are relatively good to think that others can be so evil as to carry out deeds that would seem unthinkable to ordinary people.

Two real-life examples illustrate the thoughts above.

The first example is the Church and those events of the last sixty-three years. The readers of *The Seraph* are all too familiar with the destruction which has taken place. Most Catholics have little or no idea of the evil men in the Church who hide behind their collars. Laity cannot accept that clerics would be so evil that they would willingly work to destroy the Catholic Church.

The Church has been infiltrated with Freemasons, Communists of different types, and Modernist heretics. The laity in the 21st century is ill-prepared to understand the destructive forces within the Church. When these issues are brought up in a discussion, we usually see one or another response. It is the blank stare because they have no idea what you are speaking about or think you are some crazy conspiracy theorist. Most will simply dismiss the possibility because of ignorance or because they consider it unrealistic. The result is the enemies of the Church continue unabated in utterly gutting the Church. Presently, there is little left to destroy.

Too many Catholics confuse God's Direct (Divine) Will

and the free will of men. When the clergy is following the laws of God and the Church, then the two wills are essentially one. The problem is when the clergy purposely disobeys these laws, but the laity believes their actions are good. Here, the laity believes God's Will is being followed when it is, in reality, the evil, sinful desires of men being carried out.

This is essentially what has happened in the Church since Vatican II. Men's wills have dominated the decisions in the Church, but far too many Catholics believe it is God's Holy Will. They think they must follow the dictates of Vatican II when the documents, directly and indirectly, promote theological errors. This is a sure sign that the Holy Ghost did not guide the infamous council.

Secondly, for many years the masses have allowed themselves to believe the lies of politicians and the political systems. This is not to say they all lie, but there has been enough lying to create a great distrust among many people.

The distrust and failures of the systems have created different types of chaos. This chaos has, at other times, brought about great hardships for the average American. If the hardship is

severe enough, some will wonder why God has allowed these things to happen. The fact is that God had little or nothing to do with it.

There is an important principle tied to situations like this. It is this: God gave man free will. God does not interfere with this free will. Man can use his free will to do that which is correct or that which is wrong. When someone does the wrong thing, it is not God's fault. The fault lies with the person who made the decision.

When tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, or other natural disasters occur, it is not God's fault that men die. Such disasters are the cause of people dying. These storms are a part of nature that would seem to be the result of the Fall of Man. Suffering and dying are, in fact, the result of Original Sin. Indeed, God often uses these events to punish men, but it would seem to be only in a general way. Unfortunately, so few understand this effect. It must also be said that the devils do seem to have some control over these types of events, but to what degree I do believe it is unknown.

Since early in 2020, the world has been in turmoil. Empty threats of mass deaths from a virus frightened the world

beyond anything known in its history. The panic, the loss of jobs, the economic hardships, the overnight Communist-like control of many nations, the propagandized media, the record number of suicides, the diabolical drive to have everyone take a shot that still does not meet the definition of a vaccine, the deadly or harmful effects of this questionable vaccine, the devilish goal of killing as many people as possible from a shot that is meant to do just that, i.e., kill the masses, the world looks around and finds itself at a very real "fork in the road."

It would not be surprising for people to wonder aloud if God cares or why God would allow such terrible things to occur.

In the Spring of 2020, this writer told his parishioners these things are to follow: the things the world is now experiencing are both a warning and a punishment. A warning to stop sinning in the deplorable way it is currently taking place, a punishment for these same sins, all men's known and unknown sins.

To properly remind the laity of a very simple truth about death, they were told they would not die a day sooner or later than the designs of God's Will. Perhaps it would be from

a virus, the flu, a stroke, a heart attack, etc.

The Modernist bishops exposed themselves by displaying a greater concern for the body than the soul. How many Catholics who were not obliged to attend Mass continued to practice the Faith in their homes and lives? How many returned to their churches months later?

The one crucial thing that is so very clear through all this turmoil is that God is, indeed, in control. He always has been and always will be. There may be those who disagree, but this disagreement is meaningless if it does not correctly correspond with God's Holy Will. Pray to know God's Will. Pray to accept God's Will.



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THE BIRTH OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

Part V: The Roman Empire and the Early Church

The Roman historian Tacitus (56 – 120 A.D.), who was merely a boy when the persecution took place, wrote:

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every

sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.

History certainly does not paint Emperor Nero in a favorable light, and why should it? Even if it could be proven that Nero did not start the fire that engulfed a great part of Rome, he was still debased enough to place the blame upon the Christians. To say that the way he chose to punish these “criminals” was excessive would be an understatement.

One could deduce from all of this that he may have been merely feeding his morbid artistic creativities.

At the end of the last article, I quoted Tertullian, "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*" Interestingly, Rome would be the one place that shed most of the blood. These persecutions continued not merely during the time of Nero, which were confined to the city of Rome itself, but for the next three centuries over the whole Empire. This is not to say that the persecutions were constant; the Church did enjoy times of peace and prosperity. Whether or not persecution would occur mainly depended upon whoever was the reigning emperor.

My apologies; I am getting ahead of myself! We will discuss these subsequent persecutions at more length in the following articles. I was merely musing with the incredible thought that Rome: "the center of the empire" and "the great persecutor of the Church," would eventually be given the honor of being the center of the Church itself. Perhaps, since this was God's plan, the "seed of the Church" (blood of the martyrs) needed to be planted there in greater abundance.

THE MARTYRDOM OF SS. PETER & PAUL

We left off the last article by discussing how significant the presence of both St. Peter and St. Paul were to the Roman martyrs. These "two pillars of the Church" helped support the hearts of the wavering and the wills of the constant. God called both of these great men to preach the Gospel to the entire world. They were called to follow a path that was strewn with thorns. One could only wonder that perhaps during some of those restless nights, these two men pondered upon the words of Christ, "The servant is not above the Master. If they persecute Me, they will persecute you...." We see that Our Lord's prophecy came true – they too were being persecuted, and they too were going to die in His Name.

There is some question about how St. Peter and St. Paul came to Rome just in time for the persecutions. Father John Laux, M.A., in his wonderful book, *Church History*, gives a probable answer: "*According to a very credible tradition, Paul was in the East when the persecution against the Christians broke out in Rome. He met St. Peter in Corinth, and they traveled together to Rome.*" One could innocently

ask, "What was St. Peter doing in Corinth?" He was the bishop of Rome, the center of the Church. Why would he leave? St. Peter formed many Christian communities; a notable one is Antioch. He was a missionary, so that means he would not have had a permanent residence. We have to understand that the dignity of Rome over the other communities would not have been definitively conceived at this time, at least not in the way we know now. St. Peter's first few successors had come from the Roman community - Linus, Anacletus, and Clement. It is interesting to note that the dignity of Rome and the authority of the pope is inferred in the Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians. He was called upon to write this to reprimand and pass judgment upon certain Catholics who were subverting the authority within the Corinthian Church. This is not merely an interesting side point, nor a digression on my part, but shows how important Rome was to St. Peter and how it was fitting that he should shed his blood there.

When St. Peter and St. Paul arrived in Rome, they were seized and thrown into prison. They would not die side by side, but it is a tradition that they both were martyred on

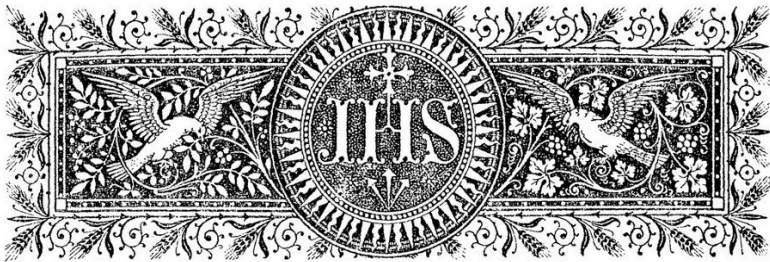
the same day in either the year 68 or 69. Father Laux relates how St. Peter "*was martyred in the Circus of Nero. A constant Roman tradition asserts that he died on the cross, like his Divine Master.*" The tradition also says that St. Peter was crucified upside down.

St. Paul being a Roman citizen, was beheaded on the Ostian Way. While he was waiting in prison, St. Paul wrote a letter, as Father Laux continues, to his "*beloved son*" Timothy, giving him some account of his sufferings and urging him to come to him as speedily as possible. He was ill-treated, he says, "*even unto fetters as an evil doer.*" He is not certain as yet of his approaching death. But he sees his blood "*already poured out in sacrifice,*" and the time of his departure at hand. "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day; and not only to me but to them also that love His coming.*" (2 Tim. 4, 6-8)

We learn from St. Peter and St. Paul that to truly live for Christ, we must be willing to turn our lives into one continuous act of supernatural charity.

We must love other people, not with a mere natural love, but with a supernatural love that desires salvation for all. They were indeed “all things to all men” because doing God’s Holy Will was the only thing that mattered. Their faith, fortitude, and apostolic zeal for souls were some of the ideals, the foundation, that helped inspire the formation of the Holy Roman Empire.

In the next issue, we will continue discussing the persecutions that the Empire inflicted upon the Christians over the subsequent three centuries. An era within Church history called “the Age of Martyrs.” We will also discuss how the Church operated during this period, especially in Rome. Finally, we will discuss how truly miraculous it was that the Church emerged victoriously.



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THE LITTLE CATECHISM OF THE CURÉ OF ARS

*Selected passages from the
writings of
St. John Marie Vianney*



CHAPTER FIVE CATECHISM ON THE WORD OF GOD

My Children, the Word of God is of no little importance! These were Our Lord's first words to His Apostles: "Go and teach". . . to show us that instruction is before everything.

My children, what has taught us our religion? The instructions we have heard. What gives us a horror of sin? What makes us alive to the beauty of virtue, inspires us with the desire of Heaven? Instructions. What teaches fathers and mothers the duties they have to fulfill towards their children and children the duties they have to fulfill towards their parents? Instructions.

My children, why are people so blind and so ignorant? Because they make so little

account of the Word of God. There are some who do not even say a Pater and an Ave to beg of the good God the grace to listen to it attentively, and to profit well by it. I believe, my children, that a person who does not hear the Word of God as he ought, will not be saved; he will not know what to do to be saved. But with a well-instructed person there is always some resource He may wander in all sorts of evil ways; there is still hope that he will return sooner or later to the good God, even if it were only at the hour of death. Instead of which a person who has never been instructed is like a sick person—like one in his agony who is no longer conscious: he knows neither the greatness of sin nor the value of virtue; he drags

himself from sin to sin, like a rag that is dragged in the mud.

See, my children, the esteem in which Our Lord holds the Word of God; to the woman who cries, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck!" He answers, "Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it!" Our Lord, who is Truth itself, puts no less value on His Word than on His Body. I do not know whether it is worse to have distractions during Mass than during the instructions; I see no difference. During Mass we lose the merits of the Death and Passion of Our Lord, and during the instructions we lose His Word, which is Himself. St. Augustine says that it is as bad as to take the chalice after the Consecration and to trample it underfoot.

My children, you make a scruple of missing holy Mass, because you commit a great sin in missing it by your own fault; but you have no scruple in missing an instruction. You never consider that in this way you may greatly offend God. At the Day of Judgment, when you will all be there around me, and the good God will say to you, "Give Me an account of the instructions and the catechisms which you have heard and which you might

have heard," you will think very differently.

My children, you go out during the instructions, you amuse yourselves with laughing, you do not listen, you think yourselves too clever to come to the catechism... do you think, my children, that things will be allowed to go on so? Oh no, certainly not! God will arrange matters very differently. How sad it is! We see fathers and mothers stay outside during the instruction; yet they are under obligation to instruct their children; but how can they teach them? They are not instructed themselves.... All this leads straight to Hell.... It is a pity!

My children, I have remarked that there is no moment when people are more inclined to sleep than during the instructions. You will say, I am so very sleepy. If I were to take up a fiddle, nobody would think of sleeping; everybody would be roused, everybody would be on the alert. My children, you listen when you like the preacher; but if the preacher does not suit you, you turn him into ridicule. We must not think so much about the man. It is not the body that we must attend to. Whatever the priest may be, he is still the instrument that the good God makes use

of to distribute His holy Word. You pour liquor through a funnel; whether it be made of gold or of copper, if the liquor is good it will still be good.

There are some who go about repeating everywhere, "Priests say just what they please." No, my children, priests do not say what they please; they say what is in the Gospel. The priests who came before us said what we say; those who shall come after us will say the same thing. If we were to say things that are not true, the Bishop would very soon forbid us to preach. We say only what Our Lord has taught.

My children, I will give you an example of what it is not to believe what priests tell you. There were two soldiers passing through a place where a mission was being given; one of the soldiers proposed to his comrade to go and hear the sermon, and they went. The missionary preached upon Hell. "Do you believe all that this priest says?" asked the least wicked of the two. "Oh, no!" replied the other, "I believe it is all nonsense, invented to frighten people." "Well, for my part, I believe it; and to prove to you that I believe it, I shall give up being a soldier, and go into a

convent." "Go where you please; I shall continue my journey." But while he was on his journey, he fell ill and died. The other, who was in the convent, heard of his death, and began to pray that God would show him in what state his companion had died. One day, as he was praying, his companion appeared to him; he recognized him, and asked him, "Where are you?" "In Hell; I am lost!" "O wretched man! Do you now believe what the missionary said?" "Yes, I believe it. Missionaries are wrong only in one respect; they do not tell you a hundredth part of what is suffered here."

My children, I often think that most of the Christians who are lost for want of instruction — they do not know their religion well. For example, here is a person who has to go and do his day's work. This person has a desire to do great penances, to pass half the night in prayer; if he is well instructed, he will say, "No, I must not do that, because then I could not fulfill my duty tomorrow; I should be sleepy, and the least thing would put me out of patience; I should be weary all the day, and I should not do half as much work as if I had rested at night; that must not be done."

Again, my children, a servant may have a desire to fast, but he is obliged to pass the whole day in digging and ploughing, or whatever you please. Well, if this servant is well instructed, he will think, "But if I do this, I shall not be able to satisfy my master." Well, what will he do? He will eat his breakfast and mortify himself in some other way. That is what we must do—we must always act in the way that will give most glory to the good God.

A person knows that another is in distress and takes from his parents what will relieve that distress. He would certainly do much better to ask than to take it. If his parents refuse to give it, he will pray to God to inspire a rich person to give the alms instead of him. A well-instructed person always has two guides leading the way before him — good counsel and obedience.

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ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

An Autobiography

CHAPTER SEVEN

CARMEL AT LAST

While I was a postulant, our Novice Mistress used to send me every afternoon at half-past four to weed the garden. This cost me a great deal, the more so because I was almost sure to meet Mother Mary of Gonzaga. On one of these occasions she remarked: "Really, this child does absolutely nothing! What are we to think of a postulant who must be sent out for a walk every day?" And this was her invariable method of dealing with me.

Yet, dear Mother, I thank God for having provided me with so sound and valuable a training: it was a priceless grace. What should I have become if, as the outside world believed, I had been made the pet of the community? Instead of seeing Our Lord in the person of my superiors I might have considered only the creature, and my heart, so carefully guarded in the world, would have been ensnared by human affection in the cloister. Happily, I was preserved from such a disaster.

I can truly say that not only in what I have described, but in trials that affected me more

keenly. Suffering opened wide her arms to me from the first and I took her fondly to my heart. In the solemn examination before making the vows I thus declared my reasons for entering Carmel — "I have come to save souls and especially to pray for priests." The end cannot be reached without adopting the means, and since Our Lord had made me understand that it was through the cross He would give me souls, the more crosses I encountered the stronger became my attraction to suffering. Unknown to anyone, this was the path I trod for fully five years: it was precisely the flower I wished to offer to Jesus — a hidden flower which keeps its perfume only for Heaven.

Two months after I entered Carmel, Father Pichon¹ was

¹Of the Society of Jesus. He was one of the witnesses at the Tribunal of the Beatification, and after having given over a thousand retreats in France and Canada, he died in 1919 as he was preparing to offer the Holy Sacrifice. He had asked "his little Therese" to obtain for him the grace of saying Mass to the last day of his life. (Carmel.)

astonished at the workings of grace in my soul; he considered my fervor quite childlike and my path a most peaceful one. The spiritual direction given me by this holy priest in the confessional would have brought me great comfort, had it not been for the extreme difficulty I felt in opening my heart. Nevertheless, I made a general confession to him, and when I had finished, he said: "Before God, the Blessed Virgin, the Angels, and all the Saints, I declare that you have never committed a mortal sin. You must thank God for this favor which He has bestowed upon you without any merit whatever on your part."

It was not difficult to believe that it was without merit on my part, and, fully conscious of my weakness and imperfection, my heart overflowed with gratitude, and gratitude alone. The fear that I might have stained my baptismal robe had greatly disturbed me, and this assurance coming from the lips of a director such as our mother St. Teresa desired — one, that is, "combining knowledge with virtue" — seemed to me to come from God Himself. "May Our Lord always be your Superior and your Novice Master!" added Father Pichon: and indeed He ever was, and my Director, too. By this I do not mean to imply that I was re-

served towards my superiors; on the contrary, I always tried to be as an open book to them.

Our Mistress was truly a Saint, a perfect type of the first Carmelites; she had to teach me how to work, and so I was constantly with her. Yet, kind as she was beyond all I can say, and much as I loved and appreciated her, my soul did not expand under her guidance. Words failed me when I spoke to her of what passed in my soul, and thus my time of spiritual direction became a torture and a real martyrdom.

Apparently understanding my difficulty, one of our former Mothers once said to me during recreation: "I should think, child, you have not much to tell your superiors." "Why do you think that, dear Mother?" I asked. "Because your soul is extremely simple. And when you are perfect you will become still more so, for the nearer one approaches God the simpler one becomes." She was right; but although the great difficulty I experienced in opening my heart arose from simplicity, it was nevertheless a genuine trial. Now, however, without detriment to simplicity I can express my thoughts with the greatest ease.

I have already said that Our Lord Himself has always acted as my spiritual guide, for hard-

ly had Father Pichon undertaken the care of my soul when his superiors sent him to Canada, and I could not hear from him more than once in the year. It was then that the Little Flower which had been transplanted to the mountain of Carmel turned quickly to the Director of directors and gradually unfolded itself under the shadow of His cross, having for refreshing dew His tears and His blood, and for its radiant sun His adorable Face.

Until then I had not appreciated the beauties of the Holy Face, and it was you, my little Mother, who unveiled them to me. Just as you had been the first to leave our home for Carmel, so too, were you the first to penetrate the mysteries of love hidden in the Face of Our Divine Spouse. Having discovered them you showed them to me — and I understood. . . . More than ever did it come home to me in what true glory consists. He whose “Kingdom is not of this world”¹ taught me that the only kingdom worth coveting is the grace of being “unknown and esteemed as naught,”² and the joy that comes of self-contempt. I wished that, like the Face of Jesus, mine “should be, as it were, hidden and despised,”³ so that no one on earth should esteem me: I thirsted to suffer and to be forgotten.

Most merciful has been the way by which the Divine Master has led me, never leaving unsatisfied any wish He may have inspired; that is why I have always found His bitter chalice full of sweetness.

At the end of May, Marie, our eldest sister, was professed, and Therese, the Benjamin, was given the privilege of crowning her with roses on that day of her mystical espousals — a joy which was quickly followed by a cross. Ever since Papa's first attack of paralysis, we realized that he was very easily tired, and during our journey to Rome I noticed that he often seemed exhausted and in pain. But what struck me above all was his progress in holiness. He had so completely succeeded in mastering his natural impetuosity of character that earthly things failed to disturb him. During our pilgrimage, for example, when we were in the train for days and nights at a stretch, some of the travelers grew weary, and, to while away the hours, played cards, becoming at times very noisy. One day they asked us to

1 John 17:36

2 Imitation of Christ, Chapter 1, 2:3

3 Isaiah 53:3

join in the game, but we refused on the pretext that we knew little about it. Unlike them, we found the time none too long to enjoy the magnificent views that everywhere met the eye. Their annoyance soon became manifest, and our dear Papa defended us quietly, suggesting that, as pilgrims, more of our time might well be given to prayer. Unmindful of the respect due to age, one of the players thoughtlessly exclaimed: "Thank God, there are not many Pharisees!" Papa did not answer and seemed even to be pleased. Not long after this, he found an opportunity of shaking hands with the speaker, and the kindly action was accompanied by such pleasant words as to convey the impression that the rude remark had either not been heard or had been forgotten. But his habit of forgiveness, as you well know, did not date from this day only. Mamma and all who knew him bore witness that no uncharitable word ever passed his lips.

His faith and generosity were likewise proof against trial. This is how he announced my leaving home to one of his friends: "Thérèse, my little Queen, entered Carmel yesterday. God alone could ask such a sacrifice, but He helps me so

powerfully that my heart is overflowing with joy even in the midst of tears."

To this faithful servant was due a reward worthy of his virtue, and to that reward he himself laid claim. Do you remember the day on which he said to us in the parlor: "Children, I have just returned from Alençon, and there, in the church of Notre Dame, I received such graces, such untold consolation, that I made this prayer: 'My God, it is too much — I am too happy. It is impossible to reach Heaven in this way; I must suffer something for Thee!— and I offered myself as . . .'"? The word victim died on his lips — he dared not pronounce it before us, but we understood.

You know but too well, dear Mother, all the sad tale, and it is needless for me to dwell on those heartrending memories.

To Be Continued





FRANCISCAN SAINTS

JUNE 2ND

Blessed Herculano of Piagale
Confessor, First Order

At the time the Franciscan Order shone with the glory of such saints as Bernardine of Siena and John Capistran, it was adorned also by Blessed Herculano, a celebrated preacher of penance. He was the scion of a wealthy family of Piagale in the neighborhood of Perugia. As a young man he nobly sacrificed all that the world offered him in order to work for God and the salvation of souls under the standard of St. Francis. He received the holy habit in the convent of Sarteano, and there he had the great Albert of Sarteano as his teacher.

When he received Holy Orders and was appointed to the office of preaching, he proved worthy of so great a master. His sermons soon attracted crowds of people and brought about extraordinary conversions. The most frequent topic of his sermons was the sufferings of Jesus Christ because he recognized the subject as the most

effectual means for the conversion of sinners.

Once on a Good Friday, in the city of Aquila, he so touchingly portrayed the sufferings which the God-man took upon Himself out of love for sinners that the whole congregation broke out in tears. A woman, who was standing near the pulpit and was less affected than the others, said to the enthusiastic preacher: "Father Herculano, there has been weeping enough, do not raise any more tears." "What?" cried the saint. "Never can we weep enough over the sufferings of Jesus Christ. These tears must cleanse our souls. Did Our Lord not shed more blood than we can ever shed tears?"

He not only preached about the sufferings of Christ, he also meditated on them day and night, and amid burning tears pleaded the while for mercy for sinners. To this devotion he joined the most severe mortification, fasting sometimes so

continuously that Holy Communion seemed to be his only nourishment.

While he was preaching in the cathedral of Lucca during the Lent of 1430, the town was besieged by the Florentines. Herculan proved that he was as much concerned for the physical welfare of those to whom he had been sent as he was for their souls. He encouraged the inhabitants to defend their city with courage and perseverance.

When famine broke out, he urged the rich to share their provisions with the poor. By divine inspiration he foretold that a new supply of provisions would arrive at Easter, and soon also assistance against their enemies. And so, it happened. At Easter, grain was successfully brought into town, and soon the Milanese came to the assistance of the city, the Florentines withdrawing in haste.

In gratitude to Father Herculan, the city of Lucca offered to establish three convents of his order in their territory. In one of these convents Herculan died after untiring and constant labor, on May 28, 1451. Many miracles glorified his tomb. Pope Pius IX sanctioned the devotion paid to him.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST SHOULD LEAD US TO PENANCE

1.) St. Bernard says somewhere in a parable: "As a boy I played in the courtyard of the king's castle. There I saw a beautiful young man going across the yard, laden with a heavy cross, and many people were around him. I was told that he was the son of the king, and that he had volunteered to make reparation for me on the cross though it was I who had been condemned to death. Not another moment could I go on with my game, but I ran weeping to the king's son, ready to follow him even unto death." — Are there not many people living here on God's earth as if they were children at play, since in all things they follow only their good pleasure and comfort? But when we look at the Son of God, who "hath loved us and hath delivered himself for us" (*Eph. 5:2*), then truly our delight in play ought to leave us as we penitently follow our Savior laden with the cross. Do you also look up to Him in order to put an end to your indifference?

2.) Consider that Blessed Herculan portrayed the sufferings of Christ to move the faithful not only to tears of tender compassion but to true contri-

tion for their sins. Thus, our Lord Himself spoke on the Sorrowful Way to the women of Jerusalem: "Weep not over me but weep for yourselves and for your children" (*Luke 23:28*). In memory of Christ's Passion, weep also for your sins and for those of your children, which gave cause to that bitter suffering. Reflect further, that if our innocent Savior suffered so much for the sins of others, what will guilty man have to suffer in eternity if he has not satisfied divine justice to the best of his power? "Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of penance!" (*Luke 3:8*)

3.) Consider that the sufferings of Christ should in future preserve us from every sin. Of

those who relapse and commit sin anew, the Apostle says they are "crucifying again to themselves the Son of God and making him a mockery" (*Hebr. 6:6*). If you remembered your suffering Savior, would you with sins of the flesh scourge anew your bleeding and bruised Jesus? Would you with pride and self-will again crown with thorns His painfully pierced head? Would you again drive nails into His transfixed hands with acts of injustice, and again nail His holy feet to the cross with forbidden parties? Indeed, you would not. The lively remembrance of the sufferings of Christ would strengthen you to remain faithful in His service until death.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, who by the ministry of Blessed Herculán didst urge the faithful to despise this world, and to be mindful of the sufferings of Thy Divine Son, vouchsafe us the grace of despising earthly things and of bearing our cross here below, that one day we may attain to the possession of the eternal blessings. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AMONG INFIDELS - BY DIVINE GRACE

Father Louis Vezelis, OFM

Chapter Fifteen — On Eating and Greeting

There are several peculiarities about the manner of eating and greeting in Korea that shock and surprise the Westerner. The first one regards eating. In itself, eating seems like a very matter-of-fact exercise. There are relatively few rules on this matter for the average Westerner to observe. But, in Korea there are many delicate little mannerisms that must be observed. To begin with, there is the question of sound.

The Korean eats with gusto and with great slurps, slushes, sighs and burps. It is not only in the nature of the food that this is required, it is the nature and concept of good manners that requires it. To eat silently at a Korean table would be enough to cause great concern on the part of the host. It would give the impression that the meal was not good and that the guest was simply eating it in order to avoid offending the host. Unlike the West, where it is a sign of good breeding to eat quietly, in most of the Orient eating with

accompanying sounds is a sign of good breeding. It indicates that the eater is not only enjoying the meal, but that the cook's handiwork is genuinely appreciated. And isn't this what a cook wants more than anything else: to feel that all the toil and effort expended in the preparation has been greatly appreciated? What a let-down for anyone who has worked at the dreary job of preparing food only to see that the effort is rejected or half-heartedly appreciated? Of course, the adoption of the oriental custom in this matter would have meant that the reader in our refectory would expose himself to getting laryngitis from straining his voice over the cacophony of un-orchestrated slurps and chomping. It is an odd experience to be sitting in a refectory with about ten people at various stages of mastication. The sound is not much different than listening to a sty of pigs devouring their fare. And what a peaceful and harmonious

silence when the slurps are censored and the chomping curbed. This is something I could never get used to no matter how hard I tried. Trained in the monastery to eat silently while paying attention to the reading, this became for me a point in good breeding and refinement of an otherwise very primitive animal function. Perhaps this showed more the Christian asceticism regarding such necessary animal functions and the attitude in the East which was fundamentally hedonistic and sought to emphasize the physical pleasure of eating.

Another delicate consideration in the East which does not correspond to attitudes in the West is the matter of whether to leave anything on one's plate after finishing. In the West, it is a sign of satiety to leave a little bit of food on one's plate to signal to the host that one has truly had one's fill and that lo, see: there was just not enough room to finish this little piece. This is accepted in the West as a sign that there was ample and sufficient food. The host does not lose face and is content. But, in the Orient - particularly in Korea - to leave some food on one's plate would be construed as either there was not enough food, or that the food

was not tasty. Here, however, the guest is really stuck because he finds himself in a "damned if you do: damned if you don't" situation. For example, if you leave something on your plate, the suggestion is that it was not to your taste. If you eat it all - although it did not agree with you and you had forced yourself to eat — then the host would insist that you have some more! Then begins the battle between the guest and the host until one or the other wins out. In my case, I always chose to appear impolite rather than go home with a feeling of heaviness. This is particularly true of drinking at the table.

Drinking at the table is more of a bout in endurance. The unspoken game is to see who can drink whom under the table. Fortunately for those who lost, 'under the table' did not mean going down very far since it is the custom to sit on the floor and eat off a low table. The custom is to pour a drink into the other man's glass and toast. After which, the recipient takes his own glass places it in the hands of the other person and fills it up. After emptying the glass, it is returned and filled. Where upon this is emptied and the procedure repeated until one or the other gives up

or slumps over, or under. This, of course, is not a very Christian custom. Failure to accept the drink can be construed as a serious breach of etiquette. Since I do not drink as a general rule, my best strategy in refusing a drink was to plead doctor's care and poor health. It worked much better than turning the little cup over and stubbornly refusing all entreaties to take just one more.

When Koreans get a chance to eat, they take it. This is not meant to be insulting. So many suffer from inadequate nutrition and most (in those days, at least) did not know what they would eat on the

next day that they stuffed themselves when they had the chance. This leads me to a brief discussion on the peculiarity of Korean greetings.

Koreans do not just say "Hello, how are you?" or some such thing. If a Korean meets you early in the morning he will more than likely ask: "Achim chapsusiossipnika?" which means "Did you have your breakfast?" There are many expressions which use the word "to eat" as a means of getting the idea across. For example, when one is insulted, he is said to "eat insult". When it is very hot, the expression is "to eat heat". Also, Koreans refer to



Kindergarten Taejon Korea

age as “to eat age”. One would say of an old person: he has eaten many years. If a person is arrested and pays a fine, he is not said to simply pay a fine, he is said to have “bitten” so much for such and such a thing. Even the description of personalities uses expressions derived from the taste buds. A bland person is referred to as a “salt less fellow” whereas a person who is careful and rigid is called a “salty fellow.” A stern and strict man is referred to as a “peppery fellow”. And so it is with many other characteristics too numerous to mention.

The manner in describing the number of people in one's family is also indicative of the Korean subconscious pre-occupation with food: when asked how many in your fami-

ly, a Korean will answer that there are so many mouths to feed. The literal translation of sik-ku means “eating-mouth”. So, if a person had five members in the family it would be “five eating-mouths”. This points up the fact that the elementary needs of life were always critical questions. And the greatest good that could be wished upon a friend was that he or she should have been able to have a meal! For the average American who has not really seen much hardship in comparison with many others, this may seem forced. But to a Korean who has gone to bed many nights without having eaten — particularly the little children — the need for food is very basic.

To Be Continued



*Birthday Party at “Ho-su Chon-sin” (Guardian Angels)
Kindergarten 1965*

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