

THE SERAPH

May 2023

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The Seraph

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THE SERAPH

THE MONTH OF MAY

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

May brings our hearts and minds to reflections of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our Holy Mother, the Church, has given so many titles to her that we have no difficulty finding occasions or reasons to honor her and implore her assistance in our daily struggles. Mary is the Mother of God. She is the Virgin Mother. She is The Immaculate Conception. She is The Immaculate Heart. She was assumed into Heaven body and soul.

We find many devotions and prayers dedicated to Mary. The “Hail Mary” uses the very words of God spoken through the Archangel Gabriel and marks the Annunciation and Incarnation. We have rosaries and scapulars, and even religious orders dedicated to her.

With loving hearts, we seem never to grow weary of singing the praises of Mary. The Church has enriched many prayers and devotions to Mary with wonderful indulgences.

However, there is a danger that we must be aware of in our devotions to the Mother of God. Even well-meaning

Catholics often enter into a kind of superstition in their devotion and end up neither honoring God nor His Blessed Mother. Perhaps we must remind ourselves of the words of one of Mary’s greatest promoters: “To Jesus through Mary.” To truly honor Mary, we must worship her Son, Jesus Christ.

The first part of the simple “Hail Mary” prayer directs our minds to God – principally to the Incarnation. The second part is imploring Mary’s intercession with God on our behalf. The rosary is a meditation on the Life of Jesus here on earth as seen through His mother’s eyes.

We fear that many Catholics memorize the “Hail Mary” and robotically repeat it the prescribed number of times while their hearts and minds are directed elsewhere. It is a terrible shame that the Protestant accusations against Catholic devotion to Mary are often well-founded. The devotion is good and holy, but often the way we participate in this devotion leaves much to be desired. There is nothing

“magical” in the prayers or devotions to Holy Mary. Prayers that are said mindlessly are not prayers at all. Can we expect God or even His mother to be pleased with these?

For our prayers and devotions to be acceptable, we must strive to make the words of the prayers truly our own. We need to enter into the thoughts and desires that went into the original composition of the prayers or devotions. We need to direct our hearts and minds to the various mysteries presented to us to occupy our hearts and minds.

Catholics often chide Protestants for their axiom: “Sin on boldly,” but how many Catholics act similarly? Many Catholics will “religiously” wear the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, believing that if they only die wearing this, they will not go to Hell. The mentality of Luther’s false theology does not appear very different than many Catholics’ false devotion to the scapular of Mary. True devotion and piety seem to devolve into superstition quickly.

Carrying a rosary in our pocket does not make us holy. Frequently and devoutly praying the rosary will. The physical wearing of the scapular of the

Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel will not save us. Devotion to Mary and living up to the goals of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel will save us. The Brown Scapular is the physical (penitential) reminder to live up to our calling and obligations to Mary. To die in the habit of Mary does not mean wearing a piece of clothing – it means having the habit (living the life) that the cloth represents.

Pope Pius XII wrote in a letter (Neminem profecto) to the Superior General of the Carmelites on February 11, 1950.

“As a Marian vestment, the Sacred Scapular is certainly a sign and guarantee of the protection of the Mother of God. However, let not those who wear it think that they can in sloth and indolence of spirit attain eternal life, for the Apostle thus openly admonishes: ‘Work out your salvation in fear and trembling.’ Therefore, all Carmelites – (whether in cloisters of the first or second order, in the regular or secular third order, or in the confraternities) who belong, by a special particular bond of love, to the family that honors itself with the name of the most Blessed Virgin should recognize in this badge of the

said Virgin a pattern of humility and chastity; in the very form of the vestment itself they should recognize an epitome of modesty and simplicity; above all they should see in the vestment itself, which they wear day and night, an eloquent expression of the prayers with which they ask for divine assistance; finally they should recognize in it an invitation to that consecration to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary which We recently earnestly recommended.

On her part, the most holy Mother will not fail to intercede with God that her children who in purgatory are expiating their sins may, at the earliest possible moment, reach the Eternal Fatherland in accordance with the so-called Sabbatine Privilege.”

The devotions to The Virgin Mother Mary are good and holy, and we must strive not to mock them by delving into superstition or using them as a cloak to hide our evil ways under the guise of piety. God and Mary see clearly through this. God will not be mocked nor allow us to get away with insulting His Blessed Mother.

This month of Mary, may Catholics everywhere re-examine our devotions and prayers. It is time to correct any misconceptions or errors and advance with better prayers and devotions to Mary so that our worship of Jesus, her Son, will be pleasing and meritorious of Eternal Life.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us; inspire, guide, and protect us!

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THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

Marriage was, in the beginning, a sacred contract. God joined Adam and Eve together. They were to be mutual aids to each other and as well as all their children in doing God's Will. Jesus elevated this sacred contract to become a Sacrament at the Wedding Feast of Cana.

We are made in the image and likeness of God, but each of us is a very limited and imperfect image of God. Men and women are incomplete reflections of God. We all fall short of the wonders of God. When we come together and work together in and for the love of God, we complement and draw closer to completing His image in ourselves.

Husbands and wives each bring different qualities and different voids together. Where the one is lacking, the other abound, and vice versa. They balance each other, filling up what is lacking in each other. In this sacred union, we see a better reflection of God. It is in this more perfect person (In marriage, the two become one) that the creative forces of God

shine forth the most gloriously. God designs the union of wife and husband to assist Him in bringing forth human infants – made in the Image and Likeness of God and destined for eternal happiness with Him in Heaven.

Conceiving and bearing children is not the end of parents' duties, but God designs husband and wife to educate, train, and sanctify their children to fill Heaven with Saints. A stable home is required for the spiritual and physical development of children. There must be a provider, protector, nurturer, and educator. It is not just the material things that parents provide, protect, nurture, and teach – even more important than the material things are the spiritual ones.

Husbands and wives must establish this complementary division of labor and responsibilities so that nothing is lacking in the proper development of their children. The divisions need not be absolute. One must always be ready, willing, and able to help

or pick up the slack when something is falling behind or failing. While there is a necessary division of responsibilities, there should always be a spirit of oneness. Parents are in this together — one for all and all for one.

The required stability of family life logically demands that the Sacrament of Matrimony can only be dissolved by the death of one of the spouses. Jesus restored the dignity of this union, which had become soiled, tattered, and torn throughout the ages. What God has joined together, let no man set asunder.

The married state is a true vocation (calling from God). It should not be we who choose this life for ourselves, but rather, we answer the call of God to enter this Sacramental state. In Matrimony, a man and a woman come before God and vow to God to be faithful to each other, no matter what, until they are separated by death. It is God Who calls them, and it is God Who joins them together, and it is God Who may bless them with children made in His Image and likeness.

We readily see the image of the parents in children, but we need to see God's Image in the child. We should strive to

develop and perfect His image rather than our own in our children. The children God gives us are His, and they must be returned to Him someday. They are to be His living Temples in this world. When we neglect to feed and cultivate the souls of our children, we do more harm to them than if we fail to feed or nurture their bodies. Our bodies will die, but our souls are destined to live forever in Heaven or Hell.

Many things are wrong in the world today, and many can be directly traced back to the dissolution of marriage and the family.

The family is the essential and primary element of every society. The demons have been focusing all their attention on bringing down the family and marriage because marriage is good and holy and is the means of populating Heaven with saints. The saints will fill the voids in Heaven created when the devils were cast out. The devils are filled with hatred, envy, and rage toward us and seek to turn us away from Heaven by every means possible.

The whispers of devils inspire all the sins against marriage: fornication, adultery, polygamy, androgyny, pedophilia,

abortion, homosexuality, bestiality, transexual/transgender, etc. The devils promote anything and everything that perverts or corrupts the sanctity of marriage and our cooperation with God in His creation.

Marriage vows are promises made to God. Husband and wife stand before God and society and publicly vow their undying love and loyalty to each other. They promise God that they will be faithful to each other no matter what happens – for better or worse; in richness or poverty; in sickness and in health; until they are separated by death.

In the Sacrament of Matrimony, the husband and wife administer the sacrament to each other. Catholics are bound to make these vows before a Catholic priest. However, the priest is only the official witness of the Church. The husband and wife are the ministers of the sacrament of matrimony. The Church also requires at least two other witnesses besides the priest. These represent the social or secular interest of the world in this union. This public exchange of vows to God before God and man provides the outward sign of the sacrament.

We trace the institution of the Sacrament to Jesus at the

Wedding Feast of Cana. The blessings of the Church are manifestations of the graces that the couple receive so that they may correctly live up to the promises they have made. In this, we see all the conditions necessary: 1) an outward sign, 2) instituted by Christ, and 3) to give grace.

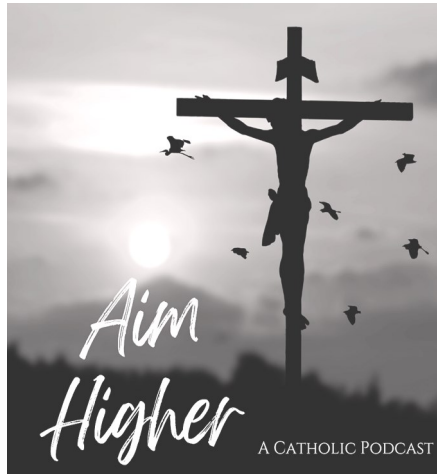
Marriage is not a license to sin or to disregard the laws of chastity and modesty. The physical union of husband and wife must always be open to conception – if God so chooses to bless them with a child. The couple is not commanded to have as many children as possible. They should, however, guide their passions with grace, moderation, reason, and intelligence. This is what places us above beasts and devils and makes us cooperate with God the Creator. To seek mere pleasure while simultaneously shirking any responsibilities attached to that pleasure is direct defiance and rebellion against God.

Everyone has an interest in marriage because everyone has an interest in God and His creations. Those outside of marriage must respect the organs given to us to cooperate with God in creating life. If we are not in a state to legitimately bring forth life, we have no right to seek the pleasure

connected with cooperating with God in conceiving another human life. This demands complete abstinence for everyone outside of true marriage. When we live up to the laws of God and right reason, we elevate the Sacrament of Matrimony, and everyone is blessed.

Complete abstinence (celibacy) gives us greater opportunities to serve and love God. It opens up opportunities for us to be of greater benefit to our fellow men. This self-denial of our physical passions and embracing the religious or

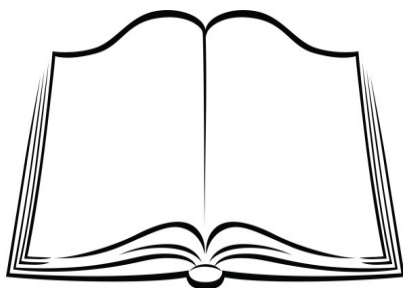
priestly life is the higher calling, but it is not for everyone. St. Paul would have those who cannot embrace this life marry. We must find that station in life that God has called us to live and offer support and aid to others to find or live in the station that God is calling them to. In every state of life, we need the sacraments that offer us the aid of God's Grace, and we need to cooperate with these graces employing the reason and intelligence God has given us to love and serve Him in this life so that we may be eternally happy with Him in Heaven.



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Tell Us Another



Winfried Herbst, SDS

WHICH DO YOU CHOOSE?

If there was one thing Irene liked to do more than anything else it was to dance. In fact, she was just crazy about it; and because this kind of amusement is so very dangerous for poor, weak human nature, the misguided girl soon found herself on the broad, seemingly flowery path that leads away from heaven. Poor Irene! Had she but listened to the warning voices of those who had her welfare most at heart and who so often pleaded, "Be careful; though dancing is not wrong in itself, still it were better to avoid the dance hall. Oh, stay away, if you value your greatest treasure, the pearl of holy purity. Make the sacrifice for Jesus' sweet sake and be truly happy!"

Yes, it was quite evident that Irene was not what she used to be. Some sad change — a change for the worse — had

come over her. In the little country town, she had come from she had been quite a different girl — a devout child of Mary.

Well, when Blanche, her schoolmate and fellow-Sodalist, came to the city, Irene was delighted. She would show her friend a good time. The first thing, of course, was a dance or two. Now, the dances seemed decent, quite so, in fact, so Blanche went — just to please her friend. And thus, she became one of the "bunch," as that circle of girls called themselves.

Then it happened that the first Saturday came around, on which the Sodalist girls were to go to confession preparatory to receiving Holy Communion the next morning. After supper Irene and the "bunch" called.

“We’re off for a dance far out in the country, Blanche. Get ready, dear!” she cried gaily.

“Oh, Irene!” Blanche said reprovingly, quite shocked. “Don’t you know this is Saturday night, on which we are especially forbidden to go to dances? And have you forgotten the Sodality, Irene? We must go to confession tonight.”

“Confession! Pshaw! Do you still believe in that nonsense, Blanche? What’s the use of going so often? We are obliged to go only once a year, you know. And I don’t see why we shouldn’t be allowed to dance Saturday night, too, if we feel like it. Well, we’re going. If you want to be a pious little Sister’s girlie — oh, all right! Suit yourself!” And Irene laughed a cruel, mocking, derisive laugh. The “bunch” smiled with contemptuous pity on the “Sister’s girlie.”

Blanche’s poor heart was sorely wounded. But she was brave and faithful under the temptation. “I’m going to confession. I’m going to be a true child of the Church and of Mary,” she simply said.

The next morning two striking things happened. There was an automobile accident on Union Avenue. At early dawn a car

loaded with girls coming home from some dance hall crashed into another car. Several of the young ladies were injured. One was taken to the hospital in an unconscious condition. It was Irene. The doctor looked grave. “It’s a fractured skull,” he said, “with injury to the brain. We may be able to save her life, but she will be deprived forever of the use of reason.”

That morning, too, just a little later, the landlady of a respectable Catholic boarding house for girls went up to wake one of the boarders, a child of Mary, who had been to confession the evening before and wished to go to Communion at the early Mass. She rapped and rapped. There was no answer. Rather surprised and slightly alarmed, she gently opened the door and entered the room. There upon the bed, neatly tucked away and with her hands piously joined, lay the young boarder in the sleep of death. A sweet smile was upon her face, as though she had passed away in some beautiful dream. It was Blanche!

Oh, how good God is to those that are true to Him and to His Mother Mary! How virtue is rewarded.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

“Ah, Father Hubert! There’s nothing to it — this talk, I mean, of the children’s prayer saving the day. It rained yesterday; it’s raining today; and ’twill rain tomorrow and Saturday, too. Prayer may be fine in a way; it may be excellent in its own place, but do you really think it will put those clouds to flight? Do you seriously mean to say that we’ll have fair weather because the boys and girls are praying for it? I, for one, am mighty doubtful.”

Edward Winson was speaking. Of all the members of Father Herbert’s parish he was the wealthiest and, in a way, the most influential. But he was by no means the most exemplary Catholic; indeed, he was far removed from the list even of those we call practical. Lukewarm and somewhat cynical, possessed of strong and uncommendable characteristics, a man who in his religious life did just his duty and no more, Edward Winson, though he knew it not, was in danger of joining the mighty, ever swelling army of twentieth century indifferentists. For as surely as

carelessness leads to lukewarmness, so surely does lukewarmness lead to indifference, that most lamentable of all states. For whom is more incurable than he that has no desire to be cured? But God was about to show him mercy. “A little child shall lead them.”

Only a few weeks ago the zealous and untiring Father Herbert had solicited Mr. Winson’s aid and active participation in the coming bazaar that was to lighten the burden of debt weighing so heavily on his little church. He had, to be sure, approached his stern, somewhat caustic parishioner with no little trepidation. But to his great surprise and joy that he worthily had offered his services with altogether unwonted alacrity and affability. He had assured the delighted priest that both purse and goods as well as his own personal assistance were at his disposal at any time. In the days that followed almost all the preparations had been made. Even the booths had been erected in the grove belonging to the school-

grounds. But then, to the bitter disappointment of all, it had begun to rain. That was Wednesday — Saturday, the first of May, was to witness the long-expected event. This was Thursday — and oh what a downpour! Was it really never going to stop? Yesterday Father Herbert had said to the children, in his own simple way, “My dearest little friends, it’s all up to you. You must pray that it stop raining before Saturday. This is Wednesday, St. Joseph’s day. Go to Joseph: he always helps. Storm his fatherly heart.” Of course, the children had forthwith become enthusiastic. They were all piety, all smiles, and all confidence, too. “Don’t you worry, Father,” they cried. “We’ll have fine weather; you’ll see. Oh, we’ll have fine weather for Saturday.” And with that they straightway began a triduum in St. Joseph’s honor, Sister Modesta at the head, of course.

And now it was Thursday. What a veritable deluge! Mr. Winson, as the head of the committee of affairs, had come to see about the postponement of the bazaar. But with a quiet smile the parish priest had assured him that all would be well, that the matter had been placed into

good hands. Then he told about the children’s triduum to St. Joseph. This it was that gave occasion to the remark with which our story opens.

“More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,” said Father Herbert, quoting Tennyson. “Mr. Winson, faith can move mountains, as Holy Writ tells us. I have unbounded confidence in the children’s prayers. I believe they are going to pierce the clouds in very truth, and scatter them, too.”

That settled it. Willy-nilly Mr. Winson was obliged to postpone the projected postponement. And so he took his departure with the best possible grace, doubtful, to be sure, and wondering much; for heavy clouds in foggy England are rarely anxious to flee away at the bidding of any man, much less, thought he, at the feeble lisplings of a group of boys and girls. But he would see. And Saturday evening he would call and let Father Herbert have his “I told you so!”

Friday morning came, bringing a leaden sky. From out the gloomy heavens the rain came steadily, steadily down. “The children are praying hard,” Sister whisp-

ered to Father Herbert in school that morning. "They haven't the least doubt about tomorrow; they are sure of the bazaar. They are bringing just heaps of flowers to St. Joseph. And only think of it — about an hour ago the sweet little things came to me and said, 'Sister, if St. Joseph doesn't listen, we're going to turn his picture round to the wall.' What a threat! And what a wondrous faith withal!" And Sister smiled happily.

Saturday morning came, and still it was raining, raining, raining. The great event had been planned for the afternoon. The triduum was at an end: the prayers were apparently unheard. Could it be that Mr. Winson was right after all? Not so thought the children. "We'll have fine weather, Father; you'll see; we'll have fine weather," — such was still the burden of their song. Were they not a little rash? Was not this a case

of hoping against hope? It seemed even presumptuous.

But it was not. About ten o'clock the clouds began to grow ever thinner and thinner; it stopped raining; the jolly May sun peeped down upon the earth and began to kiss away the diamond drops from bud and flower; a warm wind began to blow, putting to even more rapid flight the already retreating denizens of the sky, and gathering up the little pools of water in passing. By two o'clock in the afternoon everything was dry. The grass was invitingly fresh and green. The birds in the grove began to sing their sweetest songs — so sweet that the beautiful flowers which had been sleeping since Wednesday were awakened thereby and opened their little eyes again.

And the people, dressed in their Sunday best, left their homes in crowds and thronged to the bazaar.

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THE COMMUNIST THREAT

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part Nineteen: The Undermining of Education

*Note: The information in this article comes from **The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America** by Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt.*

“Conclave of the Change Agents” by Barbara M. Morris was published in the March 1977 issue of *The National Educator*. Excerpts follow from this extremely important article which proves that the federal government has been deeply involved in the funding and implementation of moral/citizenship (values) education:

Early in June 1976, 85 top level members of the educational elite and an assortment of influential change agents met at an invitation only conference in Philadelphia to draft recommendations on how to put “Moral/Citizenship Education” (MCE) programs in every school in the country—public, private and parochial. Conference participants included Humanist values educators Lawrence Kohlberg and Howard Kirschenbaum and representatives of the federal government, foundations, PTA, NEA and the National

Council of Churches. The recommendations that resulted from that conference which was sponsored by a Pennsylvania organization called Research for Better Schools (RBS) [a federally funded education laboratory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania] have been submitted to the National Institute of Education, with whom RBS has a contract to research, develop and disseminate moral/citizenship education programs....

So shaky is the basis for MCE that much conference time was devoted to trying to decide what to call MCE programs so as to avoid public hostility. Here are some examples of the thinking of conference participants relating to this problem:

- “‘Moral/Citizenship Education’ as a title can be sold; ‘Moral Education’ cannot. Avoid such red-flag slogans.”
- “We spent three conference days quibbling about the term ‘Moral/Citizenship Education.’ That is a major problem.” [emphasis in original]

- “The concept of self-development (which implies moral development) is more salable and will engender less resistance than moral development.”

- “It is important to limit the parameters of what we’re engaged in, if not to change the actual title, to avoid religious antagonisms and court action.”

The School Counselor, Publication of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, published a special issue on the subject of “Death” in its May 1977 issue (Vol. 24, #5). In this issue a remarkable admission regarding the results of sex education was made which explains clearly the purpose of these controversial humanistic programs: to create the problems sex ed, values ed, drug ed, and death ed were supposed to solve. An excerpt from *The School Counselor* follows:

Helping Students Clarify Values: ...

The last goal is to help students clarify their values on social and ethical issues. An underlying, but seldom spoken, assumption of much of the death education movement is that Americans handle death and dying poorly and that we ought to be doing better at it. As in the case of many other

problems, many Americans believe that education can initiate change. Change is evident, and death education will play as important a part in changing attitudes toward death as sex education played in changing attitudes toward sex information and wider acceptance of various sexual practices.

Charlotte Iserbyt’s Note: In light of events in the 1990s, the question arises: What does “doing better at it” mean? The statement “Death education will play as important a part in changing attitudes toward death as sex education played in changing attitudes toward... wider acceptance of various sexual practices” implies that our children benefitted from exposure to “wider acceptance of various sexual practices,” when all one has to do is survey the moral landscape to see the devastating effect these programs have had on our children’s lives. The same applies to death education and its effect on children’s understanding of the value of life, reflected in the increased number of murders carried out by youth.

Joanne McAuley’s **National Council for Educational Excellence**, A National Organization of concerned parents

and educators, was founded in the mid-1970s and, considering the potential it had for holding the line on innovations taking place in American education, its early demise represented a real setback for parents, children, and teachers. Ms. McAuley's May/June 1977 issue of her newsletter, *The School Bell*, is proof that the National School Boards Association was, at one time, a strong proponent of local control, not a "sell out the locals" organization that in the 1990s would support site- and school-based management (taxation without representation) and charter schools. Excerpts follow:

**NSBA PRESIDENT TELLS
BOARDS: STAND UP TO
FEDERAL MEDDLING**

On March 27, George W. Smith, immediate past president of the National School Boards Association, warned school board members attending the NSBA convention in Houston that "The Congress and the federal bureaucracy could become the country's master school board unless school board members stand up and be counted." He urged delegates to continue to forge a strong NSBA to convince Congress that local school board members are truly representative, most unselfish,

and the best qualified persons to represent the local viewpoint in education.

Smith said local constituencies cannot be forgotten even while the new trust is being built with Congress. "We must not forget our own constituency," he noted. He also advised board members to be aware of — and leery of — proposals for public involvement in public school operations that would shift decision-making authority to "vaguely defined groups of citizens at the school site level." The minister from San Diego cautioned that the power to make a decision must never be divorced from the responsibility for making that decision....

He said school boards must be strong for another reason — to counter the movements of the courts and federal regulatory agencies into the operation of schools. "If we want other governmental units to stop eroding our ability to provide educational governance, we must exercise that ability more often and more effectively." Smith said, "Where we can, we should work together with all segments of the public toward the improvement of the schools. But," he concluded, "our responsibility is to all the people and we must view only the 'big picture.'"

Charlotte Iserbyt's Note: Smith's ability to foresee the implementation of site-based management, the downgrading of the importance of elected board members, and the transfer of power to public-private partnerships, etc., is to be lauded! While serving in the

U.S. Department of Education this writer attempted to stop federally funded programs to train local school board members in conflict resolution and in how to implement effective school research.

To Be Continued

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

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 LITTLE CATECHISM OF THE CURÉ OF ARS

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



CHAPTER FOURTEEN CATECHISM ON SIN

Sin IS the executioner of the good God, and the assassin of the soul. It snatches us away from Heaven to precipitate us into Hell. And we love it! What folly! If we thought seriously about it, we should have such a lively horror of sin that we could not commit it. O my children, how ungrateful we are! The good God wishes to make us happy; that is very certain; He gave us His Law for no other end. The Law of God is great; it is broad. King David said that he found his delight in it, and that it was a treasure more precious to him than the greatest riches. He said also that he walked at large, because he had sought after the Commandments of the Lord. The good God wishes, then, to make us

happy, and we do not wish to be so. We turn away from Him and give ourselves to the devil! We fly from our Friend, and we seek after our murderer! We commit sin; we plunge ourselves into the mire. Once sunk in this mire, we know not how to get out. If our fortune were in the case, we should soon find out how to get out of the difficulty; but because it only concerns our soul, we stay where we are. We come to confession quite preoccupied with the shame that we shall feel. We accuse ourselves *by steam*. It is said that many confess, and few are converted. I believe it is so, my children, because few confess with tears of repentance. See, the misfortune is, that people do not reflect. If one said to those

who work on Sundays, to a young person who had been dancing for two or three hours, to a man coming out of an alehouse drunk, "What have you been doing? You have been crucifying Our Lord!" they would be quite astonished, because they do not think of it. My children, if we thought of it, we should be seized with horror; it would be impossible for us to do evil. For what has the good God done to us that we should grieve Him thus, and put Him to death afresh — Him, who has redeemed us from Hell? It would be well if all sinners, when they are going to their guilty pleasures, could, like St. Peter, meet Our Lord on the way, who would say to them, "I am going to that place where thou art going thyself, to be there crucified afresh." Perhaps that might make them reflect.

The saints understood how great an outrage sin is against God. Some of them passed their lives in weeping for their sins. St. Peter wept all his life; he was still weeping at his death. St. Bernard used to say, "Lord! Lord! it is I who fastened Thee to the Cross!" By sin we despise the good God, we crucify the good God! What a pity it is to lose our souls, which have cost Our

Lord so many sufferings! What harm has Our Lord done us, that we should treat Him so? If the poor lost souls could come back to the earth! if they were in our place! Oh, how senseless we are! the good God calls us to Him, and we fly from Him! He wishes to make us happy, and we will not have His happiness. He commands us to love Him, and we give our hearts to the devil. We employ in ruining ourselves the time He gives us to save our souls. We make war upon Him with the means He gave us to serve Him.

When we offend the good God, if we were to look at our crucifix, we should hear Our Lord saying to us in the depths of our soul, "Wilt thou too, then, take the side of My enemies? Wilt thou crucify Me afresh?" Cast your eyes on Our Lord fastened to the Cross, and say to yourself, "That is what it cost my Savior to repair the injury my sins have done to God!" A God coming down to earth to be the victim of our sins, a God suffering, a God dying, a God enduring every torment, because He would bear the weight of our crimes! At the sight of the Cross, let us understand the malice of sin, and the hatred we ought to feel for it. Let us enter into

ourselves; let us see what we can do to make amends for our poor life.

“What a pity it is!” the good God will say to us at our death; “why hast thou offended Me — Me, who loved thee so much?” To offend the good God, who has never done us anything but good; to please the devil, who can never do us anything but evil! What folly! Is it not real folly to choose to make ourselves worthy of Hell by attaching ourselves to the devil, when we might taste the joys of Heaven, even in this life, by uniting ourselves to God by love? One cannot understand this folly; it cannot be enough lamented. Poor sinners seem as if they could not wait for the sentence which will condemn them to the society of the devils; they condemn themselves to it. There is a sort of foretaste in this life of Paradise, of Hell, and of Purgatory. Purgatory is in those souls that are not dead to themselves; Hell is in the heart of the impious; Paradise in that of the perfect, who are closely united to Our Lord.

He who lives in sin takes up the habits and the appearance of the beasts. The beast, which has not reason, knows nothing but its appetites. So the man

who makes himself like the beasts loses his reason, and lets himself be guided by the inclinations of his body. He takes his pleasure in good eating and drinking, and in enjoying the vanities of the world, which pass away like the wind. I pity the poor wretches who run after that wind; they gain very little, they give a great deal for very little profit—they give their eternity for the miserable smoke of the world.

My children, how sad it is! when a soul is in a state of sin, it may die in that state; and even now, whatever it can do is without merit before God. That is the reason why the devil is so pleased when a soul is in sin, and perseveres in it, because he thinks that it is working for him, and if it were to die he would have possession of it. When we are in sin, our soul is all diseased, all rotten; it is pitiful. The thought that the good God sees it ought to make it enter into itself. And then, what pleasure is there in sin? None at all. We have frightful dreams that the devil is carrying us away, that we are falling over precipices. Put yourself on good terms with God; have recourse to the Sacrament of Penance; you will sleep as quietly as an angel. You will be glad to

waken in the night, to pray to God; you will have nothing but thanksgivings on your lips; you will rise towards Heaven with great facility, as an eagle soars through the air.

See, my children, how sin degrades man; of an angel created to love God, it makes a demon who will curse Him for eternity. Ah! if Adam, our first father, had not sinned, and if we did not sin every day, how happy we should be! we should be as happy as the saints in Heaven. There would be no more unhappy people on the earth. Oh, how beautiful it would be! In fact, my children, it is sin that brings upon us all calamities, all scourges, war, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, fires, frost, hail, storms — all that afflicts us, all that makes us miserable. See, my children, a person who is in a state of sin is always sad. Whatever he does, he is weary and disgusted with everything; while he who is at peace with God is always happy, always joyous. . . . Oh, beautiful life! Oh, beautiful death!

My children, we are afraid of death; I can well believe it. It is sin that makes us afraid of death; it is sin that renders death frightful, formidable; it is sin that terrifies the wicked

at the hour of the fearful passage. Alas! O God! there is reason enough to be terrified, to think that one is accursed —accursed of God! It makes one tremble. Accursed of God! and why? for what do men expose themselves to be accursed of God? For a blasphemy, for a bad thought, for a bottle of wine, for two minutes of pleasure! For two minutes of pleasure to lose God, one's soul, Heaven forever! We shall see going up to Heaven, in body and soul, that father, that mother, that sister, that neighbor, who were here with us, with whom we have lived, but whom we have not imitated; while we shall go down body and soul to burn in Hell. The devils will rush to overwhelm us. All the devils whose advice we followed will come to torment us.

My children, if you saw a man prepare a great pile of wood, heaping up fagots one upon another, and when you asked him what he was doing, he were to answer you, "I am preparing the fire that is to burn me," what would you think? And if you saw this same man set fire to the pile, and when it was lighted throw himself upon it, what would you say? This is what we do when we commit sin. It is not God who casts us into Hell;

we cast ourselves into it by our sins. The lost souls will say, "I have lost God, my soul, and Heaven; it is through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault!" He will raise himself out of the fire only to fall back into it. He will always feel the desire of rising because he was created for God, the greatest, the highest of beings, the Most High... as a bird shut up in a room flies to the ceiling, and falls down again, the justice of God is the ceiling which keeps down the lost.

There is no need to prove the existence of Hell. Our Lord Himself speaks of it, when He relates the history of the wicked rich man who cried out, "Lazarus! Lazarus!" We know very well that there is a Hell, but we live as if there were not; we sell our souls for a few pieces of money. We put off our conversion till the hour

of death; but who can assure us that we shall have time or strength at that formidable moment, which has been feared by all the saints — when Hell will gather itself up for a last assault upon us, seeing that it is the decisive moment? There are many people who lose the faith, and never see Hell till they enter it. The Sacraments are administered to them; but ask them if they have committed such a sin, and they will answer you, "Oh! settle that as you please."

Some people offend the good God every moment; their heart is an anthill of sins: it is like a spoilt piece of meat, half-eaten by worms. . . . No, indeed; if sinners were to think of eternity — of that terrible forever — they would be converted instantly.



ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

An Autobiography

CHAPTER NINE THE NIGHT OF THE SOUL

I assisted at Prime and Chapter with great fervor; and hastened to kneel at your feet to confide my happiness to you. I felt no fatigue, and not the slightest pain, so I had no difficulty in getting permission to finish Lent as I had begun, and on this Good Friday I shared in all the austerities of Carmel without any relaxation. Never had they appeared sweeter . . . the hope of soon entering Heaven transported me with joy.

When I returned to our cell in the evening of that happy day, I was still full of joy and I was quietly falling asleep when, as on the previous night, Jesus gave me the same sign of my speedy entrance into eternal life. My faith at this time was so clear and so lively that the thought of Heaven was my greatest delight; I could not believe it possible that there should be wicked men without Faith, and I was sure that those who deny the existence of another world belie their convictions. But during the Paschal days, that time so full of light,

Our Lord made me understand that there are really souls bereft of faith and hope, which through the abuse of grace have lost these precious gifts, the only source of pure and lasting joy. He allowed my own soul to be plunged in thickest gloom, and the thought of Heaven, so sweet from my earliest years, to become for me a subject of torture. Nor did the trial last merely for days or weeks; months have passed in this agony and I still await relief. I wish I could explain what I feel, but it is beyond my power. One must have passed through the tunnel to understand how black is its darkness. Let me try, however, to illustrate what I mean.

I will suppose that I was born in a land of thick fog, that I had never seen nature in her smiling moods or one single ray of sunshine. From my childhood I had heard of these things and knew that the country in which I dwelt was not my real home, that there was another land to which I must

always aspire. This was no fable invented by an inhabitant of the land of fogs. It was an unquestionable truth; for the King of that sunlit country had come to dwell for three and thirty years in the land of darkness, though alas! "the darkness did not understand that He was the Light of the world."

But, dear Jesus, Thy child believes firmly that Thou art the Light Divine; she asks pardon for her unbelieving brethren and is willing to eat the bread of sorrow as long as Thou shalt will it so. For love of Thee she will sit at that table of bitterness where these poor sinners take their food and will not rise from it till Thou givest the sign. But may she not say in her own name and in the name of her guilty brethren: "O God, be merciful to us sinners"? Send us away justified. May all those on whom faith does not shine, at last see the light! My God, if that table which they profane must be purified by one who loves Thee, I am willing to remain there alone to eat the bread of tears until the day when it shall please Thee to bring me to Thy Kingdom of light. I ask no other favor beyond that of never offending Thee.

I have already told you, Mother, that from my childhood, I

had had the conviction that I should one day be released from this land of darkness. I believed it not only from what I had heard, but also because the deepest and most secret longings of my heart assured me that there was in store for me another and most beautiful country, an abiding dwelling-place. I was like Christopher Columbus whose genius anticipated the discovery of the New World. But of a sudden the fog that surrounds me finds its way into my very soul, and so blinds me that I can no longer see there the lovely picture of my promised Home ... it has all faded away.

When my heart, weary of the enveloping darkness, tries to find some rest and strength in the thought of an everlasting life to come, my anguish only increases. It seems to me that the darkness itself, borrowing the voice of the unbeliever, cries mockingly: "You dream of a land of light and fragrance, you believe that the Creator of these wonders will be forever yours, you think to escape one day from the mists in which you now languish. Hope on! ... Hope on! ... Look forward to death! It will give you, not what you hope for, but a night darker still, the night of utter nothingness!"

This description of what I suffer, dear Mother, is as far removed from reality as the painter's rough outline from the model he copies, but to write more might be to blaspheme . . . even now I may have said too much. May God forgive me! He knows how I try to live by faith, even though it affords me no consolation. I have made more acts of faith during the past year than in all the rest of my life. Whenever my enemy provokes me to combat, I try to behave like a gallant soldier. Aware that a duel is an act of cowardice, I turn my back on the foe without once looking him in the face; then hastening to my Savior, I tell Him that I am ready to shed my blood as a witness to my belief in Heaven. I tell Him that if He will deign to open it for eternity to poor unbelievers, I am content to sacrifice during my life all joyous thoughts of the Home that awaits me. And so in spite of this trial which robs

me of all sense of enjoyment, I can still say: "Thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in Thy doings." For is there a greater joy than to suffer for Thy love, O my God? The more intense and more hidden the suffering the more dost Thou value it. And even if by an impossibility Thou should not be aware of my affliction, I should be still happy to bear it, in the hope that by my tears I might prevent or atone for one sin against faith.

You may think that I am exaggerating the night of my soul. If one judged by the poems I have composed this year it might seem that I have been inundated with consolation, that I am a child for whom the veil of Faith is almost rent asunder... But it is not a veil... it is a wall which reaches to the very heavens, shutting out the starry sky.

To Be Continued





FRANCISCAN SAINTS

MAY 6TH

**The Servant of God
Elizabeth of Torre**
Virgin, Second Order

Elizabeth lived as a nun of the Order of St. Clare in the city of Burgos, Spain. She was a model to her fellow sisters edifying them especially with her piety, the faithful observance of religious poverty, her humility, and her unlimited kindness of heart.

Once on a Sunday she was obliged to take care of a sister who was ill. Her ministrations engaged her attention to such an extent that she was not able, according to custom, to go to confession and Holy Communion; in fact, she could not even attend holy Mass. Nonetheless, she rendered the patient every service required without a sign of displeasure. Later when the sick sister could dispense with her assistance for a while, Elizabeth went to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament and poured out her heart in loving sorrow that she had to neglect His service, begging for-

givenness if she had failed in any way. Then, as the chronicle relates, an unknown Franciscan Father appeared, administered the holy sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist to her, and also celebrated Holy Mass.

Most unusually fortified, Elizabeth again went to her patient, thanked God fervently for His goodness, and thereafter was the more zealous in the practice of works of charity. Among other extraordinary graces, the day of her death was foretold to her by God.

Rich in merits and venerated by all as a saint, Elizabeth yielded her soul into the hands of her Creator in the year 1510. She was laid to rest in a special tomb in the choir of the convent church, where she was devoutly venerated.

ON LEAVING GOD FOR GOD'S SAKE

1.) Consider how the servant of God Elizabeth understood how one must serve God. She omitted her accustomed devotions, even the otherwise obligatory attendance at holy Mass, because out of love for God she did not wish to neglect anything in the care of her sick sister. That is what is called by St. Francis de Sales, leaving God for God's sake. Apparently, one neglects a point in the service of God, but in reality one serves Him the better by the practice of charity towards one's neighbor. Thomas a Kempis (1:15) also says: "For the benefit of one that is in need, a good work is sometimes freely to be left undone, or rather to be changed for what is better." Have you acted accordingly in the past?

2.) Consider that Christ our Lord Himself teaches us that certain laws permit of exceptions in special cases. He healed a sick person on the Sabbath day, and permitted His hungry disciples to pluck ears of corn although the Pharisees accused Him on that account of violating the Sabbath. Thus, Our Holy Father St. Francis also urged a weak brother to eat out of

time on a fast day, and himself ate with him to encourage him. So, there may arise instances where the commandment to refrain from servile work, to attend Holy Mass, to fast, and so forth, does not obligate us, yes, where the need of the neighbor or our own may demand that we refrain from observing the commandment, especially if our superiors or our confessor so direct us. In such cases it would be pharisaical justice, and often perverse self-will, to persist in carrying it out. — Have you ever done this?

3.) Consider that it is indeed not permitted for any person's sake to do evil or omit an obligatory good act from which we are not excused. But the good deeds and pious exercises which we perform of our own accord, we can at times with merit neglect or put off for the sake of others, especially if complying with them would be burdensome or annoying to others. Thus, the Apostle says: "To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men that I might save all" (*1 Cor. 9:22*).

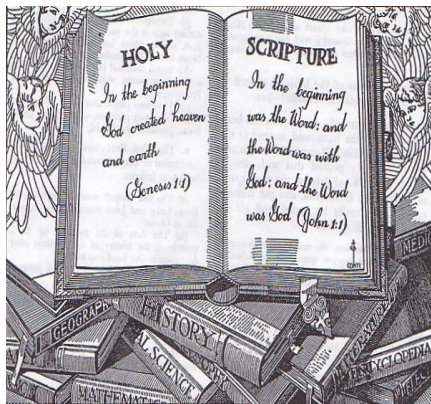
PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(Eighth Sunday after Pentecost)

*Of Thy mercy, O Lord, we beseech Thee, grant us the mind
ever to think and to do what is right, that we who have no
being apart from Thee, may live according to Thy will.
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*



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HERESY

THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA:1910

Imprimatur +John Cardinal Farley — Archbishop of New York

IX. PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LEGISLATION.

— The guiding principles in the Church's treatment of heretics are the following: Distinguishing between formal and material heretics, she applies to the former the canon, "Most firmly hold and in no way doubt that every heretic or schismatic is to have part with the Devil and his angels in the flames of eternal fire, unless before the end of his life he be incorporated with, and restored to the Catholic Church." No one is forced to enter the Church, but having once entered it through Baptism, he is bound to keep the promises he freely made. To restrain and bring back her rebellious sons the Church uses both her own spiritual power and the secular power at her command. Towards material heretics her conduct is ruled by the saying of St. Augustine: "Those are by no means to be accounted heretics who do not defend their false and perverse opinions with pertinacious zeal (*animositas*), especially when their error is not the fruit

of audacious presumption but has been communicated to them by seduced and lapsed parents, and when they are seeking the truth with cautious solicitude and ready to be corrected" (P. L., XXXIII, ep. xliii, 160). Pius IX, in a letter to the bishops of Italy (10 Aug., 1863), restates this Catholic doctrine: "It is known to Us and to You that they who are in invincible ignorance concerning our religion but observe the natural law . . . and are ready to obey God and lead an honest and righteous life, can, with the help of Divine light and grace, attain to eternal life . . . for God . . . will not allow any one to be eternally punished who is not willfully guilty" (Denzinger, "Enchir.", n. 1529).

X. ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION OVER HERETICS.

— The fact of having received valid Baptism places material heretics under the jurisdiction of the Church, and if they are in good faith, they belong to the soul of the Church. Their material severance, however, precludes them from

the use of ecclesiastical rights, except the right of being judged according to ecclesiastical law if, by any chance, they are brought before an ecclesiastical court. They are not bound by ecclesiastical laws enacted for the spiritual well-being of its members, e.g. by the Six Commandments of the Church.

XI. RECEPTION OF CONVERTS. — Converts to the Faith, before being received, should be well instructed in Catholic doctrine. The right to reconcile heretics belongs to the bishops, but is usually delegated to all priests having charge of souls. In England a special license is required for each reconciliation, except in case of children under fourteen or of dying persons, and this license is only granted when the priest can give a written assurance that the candidate is sufficiently instructed and otherwise prepared, and that there is some reasonable guarantee of his perseverance. The order of proceeding in a reconciliation is: first, abjuration of heresy or profession of faith; second, conditional baptism (this is given only when the heretical baptism is doubtful); third, sacramental confession and conditional absolution.

XII. ROLE OF HERESY IN HISTORY. — The role of heresy in history is that of evil generally. Its roots are in corrupted human nature. It has come over the Church as predicted by her Divine Founder; it has rent asunder the bonds of charity in families, provinces, states, and nations; the sword has been drawn and pyres erected both for its defense and its repression; misery and ruin have followed in its track. The prevalence of heresy, however, does not disprove the Divinity of the Church, any more than the existence of evil disproves the existence of an all-good God. Heresy, like other evils, is permitted as a test of faith and a trial of strength in the Church militant; probably also as a punishment for other sins. The disruption and disintegration of heretical sects also furnishes a solid argument for the necessity of a strong teaching authority. The endless controversies with heretics have been indirectly the cause of most important doctrinal developments and definitions formulated in councils to the edification of the body of Christ. Thus the spurious gospels of the Gnostics prepared the way for the canon of Scripture; Patripassian, Sabellian, Arian, and Macedonian heresies drew out a clearer concept of the

Trinity; the Nestorian and Eutychian errors led to definite dogmas on the nature and Person of Christ. And so down to Modernism, which has called forth a solemn assertion of the claims of the supernatural in history.

XIII. INTOLERANCE AND CRUELTY. — The Church's legislation on heresy and heretics is often reproached with cruelty and intolerance. Intolerant it is; in fact its *raison d'être* is intolerance of doctrines subversive of the Faith. But such intolerance is essential to all that is, or moves, or lives, for tolerance of destructive elements within the organism amounts to suicide. Heretical sects are subject to the same law: they live or die in the measure they apply or neglect it. The charge of cruelty is also easy to meet. All repressive measures cause suffering or inconvenience of some sort: it is their nature. But they are not therefore cruel. The father who chastises his guilty son is just and may be tender-hearted. Cruelty only comes in where the punishment exceeds the requirements of the case. Opponents say: Precisely; the rigors of the Inquisition violated all humane feelings. We answer: they offend the feelings of later ages in which there is less regard

for the purity of faith; but they did not antagonize the feelings of their own time, when heresy was looked on as more malignant than treason. In proof of which it suffices to remark that the inquisitors only pronounced on the guilt of the accused and then handed him over to the secular power to be dealt with according to the laws framed by emperors and kings. Medieval people found no fault with the system, in fact heretics had been burned by the populace centuries before the Inquisition became a regular institution. And whenever heretics gained the upper hand, they were never slow in applying the same laws: so the Huguenots in France, the Hussites in Bohemia, the Calvinists in Geneva, the Elizabethan statesmen and the Puritans in England. Toleration came in only when faith went out; lenient measures were resorted to only where the power to apply more severe measures was wanting. The embers of the Kulturkampf in Germany still smolder; the separation and confiscation laws and the ostracism of Catholics in France are the scandal of the day. Christ said: "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"(Matt., x, 34). The history of heresy verifies this prediction and shows,

moreover, that the greater number of the victims of the sword is on the side of the faithful adherents of the one Church founded by Christ (see INQUISITION).

For historical development of anti-heretical legislation see de Cauzons, Histoire de l'inquisition en France, I (Paris, 1909); it is the best work of its kind. — For Canon law:

Taunton, The Law of the Church for English-speaking Countries (London, 1906).— For information on special sects, etc.: Arnold and Scannel, A Catholic Dictionary (London, 1905); Blunt, Diction, of Sects (London, 1903); Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom (London, 1878).

J. WLLHELM.



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