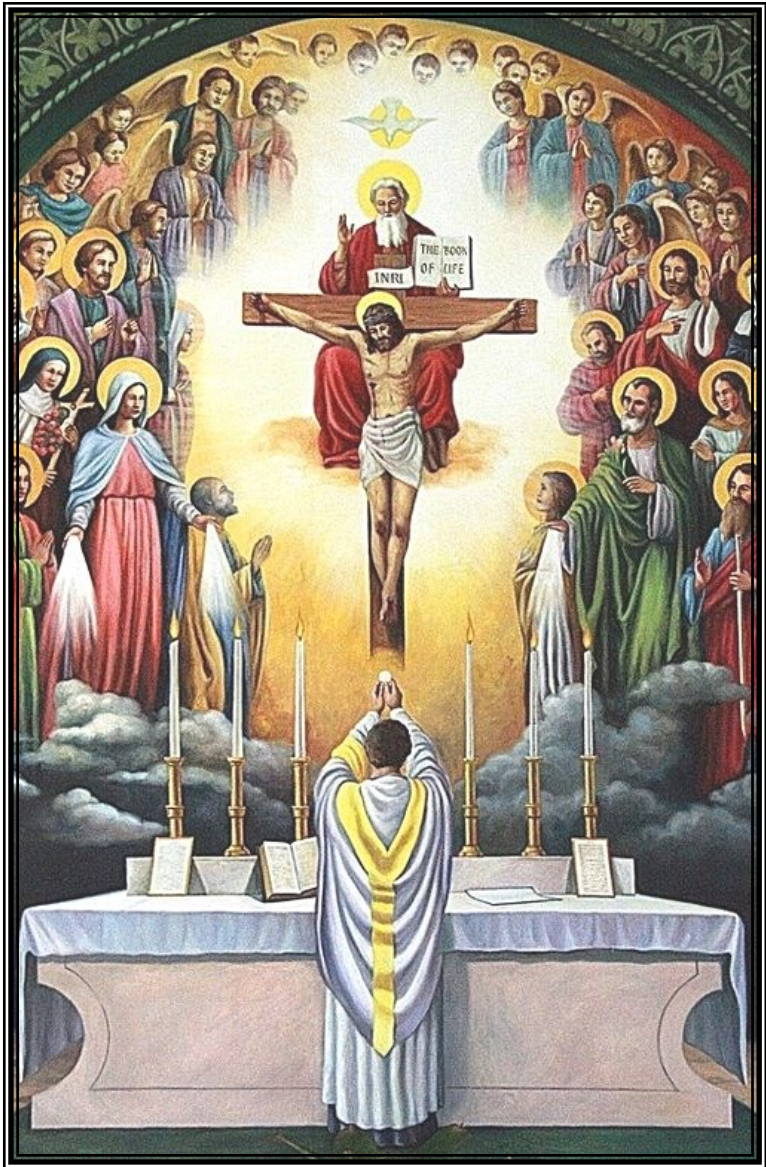


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*In essentia - Únitas. In dúbio - Libertas.
In ómnibus - Cáritas.*

THE SERAPH

THE LAST GREAT FEAST

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

The Liturgical Year is soon ending, but like the mythical phoenix, it will arise from the ashes anew with the season of Advent. But before the Church reaches this climatic end with the Gospel account of the end of the world and the General Judgment, it celebrates the most sacred part of the Fall season – Hallowtide.

Hallowtide refers to the Triduum of All-Hallows Eve, All-Saints Day, and All-Souls Day. Even though in the 1950s Pope Pius XII suppressed the vigil of All Saints, we may still observe this day as one of spiritual preparation and, in essence, preserve Hallowtide. This celebration and commemoration contains the dogma of the Communion of Saints. It is an Article of our Faith expressly stated in the Apostles' Creed: "*I believe....in the Communion of Saints.*"

The Communion of Saints is defined as *the spiritual solidarity which binds together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven in the organic unity of*

the same mystical body under Christ its head, and in a constant interchange of supernatural offices. The participants in that solidarity are called saints by reason of their destination and of their partaking of the fruits of the Redemption. (The Catholic Encyclopedia 1917) As we observe, this dogma expresses the spiritual bond that connects all members of the Catholic Church, both living and dead. The members are divided into three groups known as: the *Church Militant* – those of us still on earth working out our salvation; the *Church Suffering* – those poor souls in Purgatory who are being cleansed of any remaining sin or stain of sin; and the *Church Triumphant* – those who have entered Heaven and eternal glory with God. Our communion with each other is not merely our sharing the same Faith but also the love we express for one another.

All-Saints Day is clearly dedicated to honoring the *Church Triumphant*, and All-Souls Day is clearly dedicated to

praying for the *Church Suffering*. Although it is not stated in the Liturgy, we may, without fear of presumption, dedicate All-Hallows Eve to remembering the *Church Militant*.

Let us now delve into the history of each day and its spiritual significance.

All-Saints Day

The Feast of All-Saints originates with the Church of Antioch around the middle of the fourth century. It became the custom in Antioch that on the Sunday following Pentecost, a commemoration would be kept honoring the most holy martyrs. This practice spread throughout the Eastern Church and was finally introduced in Rome by Pope Boniface IV in the year 615. The date of this feast was May 13th. At some point, no later than 741, the commemoration had extended to include all the saints in Heaven. In the year 844, Pope Gregory IV transferred the date to November 1st. The reason for the change was not to be a substitute for the Germanic pagan feast of the demon cult of that time of the year. It was done for the practical consideration that more food would be available due to the harvest to feed the pilgrims who came to Rome for

the feast. Of course, nothing stops us from appreciating that on this day, we honor the friends of God to combat those who would invoke the demons, the enemies of God and humanity.

In his book *The Holyday Book*, page 123, Father Francis Weiser explains that the purpose of this feast is twofold. He says: "*As the prayer of the Mass states: 'the merits of all the saints are venerated in common by one celebration,' because a very large number of the martyrs and other saints could not be accorded in honor of a special festival since the days of the year would not suffice for all these individual celebrations. The second purpose was given by Pope Urban IV: 'Any negligence, omission, and irreverence committed in the celebration of the saints' feasts throughout the year is to be atoned for by the faithful, and thus due honor may still be offered to these saints.'*"

Those unknown saints are truly wonders. They help to remind us that we are all called to sanctity and about what is necessary to achieve it. We are not all called to practice severe mortifications or to be an inspiration for the whole world but to imitate Christ in His meekness and humility.

All-Souls Day

Every Catholic should know the need and the duty to pray for the dearly departed souls. This was a custom known in the Church from the very beginning. The Scriptural reference is found in the Second Book of Maccabees 12, 46, and the practice of private and public prayers (Requiem Mass) was well known. This devotion was left to the private practice of the faithful and was not added to the Roman Calendar until after the Benedictine Monks of Cluny began the commemoration.

“The memorial feast of all the departed ones,” notes Fr. Weiser in the same book quoted above, *“in a common celebration was inaugurated by Abbot Saint Odilo of Cluny (1048). He issued a decree that all monasteries of the congregation of Cluny were annually to keep November 2 as a ‘day of all the departed ones.’ (Page 124)”*

Eventually, this practice was adopted by other Benedictines, the Carthusians, and other communities in various countries. It was not until the fourteenth century that Rome placed the day of commemoration of all the faithful departed into the official books of the Western Church. No-

vember 2nd was chosen *“in order that the memory of the ‘holy souls’ both of the saints in Heaven and of the souls in purgatory should be celebrated on two successive days, and in this way to express the Christian belief in the “Communion of Saints.” (Ibid., page 124)* It was in the year 1915 that Pope Benedict XV allowed the custom of priests to celebrate three Masses on All Souls’ Day. This was done to increase the help given to the poor souls.

The Poor Souls cannot pray for themselves, nor can they gain merit to decrease their time of expiation. They require our prayers to help them. We should develop a deep devotion to the Poor Souls and pray for them daily. They will return the favor and pray for us, especially when they have entered Heaven’s glory.

All-Hallows Eve

On October 31st, we observe All-Hallows Eve, or the Old-English word, Halloween. This day is a Christian feast we can dedicate to the Church Militant. I should take a moment and make clear that Halloween has no connection with the Celtic festival of Samhain (a Gaelic word pronounced “SAH-win”), a pa-

gan religious celebration to welcome the harvest at the end of summer when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. (The definition is taken from the Library of Congress.) The name was stolen by those who still wish to celebrate this pagan festival. It is odd that a country that professes itself to be a “Christian nation” would even promote this as a holiday, even if it is not national. We Catholics must remember what this day is. It is the solemn preparation for the great feast of All-Saints. We Catholics should not waste our time with any of these worldly celebrations, even those that appear innocent. Instead, on this day, we should engage ourselves more earnestly with spiritual exercises – prayers and spiritual reading. Remember that our sole aspiration in life must be to become saints. On All-Hallows Eve, we should take stock of ourselves and our conduct. We should take extra care to examine our conscience and reaffirm our pious intentions to advance in virtue. It would be an excellent day to renew our Baptismal vows and to read something from the lives of the saints. Families could make this a custom in their homes. The father could lead the fam-

ily in the Baptismal Renewal by following what is contained in the Missal on Holy Saturday. Then afterward, they can recite the rosary dedicated to all the saints. The family should place themselves under the protection of their Guardian Angels, patron saints, and, especially, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of All Saints. Finally, the evening could end with the hymn, *Come Holy Ghost*, because we can become saints by the inner dwelling of the Holy Ghost.

One final thought for our spiritual consideration concerning Hallowtide. Thanks to Pope Pius XI, we now celebrate the Feast of Christ the King on the last Sunday in October. This feast properly proceeds Hallowtide, just as the Eternal Word proceeds us creatures. He connects the Communion of Saints because He is the Head of the Mystical Body. He is the central figure of our creation and our redemption. He unites the Communion of Saints of the Old Testament with those of the New Testament. Through His infinite merits, we can become saints and share eternal glory with the Most Blessed Trinity.

“Jesus Christ yesterday, today, and the same forever.”

Prayers for the Dead

St. Alphonsus Ligouri

MY GOD! I RECOMMEND TO THEE THE SOULS OF MY RELATIONS, MY BENEFACTORS, MY FRIENDS, AND MY ENEMIES, AND OF THOSE WHO ARE IN PURGATORY ON MY ACCOUNT.

I RECOMMEND TO THEE THE SOULS OF EVANGELICAL LABORERS, OF RELIGIOUS AND PRIESTS, AND ESPECIALLY OF THOSE WHO HAD CHARGE OF MY SOUL.

I RECOMMEND TO THEE THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO WERE MOST DEVOUT TO THE PASSION OF OUR LORD, TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE SOULS WHO ARE MOST ABANDONED, THOSE WHO SUFFER MOST, AND THOSE WHO ARE NEAREST TO THE ENTRANCE INTO PARADISE.

ETERNAL REST GIVE TO THEM, O LORD; AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM.

MAY THEIR SOULS AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE AND MAY THE DIVINE ASSISTANCE ALWAYS REMAIN WITH US AND BRING US TO LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

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DISCOVER THE MISSAL

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

The use of a Missal is often confusing until we take some time to examine how it is arranged. To complicate matters, there are Sunday and Daily Missals, and not every Missal is arranged in the same order. Sunday Missals are usually much smaller because they only have Sunday Masses. The Daily Missal contains the Masses for Sundays as well as for the various feasts and occasions throughout the year.

Our missals have distinct sections that we should become familiar with by frequently perusing through them. In the Missal, we have various sections such as: “Proper of the Season,” “Ordinary of the Mass,” “Proper of the Saints,” “Common of the Saints,” “Masses for the Dead,” and several “Votive Masses.” There is quite often a section of various prayers and devotions as well.

After introductions, general instructions, etc., in our Missals, the first section is generally “The Proper of the

Season.” This section takes us from the First Sunday in Advent to the Last Sunday after Pentecost. This section does not contain the entirety of the Mass but only those parts that are “Proper” or unique for each of the Sundays of the Seasons. For each Sunday in this section, we usually find a proper: Introit, Collect, Epistle, Gradual, Alleluia, Gospel, Offertory, Secret, Communion, and Post Communion prayers.

The “Ordinary of the Mass” usually follows “The Proper of The Season.” This frequently has some introduction, instruction, preparatory prayers, etc. “The Ordinary of the Mass” contains the Prayers at the foot of the Altar, through the Canon of the Mass, Communion, and Last Gospel. There are also usually some instructions and prayers of thanksgiving printed after the Mass for our private devotion. These parts of the Mass do not or very seldom change. Before or after this section on the Mass, we will find Proper Prefaces for the various seasons.

Next, we have the “Proper of the Saints.” “The Proper of the Saints takes us through the Saints’ feast days that fall on a particular day of the month. It usually begins at the end of November because this coincides with the First Sunday of Advent and continues throughout the year. “The Proper of the Saints” contains the proper parts of Mass (like we saw in the “Proper of the Season”) for the Saints’ Feast Days,

Next comes “The Common of Saints.” This section contains the proper parts (like what are found for the “Proper of the Season”) for the various classifications of Saints. For many of the Saints’ Feast Days listed in the “Proper of the Saints,” we are directed to the “Common of the Saints.” If we do not have a particular feast day in our Missal, we can usually find an appropriate Mass to follow in the “Common of the Saints.” This is easier than repeating all the Propers for each Feast Day. The classification of Saints follows a general pattern of Common of Apostles and Evangelists, Common of Popes, Common of one Martyr, Common of a Martyr Bishop, Masses of a Martyr, not a bishop, Common of Several Martyrs

(These may be subdivided into Masses during Easter Season or not during Easter Season). Next come Masses for Confessor Bishop, Common of a Doctor, Confessor not a Bishop. Masses of Virgins, Virgin Martyrs, Virgin not a Martyr, Common of Holy Women, Holy Woman Martyr, Holy Woman not a Martyr, Dedication of a Church, Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturdays, etc.

Lastly, we generally find Masses for the dead, for Marriages, and votive Masses – Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ Eternal High Priest, Sacred Heart, Blessed Sacrament, Holy Name, Precious Blood, Holy Cross, Passion of Our Lord, Holy Ghost, To obtain the Grace of the Holy Ghost, The Blessed Virgin Mary, Holy Angels, St. Joseph, Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, All the Holy Apostles, St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, Honor any Canonized Saint, Election of a Pope, Consecration of a Bishop, Conferring Holy Orders, For the Sick, For a dying Person, Propagation of the Faith, Against the Heathen, Healing of Schism and return of Separated Christians, In Time of War, For Peace, In Time of Pestilence, Thanksgiving, Forgiveness of Sins, For

Pilgrims and Travelers, For Any Necessity, For a Happy Death, etc.

All this doesn't sound very easy to many unfamiliar with using a Missal, but once we learn to read, we should begin learning to use it and follow along with the Mass. It is also good to keep our Missals close so we can read the prayers for the day's Mass. When we get into the habit of opening our missals to pray the various prayers that the Church has composed to honor the saint of the day, we quickly become familiar with our missal, and following along at Mass becomes more straightforward and even more fruitful. Too often, we attend Mass without participating, as if we were watching a stage performance. The priest and those in the Sanctuary are not there to entertain us. They are there to lead us in uniting with Jesus in Sacrifice and receiving Him into our lives through Holy Communion.

The Holy Mass is in Latin, and we often hear the argument that the people don't understand what is being said. First, excepting a sermon, the priest is not speaking to people. He is speaking for the people to God. Secondly, the Mass is a mystery that is

beyond our comprehension. We believe not because we understand but because Jesus tells us through the Church. Lastly, we can always follow along with approved translations in our Missals.

Those who cannot read may still participate by uniting in praying to God and meditating on the Mysteries of the Sacrifice of the Mass. We can imagine ourselves present at the foot of the Cross and speak to Jesus in the inner voice of our hearts.

The Beginning of the Ecclesiastical year is an excellent time to peruse our Missal and discover something we have forgotten or even find something we did not know was there. There is a treasure of inspiration and devotion in our little Missals, but they will only benefit us if we take the time to find and use them. Following along with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is much easier when we are familiar with our Missals.



SIMPLY ANSWERED

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

Does it matter what language we use to pray to God? Isn't it all the same worship and the same God?

Yes, it matters what language we use when we pray to God in the public worship given in the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments. In the Roman or Latin Rite, the proper language is Latin. In our private devotions, we are also free to use the vernacular. For our personal advantage, using the vernacular is good and acceptable.

There is only one true God, but many false gods or idols exist. There is only one true Church, but many false churches or religions exist. Where God is one, the devils create many. It is standard Catechetical instruction that we must believe all that the Catholic Church teaches because God is teaching us these things through the Catholic Church. To deny one doctrine of the Church is essentially to deny them all.

In the Western or Latin rite, Latin became the universal language of the Church. The

Sacraments were administered, and the Mass was offered in the same rite, with the same language, in the same manner. A Catholic could go anywhere there was a Roman Catholic Church and be familiar with the ceremonies and rituals because they were the same everywhere. This was a significant advantage that Roman Catholics had over the many non-Catholic sects. It was an essential element of the oneness of the Church.

With the changes brought in by the “spirit of Vatican Council II,” things were now done in the vernacular for each region. English was to be used in English-speaking areas, Spanish in Spanish-speaking regions, French in French-speaking regions, etc. In this manner, the New Rite was more in conformity with the Protestants and other non-Catholics. The oneness of the Church was severely undermined simply by the diversity of languages.

This may have been tolerable, but modern vernacular has an inherent problem. Each language has ambiguities, double

meanings, changing vocabulary, and definitions. This opened the door for false doctrines or false understandings of the doctrines. In the vagueness of definitions and interpretations, non-Catholics were no longer offended. The divisive language was done away with. A common phrase was, "Let us seek what unites us rather than what divides us." Ignoring or reinterpreting doctrine is tantamount to denying it.

However, there was much more going on than a simple translation of the rites of the Latin Church. The Vatican II Church did not just translate but created an entirely new rite for the celebration of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments. This was evident by the continuous necessity to obtain a new and updated "Missalette" to participate in the Mass. Most Catholics already possessed Missals with both the Latin and vernacular translations side by side. The New Rite of Vatican II was not a translation but was something new and different, with just a little of the original intact. Most of what was changed was to make Catholic worship compatible or less objectionable to non-Catholics. Subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, definitions and teach-

ings changed as well. For example, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, emphasizing the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary, became a Memorial of the Last Supper. The Mass went from a Sacrifice to a Meal. The solemnity of Sacrifice and worship was replaced with sharing a meal with our neighbors and friends. This brought about greater activity/participation of the laity in the service (which was one of the stated goals). The "boring" silence of worship and adoration was replaced with a more engaging, exciting, active participation of the laity. This was more in line with many of our non-Catholic friends and neighbors' way of worship, thinking, and believing.

With the loss of the universal Latin, the laity was not drawn into a greater participation in true worship, understanding, and faith. On the contrary, the laity was scattered into various forms of false worship, understanding, and faith. The once-Catholic Churches, with the ambiance of sacredness and solemnity, were turned into Protestant meeting halls or cafeterias. Where Catholics once listened in silent awe to hear God speaking silently to them in the innermost of their souls, they now heard and par-

ticipated in the near-constant chatter of men.

One universal language, as opposed to multiple languages, promotes unity in worship, faith, and doctrines. The diversity of languages opens the door and promotes a variety of worship, faith, and doctrines. Multiple languages invite and promote false worship, faith, and doctrines. Therefore, it matters what lan-

guage we publicly use to worship God. Not all religions, worship, and beliefs are true and good. On the contrary, most are false. It is the devil's work to create this disunity and undermine the prayer of Jesus that we should be one. *“That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me”* (Saint John 17:21).



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THE COMMUNIST THREAT

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part Twenty-One: The Undermining of Education

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

1976

In the September 1976 Issue of Phi Delta Kappan, “*America’s Next Twenty-Five Years: Some Implications for Education*,” Harold Shane described his version of the “new and additional basic skills” as follows:

Certainly, cross-cultural understanding and empathy have become fundamental skills, as have the skills of human relations and intercultural rapport... the arts of compromise and reconciliation, of consensus building, and of planning for interdependence become basic.... As young people mature we must help them develop... a service ethic which is geared toward the real world... the global servant concept in which we will educate our young for planetary service and eventually for some form of world citizenship.... Implicit within the “global servant”

concept are the moral insights that will help us live with the regulated freedom we must eventually impose upon ourselves.

Charlotte Iserbyt’s Note: The writer would like to contrast Harold Shane’s comments with those of C.S. Lewis as compiled in an article “C.S. Lewis on Liberal Arts Education” by Gregory Dunn which was published in the newsletter *On Principle* from the John M. Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs (April 1999, Vol. VII, No. 2). Excerpts from Dunn’s article follow:

The first reason we study the liberal arts has to do with freedom. That freedom is an integral part of the liberal arts is borne out of [C.S.] Lewis’s observation that “liberal comes of course from the Latin, liber, and means free.” Such an education makes one free, according to Lewis, because it transforms the pupil from “an unregenerate little bundle of appetites” into “the good man and the good citizen.” We act most human when we are reasonable, both in thought and

deed. Animals, on the other hand, act wholly out of appetite. When hungry, they eat; when tired, they rest. Man is different. Rather than follow our appetites blindly we can be deliberate about what we do and when we do it. The ability to rule ourselves frees us from the tyranny of our appetites, and the liberal arts disciplines this self-rule. In other words, this sort of education teaches us to be most fully human and thereby, to fulfill our human duties, both public and private.

Lewis contrasts liberal arts education with what he calls “vocational training,” the sort that prepares one for employment. Such training, he writes, “aims at making not a good man but a good banker, a good electrician... or a good surgeon.” Lewis does admit the importance of such training—for we cannot do without bankers and electricians and surgeons—but the danger, as he sees it, is the pursuit of training at the expense of education. “If education is beaten by training, civilization dies,” he writes, for the “lesson of history” is that “civilization is a rarity, attained with difficulty and easily lost.” It is the liberal arts, not vocational training, that preserves civilization by producing reasonable men and responsible citizens....

A third reason we study the liberal arts is because it is simply our nature and duty. Man has a natural thirst for knowledge of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, and men and women of the past have made great sacrifices to pursue it in spite of the fact that, as Lewis puts it, “human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice.” In his words, “they propound mathematical theorems in beleaguered cities, conduct metaphysical arguments in condemned cells, make jokes on scaffolds.” So, finding in the soul an appetite for such things, and knowing no appetite is made by God in vain, Lewis concludes that the pursuit of the liberal arts is pleasing to God and is possibly, for some, a God-given vocation....

...Truly, we ignore the liberal arts only at our peril. Without them we will find ourselves increasingly unable to preserve a civilized society, to escape from the errors and prejudices of our day, and to struggle in the arena of ideas to the glory of God.

Today's Education, The Journal of The National Education Association, carried an article in the September – October 1976 edition entitled “The Seven Cardinal Principles Revisited.” On page 1 this article stated that:

In 1972, the NEA established a Bicentennial Committee charged with developing a “living commemoration of the principles of the American Revolution.” This 200th anniversary celebration of the Declaration of Independence was to focus on the next 100 years of education in an interdependent global community. The initial work of the Committee culminated in the NEA Bicentennial Idea Book. Among its ideas was that of developing a definitive volume to “contain a reframing of the Cardinal Principles of Education and recommendations for a global curriculum.” After recognizing the importance of the original Cardinal Principles, which were published in 1918, the Committee made the point that “today, those policy statements about education are obsolete, education taken as a whole is not adequate to the times and too seldom anticipates the future.” A report to be issued by the NEA, proposing cardinal premises for the twenty-first century is the direct and immediate outgrowth of the Bicentennial Committee’s belief that “educators around the world are in a unique position to bring about a harmoniously interdependent global community based on the principles of peace and justice....” Early in September 1975, a 19-member Preplanning Committee began

the task of recasting the seven Cardinal Principles of Education by developing 25 guidelines for the project.

Charlotte Iserbyt’s Note: Members of the Preplanning Committee read like a “Who’s Who of Leading Globalists.” It included: former Secretary of Education T.H. Bell, “Mr. Management-by-Objectives,” who was responsible for the grant to William Spady of the Far West Laboratory to pilot OBE in Utah, with plans to “put OBE in all schools of the nation”; Professor Luvern Cunningham, Ohio State University, who subsequently served as advisor to the Kentucky Department of Education during its education restructuring in the 1990s; Willis Harman, Stanford Research Institute; Robert Havighurst, University of Chicago; Theodore Hesburgh, University of Notre Dame; Ralph Tyler, Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Science; Professor Theodore Sizer, Coalition for Essential Schools, which calls for a “less is more” curriculum and removal of graduation standards (the Carnegie Unit); David Rockefeller; Professor Benjamin Bloom, father of Mastery Learning (the international learning method); the late McGeorge Bundy of the Ford Foundation; and others.

Foundation of Lifelong Education was published by UNESCO (UNITED NATIONS Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) Institute for Education (Pergamon Press: Oxford, N.Y., Toronto, Sydney, Paris, Frankfurt, 1976). In chapter 4, "Theoretical Foundations of Lifelong Education: A Sociological Perspective," Henri Janne described accurately the how, what and why of decentralization (site-based management, charter schools, choice, unelected school councils, etc.) being sold to naïve school boards and citizens as "local control":

In education a monolithic structure is completely unacceptable as it creates organizations that, owing to their homogeneity and their ineluctable [inevitable] bureaucratic nature, are averse to change and to individual or local adaptation....

Decentralization of the greatest possible number of decisions is indispensable in a system founded on... education defined as "learning" rather than "teaching."

Charlotte Iserbyt's Note: "Learning," as described and defined by the educational change agents, is the process by which students/children are allowed to acquire the

knowledge which will be "beneficial" to them personally as they pursue the fulfillment of their particular life roles (jobs). This process is the opposite of the traditional role of education as "teaching" students subject matter which can be used for diversified pursuits later in life.

In the 1977 entry dealing with UNESCO's Development of Educational Technology in Central and Eastern Europe the reader will note that the socialist countries of Eastern Europe had centralized systems of education and had not yet adapted their system to accommodate Henri Janne's proposals for "lifelong learning." Janne explained above how to take a centralized system of pedagogy and ideas and "localize" them in order to change their focus without ever changing the centralized control. This gives an interesting perspective on the oft-seen bumper sticker: "Think Globally — Act Locally."

To Be Continued



ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

From the Sunday Sermon Archives, 2017

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

Dear Friends,

For the feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, our Holy Mother the Church gives us, in the Epistle today, the Valiant Woman to consider. This passage from the book of Proverbs (31, 10-31) describes for us a woman who is dedicated to her husband, children, servants, and all that concerns the proper care of the household. She is wise and prudent. She labors giving totally of her time and of herself. All in her home are well fed and well clothed.

In the life of St. Elizabeth, we see that she too, was a valiant woman. As a queen, she not only took care of all in her home, but even built a large hospital, and during a famine, she daily fed nine hundred needy people. She was truly a queen as she took her role of responsibility to all in her kingdom very seriously — especially in her care for the poor. Even when she lost her wealth and power upon the death of her husband, she labored with her hands spinning flax to provide for herself and her children and to be able to give something to the poor.

In the Gospel for today, we are shown that the Kingdom of Heaven is to be treasured above all things. We are told it is like the treasure hidden on some land and the man sells everything to buy that land. And we are given the pearl of great price, and this man sells everything to buy that pearl. We see that St. Elizabeth truly understood the value of heaven as did these men. After she was reinstated to her position in the Castle, she secured the proper education and position of her children, then she and two maids left everything. They went to live in a small house near the Franciscan church in Marburg. She was the first Third Order member in Germany. She received a token of membership from St. Francis himself. Today we honor her as a principal patroness of the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi.

We are given her life as well as the Epistle and Gospel of today for our instruction and imitation. We should realize that we have many good things from God, but His desire is that we employ them for the good of those dependent upon us, and then save some to be able to assist the

poor also. We must be wise, prudent, and frugal in our use of God's gifts for ourselves so that we have something to share with others. We should spend ourselves in our labors without growing weary.

From employing ourselves wisely and frugally in this world, we accumulate or draw to ourselves the things of this earth. We build up wealth for ourselves and others. Then we are drawn to the Gospel where we exchange all this for something much better. We sell all that we have to purchase the pearl of great price. St. Elizabeth, as the valiant woman, built up the castle and the kingdom with her laborious efforts; then as the wise man in the parable of the Gospel, she set all that aside to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven. She built up and secured material advantages for her family and kingdom then, she freely refused to take any of these for herself. All that was to be hers, she gave away to follow Christ in poverty. She truly accomplished the direction of Christ to His disciples. She sold all that she had and gave it to the poor so she could follow Him.

This is the beautiful life that our Holy Mother the Church places before us today for our

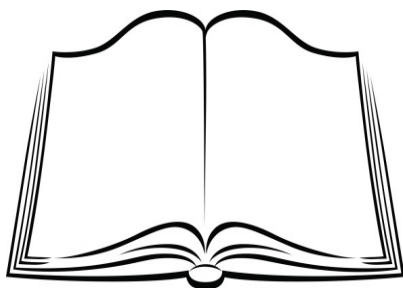
instruction and imitation. We must labor prudently and wisely so that we may provide for ourselves and our dependents the best that we can. We must also put aside something to be able to assist others in their needs. But, most importantly we are not to become overly attached to these things. All these things must be left behind if we are going to enter into Heaven. We are all asked at some point in our lives (even if it is at the end of our lives) to exchange these material things for spiritual ones. We must sell all these things to purchase the treasure of Heaven — the pearl of great price.

If we are successful in doing this during our lives here on earth, we will be like the householder who brings forth from his treasure things old and new. Our lives in God are like God — always ancient, but ever new. Our labors and treasures of this world grow old, or we grow old. In either case, we must exchange them for something new. We are to put off the old man and put on the new man with St. Paul. In drawing forth from our old treasures here on earth, we bring forth new treasures in Heaven. We put off the old life of this world and put on the new life in God.



The Catholic Mother to Her Children

The Countess de Flavigny



THIRD LESSON **ON DUTY TOWARDS GOD**

“Thou shalt fear the Lord Thy God, and thou shalt serve Him only.” Deut. vi. 13.

Faith, Hope, Charity, Adoration — in these few words, my children, we may sum up the whole of our duty towards God. By Faith we believe in him, by Hope we hope in him, by Charity we love him with our whole hearts, by Adoration we give him that worship which is due to him, and we serve him as he desires to be served.

FAITH

To believe in God is to believe that God exists. Well, who can doubt it, my children, when contemplating the beautiful spectacle of the universe, all the marvels contained in the world? Who could suppose that earth and heaven were

made by themselves and by chance? To believe in God is also to place your confidence in Him, that is to say, to look up to Him as your sovereign good, that infinite good which is to fill our hearts in this world and in the next.

Faith consists also in believing God’s Word, as written in the Holy Scripture, and all the truths taught us by the Church. These truths are called Articles of Faith. In the number there are many you cannot understand, that you will even never understand, because they are above the powers of the human mind: those are mysteries. We are, nevertheless, commanded to believe in them as firmly as if we understood them; for God who teaches us these truths, never deceives us; nor can he

either ever possibly make a mistake. If it seems to you difficult to believe in what you have not seen, what you cannot understand, I shall make you remark, my children, that you do not doubt the facts reported in history, nevertheless they did not take place under your eyes. You also believe in the changes of the seasons, in the flowers which blossom on the trees, in the fruit which comes after the flowers, in the ear of corn shooting up out of a small seed sown in the earth: you see all that, it is true, but do you understand it? Certainly not. These things are to you as so many mysteries; why then would you hesitate to believe in the mysteries of religion? This doubt, my children, would be a want of faith. You also sin against faith on neglecting to be instructed upon religion, the study of which is necessary to teach us all we ought to believe.

HOPE

To hope in God is to expect that in His infinite goodness He will grant us after death eternal happiness in heaven, and until then His Divine Grace, by the help of which alone we can obtain it. Our hope is founded, my children, on God's mercy for mankind,

on the merits of Jesus Christ, who made Himself Our Savior and our intercessor, standing between us and His Father's wrath, and finally on the promise made by God Himself, never to refuse us His help. Here is another proof of the great goodness of God; He orders us to consider hope as a duty, and even without His command it would seem impossible not to entertain so sweet, so consoling, and so natural a feeling. Nevertheless, my dear children, without being aware of it, you have already sinned against this duty. When you say that you cannot get the better of such and such a defect, that you will never be able to control your temper, this disheartening feeling is a want of faith and of hope in the God of the weak and of children. The poor and the afflicted who yield to despair, sin also against the hope they ought to have in Providence, in the God who consoles.

You rightly understand, no doubt, my children, that neither our confidence in God, nor the hope of His Divine help, in assisting us to effect our salvation, should prevent us from working at it ourselves with the greatest ardor. Zeal and good will are requisite to obtain God's

grace, and if He condescends to assist us, it is on condition that we shall begin by helping ourselves.

ON CHARITY

Charity consists in loving God with all our hearts and above all things. Faith and Hope, my children, are the foundations of Charity. How can we refrain from loving that God Whom faith shows to us as so powerful and so good, that God from Whom we hope such an abundance of grace? Has He not also been the first to show us His love? And you above all, my children, you, still so young, are you not already loaded with His benefits? Are you not brought up in the true religion, in the bosom of the true Church, surrounded by such care and such love! In fact, to know how good is the Lord, it would be sufficient to relate the history of your existence, so easy and so happy. Love God then from the depths of your souls, love Him above all things, love Him more than those who are dearest to you, for it is He who gave them to you, He who made them kind and affectionate towards you. I know you cannot always feel for God, in your heart, a sensible love like that you feel for a father; but in thinking often of God, in remembering

His divine benefits, gratitude will make you grow more truly attached to Him. Besides, my children, He has told us Himself that to love Him is especially to keep His word, and to do His will.

ON ADORATION

To adore God is to give Him that worship we owe Him, as our creator and our master. To God alone adoration is due. Homage is offered to the Blessed Virgin and to Saints, you may pray to them, as powerful protectors, intercessors before God; but you do not adore them.

The worship we owe God is inward and outward. It should be inward, that is to say, it should come from the soul, saying your prayers, it would be vain to kneel with clasped hands, for even then, if you think not of God, but of something else, you do not adore Him. In this case, my dear children, you deserve the reproof Our Lord addressed once to the Jews: "These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me."

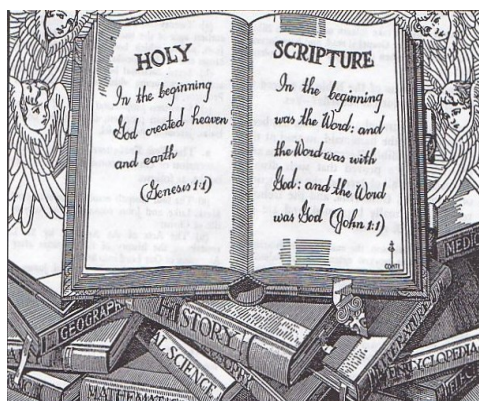
The outward worship, also ordained by God, consists in the prayer and ceremonies made use of by the Church. Prayer is the expression of

our feelings towards God. The ceremonies are intended to direct our minds to pious thoughts. In all these exercises of devotion, my dear children, our demeanor ought to be humble, respectful, and devotional; for everything in us, the body as well as the soul, must adore God and worship Him.

We are obliged to adore God. "Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and Him alone shalt thou

serve." Being our Creator, He is entitled to receive from us all praise, homage, and adoration. We should adore Him with our whole being. As we are composed of a body and soul, it is our duty to give God homage for both one and the other. Besides, external actions have a great effect upon the soul, and make us love and serve God more fervently.

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THE LITTLE CATECHISM OF THE CURÉ OF ARS

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



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN CATECHISM ON SUFFERING

Whether we will or not, we must suffer. There are some who suffer like the good thief, and others like the bad thief. They both suffered equally. But one knew how to make his sufferings meritorious, he accepted them in the spirit of reparation, and turning towards Jesus crucified, he received from His mouth these beautiful words: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." The other, on the contrary, cried out, uttered imprecations and blasphemies, and expired in the most frightful despair. There are two ways of suffering — to suffer with love, and to suffer without love. The saints suffered everything with joy, patience, and perseverance, because they loved. As for us, we suffer with anger,

vexation, and weariness, because we do not love. If we loved God, we should love crosses, we should wish for them, we should take pleasure in them. We should be happy to be able to suffer for the love of Him who lovingly suffered for us. Of what do we complain? Alas! the poor infidels, who have not the happiness of knowing God and His infinite loveliness, have the same crosses that we have; but they have not the same consolations.

You say it is hard? No, it is easy, it is consoling, it is sweet; it is happiness. Only we must love while we suffer, and suffer while we love.

On the Way of the Cross, you see, my children, only the first step is painful. Our greatest

cross is the fear of crosses. We have not the courage to carry our cross, and we are very much mistaken; for, whatever we do, the cross holds us tight — we cannot escape from it. What, then, have we to lose? Why not love our crosses and make use of them to take us to Heaven? But, on the contrary, most men turn their backs upon crosses, and fly before them. The more they run, the more the cross pursues them, the more it strikes and crushes them with burdens. If you were wise, you would go to meet it like St. Andrew, who said, when he saw the cross prepared for him and raised up into the air, “Hail O good cross! O admirable cross! O desirable cross! receive me into thine arms, withdraw me from among men, and restore me to my Master, who redeemed me through thee.”

Listen attentively to this, my children: He who goes to meet the cross, goes in the opposite direction to crosses; he meets them, perhaps, but he is pleased to meet them; he loves them; he carries them courageously. They unite him to Our Lord; they purify him; they detach him from this world; they remove all obstacles from his heart; they help him to pass through life, as a bridge helps us to pass

over water. . . . Look at the saints; when they were not persecuted, they persecuted themselves. A good religious complained one day to Our Lord that he was persecuted. He said, “O Lord, what have I done to be treated thus?” Our Lord answered him, “And I, what had I done when I was led to Calvary?” Then the religious understood; he wept, he asked pardon, and dared not complain any more. Worldly people are miserable when they have crosses, and good Christians are miserable when they have none. The Christian lives in the midst of crosses, as the fish lives in the sea.

Look at St. Catherine; she has two crowns, that of purity and that of martyrdom: how happy she is, that dear little saint, to have chosen to suffer rather than to consent to sin! There was once a religious who loved suffering so much that he had fastened the rope from a well round his body; this cord had rubbed off the skin, and had by degrees buried itself in the flesh, out of which worms came. His brethren asked that he should be sent out of the community. He went away happy and pleased, to hide himself in a rocky cavern. But the same night the Superior heard Our Lord

saying to him: "Thou hast lost the treasure of thy house." Then they went to fetch back this good saint, and they wanted to see from whence these worms came. The Superior had the cord taken off, which was done by turning back the flesh. At last he got well.

Very near this, in a neighboring parish, there was a little boy in bed, covered with sores, very ill, and very miserable; I said to him, "My poor little child, you are suffering very much!" He answered me, "No, sir; today I do not feel the pain I had yesterday, and tomorrow I shall not suffer from the pain I have now." "You would like to get well?" "No; I was naughty before I was ill, and I might be so again. I am very well as I am." We do not understand that, because we are too earthly. Children in whom the Holy Ghost dwells put us to shame.

If the good God sends us crosses, we resist, we complain, we murmur; we are so averse to whatever contradicts us, that we want to be always in a box of cotton: but we ought to be put into a box of thorns. It is by the Cross that we go to Heaven. Illnesses, temptations, troubles, are so many crosses which take

us to Heaven. All this will soon be over. Look at the saints, who have arrived there before us. The good God does not require of us the martyrdom of the body; He requires only the martyrdom of the heart, and of the will. Our Lord is our model; let us take up our cross, and follow Him. Let us do like the soldiers of Napoleon. They had to cross a bridge under the fire of grapeshot; no one dared to pass it. Napoleon took the colors, marched over first, and they all followed. Let us do the same; let us follow Our Lord, who has gone before us.

A soldier was telling me one day that during a battle he had marched for half an hour over dead bodies; there was hardly space to tread upon; the ground was all dyed with blood. Thus on the road of life we must walk over crosses and troubles to reach our true country. The cross is the ladder to Heaven. How consoling it is to suffer under the eyes of God, and to be able to say in the evening, at our examination of conscience: "Come, my soul! thou hast had today two or three hours of resemblance to Jesus Christ. Thou hast been scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified with Him!" Oh what a treasure for the hour of death! How

sweet it is to die, when we have lived on the cross! We ought to run after crosses as the miser runs after money. Nothing but crosses will reassure us at the Day of Judgment. When that day shall come, we shall be happy in our misfortunes, proud of our humiliations, and rich in our sacrifices!

If someone said to you, "I should like to become rich; what must I do?" you would answer him, "You must labor." Well, in order to get to Heaven, we must suffer. Our Lord shows us the way in the person of Simon the Cyrenian; He calls His friends to carry His Cross after Him. The good God wishes us never to lose sight of the Cross, therefore it is placed everywhere; by the roadside, on the heights, in the public squares — in order that at the sight of it we may say, "See how God has loved us!" The Cross embraces the world; it is planted at the four corners of the world; there is a share of it for all. Crosses are on the road to Heaven like a fine bridge of stone over a river, by which to pass it. Christians who do not suffer pass this river by a frail bridge, a bridge of wire, always ready to give way under their feet.

He who does not love the Cross may indeed be saved, but with great difficulty: he will be a little star in the firmament. He who shall have suffered and fought for his God will shine like a beautiful sun. Crosses, transformed by the flames of love, are like a bundle of thorns thrown into the fire, and reduced by the fire to ashes. The thorns are hard, but the ashes are soft. Oh, how much sweetness do souls experience that are all for God in suffering! It is like a mixture into which one puts a great deal of oil: the vinegar remains vinegar; but the oil corrects its bitterness, and it can scarcely be perceived.

If you put fine grapes into the wine press, there will come out a delicious juice: our soul, in the wine press of the Cross, gives out a juice that nourishes and strengthens it. When we have no crosses, we are arid: if we bear them with resignation, we feel a joy, a happiness, a sweetness! It is the beginning of Heaven. The good God, the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints, surround us; they are by our side, and see us. The passage to the other life of the good Christian tried by affliction, is like that of a person being carried on a bed of roses. Thorns give out a perfume, and the Cross

breathes forth sweetness. But we must squeeze the thorns in our hands, and press the Cross to our heart, that they may give out the juice they contain.

The Cross gave peace to the world; and it must bring peace to our hearts. All our miseries come from not loving it. The fear of crosses increases them. A cross carried simply, and without those returns of self-love which exaggerate troubles, is no longer a cross. Peaceable suffering is no longer suffering. We complain of suffering! We should have much more reason to complain of not suffering, since nothing makes us more like Our Lord than carrying His Cross. Oh, what a beautiful union of the soul with Our Lord Jesus Christ by the love and the virtue of His Cross! I do not understand how a Christian can dislike the Cross, and fly from it! Does he not at the same time fly from Him who has deigned to be fastened to it, and to die for us?

Contradictions bring us to the foot of the Cross, and the Cross to the gate of Heaven. That we may get there, we must be trodden upon, we must be set at naught, despised, crushed. . . . There are no happy people in this world but those who enjoy

calmness of mind in the midst of the troubles of life: they taste the joys of the children of God. All pains are sweet when we suffer in union with Our Lord. . . . To suffer! what does it signify? It is only a moment. If we could go and pass a week in Heaven, we should understand the value of this moment of suffering. We should find no cross heavy enough, no trial bitter enough. . . . The Cross is the gift that God makes to His friends.

How beautiful it is to offer ourselves every morning in sacrifice to the good God, and to accept everything in expiation of our sins! We must ask for the love of crosses; then they become sweet. I tried it for four or five years. I was well calumniated, well contradicted, well knocked about. Oh, I had crosses indeed! I had almost more than I could carry! Then I took to asking for love of crosses, and I was happy. I said to myself, truly there is no happiness but in this! We must never think from whence crosses come: they come from God. It is always God who gives us this way of proving our love to Him.

ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

An Autobiography

CHAPTER TEN

A NEW COMMANDMENT

God in His infinite goodness has given me, dear Mother, a clear insight into the deep mysteries of Charity. If only I could express what I know, you would hear a heavenly music; but alas! I can only stammer like a child, and if the words of Jesus were not my support, I should be tempted to beg leave to hold my peace.

When the Divine Master tells me to give to anyone who asks of me, and to allow what is mine to be taken without asking for it back, it seems to me that He speaks not only of the things of earth but also of the goods of Heaven. Neither the one nor the other are really mine I renounced the first by the vow of poverty and the others are gifts which are simply lent. If God withdraw them, I have no right to complain. But our own ideas, the fruit of our own mind and heart, we regard as a sacred and personal treasury upon which none may lay hands. For instance, if I communicate to a Sister some light given me in prayer and she afterwards

reveals it as though it were her own, it would seem she is appropriating what is mine. Or if during recreation someone makes a witty remark, which her neighbor repeats to the community without acknowledging whence it came, its originator will look on this as a sort of theft. At the time, she preserves an unwilling silence, but on the first opportunity she will insinuate delicately that her thoughts have been borrowed.

Had I not experienced all these human weaknesses, Mother, I could not so well explain them. I should have preferred to believe myself the only one who endured such petty temptations, had you not bidden me listen to the novices' difficulties and give them suitable advice. In the discharge of this duty I have learnt much, and above all I have found myself forced to practice what I preached. I can say with all truth that now, by God's grace, I am no more attached to the gifts of the intellect than I am to material things. Should any

thought of mine please my Sisters, I find it quite easy to let them regard it as their own. It belongs to the Holy Ghost, not to me, for St. Paul assures us that “without the Spirit of Love we cannot call God our Father,” and is not the same Holy Spirit free to use me as a channel to convey a good thought to a soul, without my daring to look on that thought as my private property?

Besides, while I am far from depreciating beautiful thoughts which bring us nearer to God, I have long been of opinion that we must guard against overestimating their worth. Even the highest inspirations are of no value without good works. Others may derive profit from these lights, provided they be duly grateful to Our Lord for allowing them to share in the abundance of one of His more privileged souls; but should that privileged soul take pride in her spiritual wealth and imitate the Pharisee, she becomes like a person dying of starvation before a well-spread table, while his guests enjoy the richest fare, and cast envious glances, perhaps, at the possessor of so many treasures.

How true it is that God alone can sound the heart! How short-sighted are His creatures! When they find a soul whose lights surpass their

own, they conclude that the Divine Master loves them less. Yet when did He lose the right to make use of one of His children to provide others with the nourishment they need? That right was not lost in the days of Pharaoh, for God said unto him: “And therefore have I raised thee, that I may show My power in thee, and My name may be spoken of throughout all the earth.” Centuries have passed since these words were spoken by the Most High, but His ways have remained unchanged — He has ever chosen human agents to accomplish His work among souls.



To Be Continued



FRANCISCAN SAINTS

NOVEMBER 10TH
The Servant of God
Mary Ruiz
Virgin, Third Order

Mary was born about the year 1420 at Alcaez, Spain. Her equally devout and distinguished parents reared her in the fear of God from her youth. Averse to all worldly ado and aspiration, she took no pleasure in the idle and frivolous fiction so widely circulated in those days. She read the lives of the saints instead, drawing lessons of heavenly wisdom from the virtuous examples found in them.

Like the holy hermits and penitents, Mary sought retirement and had a room arranged in an out-of-the-way part of her home, in the seclusion of which she devoted herself to fervent prayer and austere penance. Nevertheless, the fame of her virtue and beauty led many prominent young men to ask her hand in marriage. But all such proposals

and all the persuasion of her father could not separate her from the Divine Bridegroom she had chosen.

Mary was invested with the habit of the Third Order, and the step encouraged several of her young friends to do the same thing. Later she invited them all to come and live in her home, where, united in sisterly charity, they served God with holy zeal. In 1468 Pope Innocent VIII raised this pious group of young women to the rank of a religious congregation, placed them under the obedience of the Franciscan provincial of Carthagená, and appointed Mary Ruiz their first superior.

In this capacity she built, in addition to the new convent, a church which she placed under the patronage of St. Mary Magdalen. Up to a ripe old age, she labored unceasingly

and zealously at her own perfection and that of her sisters.

By special grace from on high the day of her death was revealed to her. She prepared herself for the day with the greatest care, and the Lord received her into His kingdom on the appointed day in the year 1500.

ON READING

1.) Consider how wisely the servant of God Mary acted in not reading useless worldly stories and romances. How dangerous such reading is, even if the books contain nothing that is in itself bad, St. Theresa tells us from her own experience: “My mother,” she says, “was very virtuous; but I acquired none of her good qualities. But one of her weaknesses became quite detrimental to me. She delighted in reading tales of chivalry, and permitted her children to do the same thing. She never neglected her duties on that account, but I neglected many a necessary and better occupation while I read by the hour, although this greatly displeased my father, and I was obliged to keep the books hidden from his sight. As a result,

I became negligent in my religious practices, indulged in all kinds of frivolities, and would surely have come to a tragic end, had God’s special grace not opened my eyes.” — Have you perhaps had a similar sad experience? May the grace of God help you today to see the danger to which you are exposing yourself.

2.) Consider how our servant of God Mary made her choice of reading matter like a truly wise virgin. While she carefully avoided all useless and dangerous books, she gleaned from the good and pious books she read the desire to progress in virtue. There were few books at that time, and it was not easy to get them. Printing had not yet been invented, and the books were all written by hand. Now, with books printed by the thousands, they can be bought cheap and circulated easily. Of course, bad books have increased in greater number than good ones, and it is necessary to be on our guard in the choice of our reading material. There is plenty of good material printed, and we should gladly spend a moderate sum in order to secure good books and periodicals

from which to derive instruction and new courage to lead a Christian life as well as reasonable diversion. — Have you made good use of this worthy means for yourself and your family?

3.) Consider that even in the use of good books and papers, one must carefully guard against abuse. First of all, not every book is fit reading matter for every person. Many a book that is useful and good for adults, would be dangerous and harmful for children; they should not be permitted to read such books. Secondly, in books and especially in daily papers that are otherwise good in themselves there are at times articles that are more

harmful to virtue than useful to it; such articles should not be read. Thirdly, reading is always harmful when it is done from motives of curiosity and from a passion for reading; many a duty will be neglected and little good will be derived from what we read. Thomas a Kempis (1:3) says: *“Because many take more pains to be learned than to lead good lives, therefore they often go astray and bear no fruit at all, or but little. But when the day of judgment cometh, it will not be asked of us what we have read, but what we have done.”* — Take care now that you may not be put to shame on that day.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(OVER THE PEOPLE, THURSDAY IN PASSION WEEK)

BE GRACIOUS TO THY PEOPLE, WE BESEECH THEE, O LORD,
THAT, REJECTING WHAT IS DISPLEASEING TO THEE, THEY MAY
RATHER BE FILLED WITH DELIGHT IN THY COMMANDMENTS.
THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

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