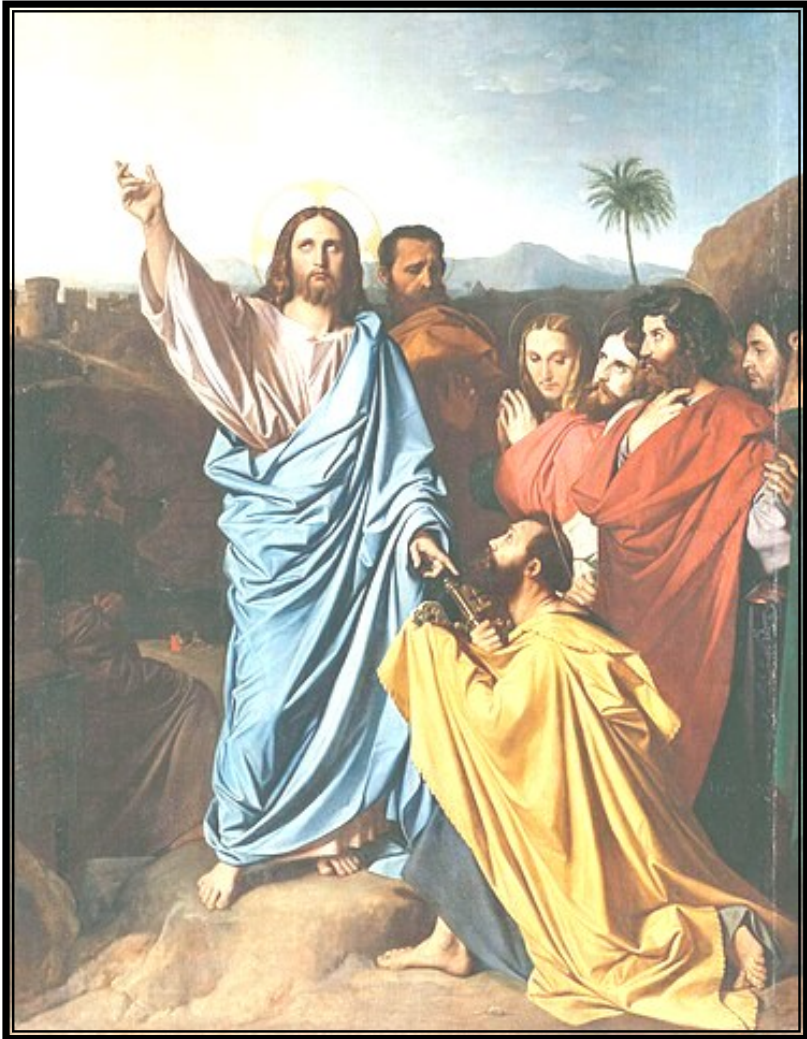


THE SERAPH

June 2024

Vol. XLIV No. 10



JESUS GIVING THE KEYS TO ST. PETER
By Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres

The Seraph

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THE SERAPH

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR ME?

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

The answer to this question is both simple and complex. On the one hand, God made us to know love and serve Him in this world so that we may be happy with Him in Heaven. On the other hand, how do we serve God in this world? There are many vocations and directions available to us in this life. Which one is the one that God wants us to personally follow?

Immediately, each and every day, we can look to the laws of God and the Church to guide us. At every moment, we should seek to do good and to avoid evil. Our activities, work, study, recreation, or play should be good and wholesome and engaged in earnestly and wholeheartedly for the love of God. Saint Paul reminds us to do whatever we do for the love of God. In this way, we can genuinely pray unceasingly. We give constant honor and glory to God in our very lives.

However, there are more things to be considered. We

must also keep an eye on our words, thoughts, and desires, as well as negligence or omission of our duties and obligations. We should begin our days with a morning offering, where we offer God all our thoughts, words, and deeds of the day. Even when our offering to God has gone to the back of our minds as we engage in our daily lives, the overall intention remains, and our day truly becomes pleasing to God.

This is the easy part, but the more difficult part to discern is what activities or vocations God wants from us. In our labors we simply do what has been given us to do. If we are students, our task is to be the best students we can be. In whatever vocation or labor we find ourselves, our task is to do and be the best we can be for the love of God. Those who are married should strive to be the best possible spouse they can be for the love of God. They should not seek to be unmarried. We should

sanctify the very life that we are in, never seeking to run away from it or to find something better. The best life is the life that is lived for the love of God.

For the young who must choose a career and a state in life, this question of God's Will is essential to their happiness both here and in eternity. Should we spend our lives in menial labor, in a factory, in an office, or some other way? This is a question that all our young people should be asking. Even though it is sometimes unpleasant, life is relatively easy when someone (parents, teachers, etc.) tells us what to do. While our elders can guide or direct us, this is one of the first critical uses of our free will. It can be frightening and sometimes overwhelming to realize the importance of this decision and not have a clear view in sight.

We are often told to do what we like or what makes us happy. The adage is: "Do what you love, and you will never work a day of your life." The problem is that we confuse pleasure with happiness, especially in our youth. A serving of ice cream may please us

and help us momentarily forget our problems, but it can't make us happy. Happiness is experienced when our souls are in proper order. When we are right with God, we are happy. The hardened sinner, or criminal, is never truly happy. He may experience pleasurable things and be momentarily distracted by these, but true happiness constantly eludes him. Only the saints are truly happy. Pursuing eternal life in Heaven is the greatest joy that can be ours in this life. And this demands putting our lives (souls) in proper order.

There are many unpleasant things associated with every vocation. If our goal is to avoid unpleasant things, we will be brought to a standstill or idleness—which will cause us to experience even greater unpleasantness. There is no joy without sorrow, no pleasure without pain, and no glory without sacrifice. We must strive to grasp this simple but profound truth.

Sickness, pain, suffering, and death are the punishment for Original Sin. In our fallen nature, we want to avoid these punishments at all costs. We

need to get ahold of ourselves and understand that our punishment is not meant to destroy us but to correct and help us. The punishment is not evil – it is good. It is precisely what we need. God gives us this because He loves us – not because He hates us. Physical sickness, pain, suffering, and death are the keys to true happiness both now and in eternity. When we spiritually mature to the point of understanding and embracing this, we will then thank God and praise Him for both the sunshine and the rain, physical health, sickness, pleasure, and pain. Every experience and occasion is an opportunity to grow closer to God and increase the joy in our hearts.

Avoidance of our crosses only makes matters worse. Jesus gave us the invitation and the example. “If you want to be My disciple, daily deny yourself, take up your cross, and come follow Me.” He willingly embraced His cross for the love of us, and He requires us to willingly embrace our cross for the love of Him. In this maturity of overcoming our fear or unwillingness to experience discomfort, we begin to

find peace, happiness, and love.

In brief, as we seek God’s calling, we should avoid the temptation to seek what will bring us the most momentary pleasure and the slightest discomfort. That is a childish dilemma. Maturity demands that we understand and accept that whatever station in life we choose, there will be good and bad interspersed with each other.

We should next take a kind of inventory of ourselves. All that we have and all that we are (sin excluded) are gifts from God. Our physical bodies, our sex, our health, our personalities, our emotions, our inclinations, our strengths, and our weaknesses are all God’s gifts (talents) that He has entrusted to us. We can look to the parable in the Gospel to see that The Master will demand an accounting of the talents. These talents must be invested in and increased. There must be a profit from them. The servant who buried and left his talent unused was called a wicked servant.

This is serious soul-searching that we must do. What are we

good at? Where can we do the most good? What is possible? What is reality? What is fantasy? We must strive not to deceive ourselves but to be brutally honest. The person with a talent for and loves the great outdoors with all it brings, sunshine, rain, heat, and cold, is most likely not called by God to work in a cubicle for eight hours a day, five days a week. God does not likely call the person with allergies to animals to work with animals.

Sometimes, God's Will is manifested in the only practical, profitable, or available option. We are sometimes merely a fit or a match in a particular field or vocation.

Finally, should we get married, stay single, or give our lives in the clerical or religious life? We must love children in each of these vocations; children are our neighbors, too. Not only married people love children. You can have (must have) a genuine love for the souls of everyone God brings into this world. Single people, priests, and religious people can manifest this love differently but complementarily to parents' love. A love of children is not a

sure sign that God wants us to marry and become parents.

A lack of suitable persons to marry is also a sign from God. If there seems to be no one out there for us, then it may be that God is not calling us to marry. Again, this demands us to be brutally honest with ourselves. We cannot give up too soon nor resist God's sign in an endless pursuit of the right person. There is not a "right" person for everyone. God intends that many remain single and are called to serve Him in the priesthood or religious life.

A young man once set forth his ideal qualifications for the perfect wife and mother of his children. After objectively reviewing his desires for a wife, he realized no perfect wife exists. His desires and expectations were completely unreasonable (not to mention shallow). Further consideration suggested that he must then compromise these expectations. However, he saw within himself that even if he compromised and married, his unfortunate spouse would be subject to his constant efforts to make her conform to his goals. The brutal honesty of

this young man saw that this would be unfair and unjust to do to anyone. The (at the time) sad and painful realization weighed heavily upon his heart for a long time. But, embracing this truth opened the door for this young man to find that God was calling him to a different life where he would find true happiness in the religious life.

Saint Paul indeed tells us that if we cannot contain our lust, it is better to marry than to burn in hell for the sins of the flesh. I think too many experience the temptations of the flesh and assume that this is a sign from God. These often end up in hurried marriages, not to mention bad marriages. If God calls us to the marriage state, we will be led by reason and morality, not the lust of passion and sin. With every temptation, God gives us the grace to overcome it. Having fallen is a sign of our weakness, not a sign for us to give into sin. We can overcome every temptation if we cooperate with God. "I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me." Our maturing spirituality demands that we be honest and not confuse lust with a

genuine desire to bring forth children for God and Heaven.

How do we know if we have a vocation to clerical or religious life? If, in the soul searching of our heart's desires, our personalities, our emotions, passions, etc., we find that we thrive in an ordered life, the daily schedule of the religious life may be for us. In the clerical state, there are regular and secular clergy. The regular clergy are members of a Religious Community. They live a regular (regulated) life with a daily routine of prayer and work. God's Will is easily discernable to the Religious simply by following the schedule or routine. The religious life (like every vocation) has its crosses, but it also has its rewards. There is the daily sacrifice of our free wills in living out our vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. If, with the help of God's grace, we can make this offering of ourselves, or we find comfort in having this routine in our lives, the Religious vocation may be for us.

In every vocation, we are to love God first and foremost and our neighbors as ourselves, but religious vocations

call upon us to take this to an even higher level. In searching our souls, we need to discern if we can (with the help of God's grace) truly embrace this higher love of God and neighbor. Every vocation or calling demands that we serve others, but the religious life raises the service of others to an act of love of God. This is why we see religious running schools, hospitals, orphanages, hospices, etc. They do all these things not for a salary but for the love of God and neighbor and only seek a reward in Heaven – not a temporal, monetary, or material one.

Religious have faith and trust in God, knowing that if they genuinely seek Heaven and Its justice, everything else needed for their life here on earth will be given to them besides. They have no expense accounts; they do not worry about what outfits they need to purchase or wear for any specific occasion. It is always their religious garb (habit) that they wear. Where they live is wherever God appoints them to live. What they do is whatever task God places before them. To some, this is impos-

sible because God is not calling them to this life; to others, this is very pleasing and comforting because God is calling them to this life. However, we must not stop at our present superficial likes or dislikes. Very often, the one that appears to least likely have a particular vocation turns out to be the very one with the vocation. It demands greater sacrifice, but with that sacrifice of self comes greater success – both spiritually as well as materially. The question should be, what can I do with the graces of God? If I cooperate with God, can I make these sacrifices? Can I give Him the greatest honor and glory? Can I love my neighbors more perfectly? Can I give myself to be a true Spouse of Jesus Christ? To love Him and serve Him, for better or worse, in sickness and health, until I die?

For young men, we need also to consider the clerical state. Priests serve God by serving people. Priests have the most intimate association with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. This intimacy with God places them in the situation of bringing God to the rest of the

world through the Sacraments. In an extraordinary way, priests allow Jesus to live, act, and speak through them. They make a similar sacrifice of themselves as religious do, but it is, in a sense, more for others than for themselves. Regular clergy (religious priests) are religious for the salvation of their own souls; they are priests for the salvation of others' souls.

Religious priests make great sacrifices and carry heavy crosses. There is no denying this. However, they occasionally experience incredible joys and often unspeakable peace and comfort. Only a priest knows the fear, the profound humbling, the peace, the comfort, and the Heavenly joy that comes with the privilege of holding the Sacred Divinity and Humanity of Jesus in their hands and administering Je-

sus, the Living God, to the bodies and souls of others. No one is worthy of this honor and grace, but God does call some to it despite their unworthiness. For those who are called to this vocation, nothing else can compare to the honor and glory of God and the salvation of souls they will be made capable of.

As we seek to discern vocations for ourselves and others, let us always pray that everyone will faithfully find and follow the vocation that God is calling us to. Let us pray for vocations to the priesthood, religious life, married and family life, and unmarried secular life. To give God the greatest honor and glory and aid us in the best possible path into heaven, we must seek to know and do God's Holy Will.

PLEASE NOTE:

THE SERAPH is not published in July and August.

We wish all our readers a most blessed Summer, and look forward to being with you again in September in our 45th year of publication.



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THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

We, as the Church Militant, are not alone in our spiritual battle. We are a united front, still on our pilgrimage and working out our salvation. Our battlefield is within our own souls, and we are called to claim victory for Christ, Our Lord, Redeemer, and King. He desires the salvation of all men, so thus, He wants total victory. He, Himself, has led us into the fray of battle. His holy example inspires us with confidence because He was the first to engage the enemy. He tells us to follow Him. He has given us orders: *“Take up your cross daily and follow Me.”* (*Gospel of St. Luke 9:23*). The Cross is the banner that we carry into this open combat. We are all given the same promise that was given to Constantine the Great, *“Under this sign, you will conquer.”* In order for any military campaign to succeed, there needs to be leaders. Christ told us that He was to return to the Father, so He left the government of His Church to His Apostles and

their successors, who are guided by the Eternal Tactician, the Holy Ghost.

The fact that the Catholic Church is a Divine institution with the office to preach, govern, and sanctify employing a hierarchical structure (a holy priesthood) is proven in Scripture:

And if he will not hear them, tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican. Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. (Gospel of St. Matthew 18: 17,18)

Jesus, in His final address, asserted His authority: *‘All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth.’* He then issued a command to His disciples, a command that resonates with us today: *‘going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the Name of*

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.' (Gospel of St. Matthew 28: 18-20). This command is not a suggestion but a mission that we, as the Church Militant, are duty-bound to fulfill. And we do so with the assurance of His perpetual presence.

Remember your prelates who have spoken the word of God to you: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, yesterday, and today: and the same forever. (Hebrews 13: 7,8)

It is further explained in Scripture that Our Lord intended for the hierarchical formula to be complete. He appointed a Vicar, His chief emissary, to guide the Church through the centuries. This vicarship begins with St. Peter, the Rock:

And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon

this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Gospel of St. Matthew 16: 17, 18)

The successors of St. Peter are the bishops of Rome. They are given the distinctive name pope, which comes from the Italian word *papa*, meaning *father*. The pope is considered the "Father of all Christendom." The See of Rome held a position of preeminence from the earliest days of Christianity, as shown by the popes' role during the first three centuries. There is the strong and authoritative letter written by St. Clement of Rome to the Ephesian (*Epistle of St. Clement*, approximately written in the year 97), exhorting the people to desist their insurrection and submit to their prelates' proper authority. In the second century, both popes Anicetus and Victor dealt with the Easter controversy, a dispute with the Eastern Church over the proper date for the Easter celebration. The Christians of Gaul twice appealed to Pope Eleutherius to check the Montanist heresy. In the third century, Pope Cornelius engaged in correspondence with St. Cyprian about restoring the "lapsed." (The

“lapsed” here refers to those Catholics who, while during the persecutions, chose to deny the Faith rather than face martyrdom and who have since repented and sought readmittance into the Church.) Finally, near the close of the century, Pope Dionysius clarified Christian faith during the confusion of the Sabellian affirmation that only one divine Person existed and the Marcionite doctrine of three separate divine Beings. Both were Trinitarian heresies, and his confirmation affected the entire Church, not just Rome.

Although many Ecumenical Councils were called to address the prevalent theological issues of the Church during their respective eras, the voice, and instruction of the popes were the constant guiding light for all of Christendom. The primary means by which they convey the teachings of faith and morals, thus defining the Church’s character and mission, is through various papal documents. These documents take many forms, such as *Papal briefs, bulls, constitutions, decretals, etc.* Each one has a particular function and purpose, but the most well-known and popular of these documents are the *encyclical letters*.

The Catholic Encyclopedia (1917 edition) defines an *encyclical*: *According to its etymology, an encyclical (from the Greek egkyklios, kyklos meaning a circle) is nothing more than a circular letter. In modern times, usage has confined the term almost exclusively to certain papal documents which differ in their technical form from the ordinary style of either Bulls or Briefs and which, in their superscription, are explicitly addressed to the patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and bishops of the Universal Church in communion with the Apostolic See.*

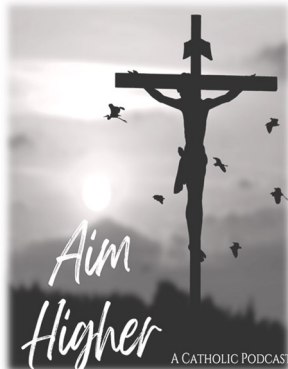
The definition of Papal Bulls includes a short description of the encyclical’s purpose: “... *which are letters sent to all the bishops of Christendom, or at least to all those in one particular country, and intended to guide them in their relations with their flocks.*”

It was not until the end of the 19th century that the popes constantly used encyclicals as a primary means of instruction to all the faithful. Between the reigns of Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) and Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), 229 encyclicals were written. These letters dealt with a wide array of top-

ics, such as the condemnation of heresies, the promotion of Catholic social justice, Catholic life and the Holy Eucharist, Church and Science, Liturgical music, etc. They were given to the bishops of the world, and these holy instructions were meant to be conveyed to their respective flocks. There have obviously been failures in this matter, as can be seen by the state of the Church today. But there have been successes, for many of these encyclicals are available to be read. Study guides are attached to these encyclicals, and groups have been formed in parishes to study these documents. There has been effort. So, we can either feel depressed about the sad state of

affairs that the Church is in today, or we can do our part and be encouraged by this effort and take part in it.

When *The Seraph* returns in September, we will start a new series explaining the most popular encyclicals and their relevance to our times. Remember, my dear Catholics, even though we are experiencing the Great Apostasy and the vacancy of the Chair of St. Peter, the Vicars of Christ still speak to us. They are the constant guardians of Sacred Tradition and help us persevere by their words and examples.



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FINDING THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS: A CONVERSION STORY

A Third Order Novice

I was born thirty-seven years ago in El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles del Río Porciúncula, otherwise known as Los Angeles. This is the first glimmer of Franciscan presence in my life. I was the only child of my parents — my father, a Jew, immigrated from the Soviet Union in the 1970's. My mother and her family stopped attending Catholic Church after her First Communion. Neither of my parents were religious — my father was more culturally than religiously Jewish, and my mother had come to embrace a sort of New Age Oprah-esque Buddhism. The city I grew up in was a far cry from when the first Franciscans tilled its spiritual soil with their sweat and blood, descending into pagan mission territory that would have been under interdict if we had a true Pope at the time. I remember touring the Franciscan Missions of the El Camino Real as an elementary student, the world they displayed frozen in time in such stark contrast to flashy

Sunset Boulevard, or the Hollywood neighborhood I called home.

Growing up, I remember asking my mother who God was, and receiving the reply, "He is an omnipotent being in the sky." Since then, I remember having a subconscious yearning for Truth. At the bookstore I would look at children's Bibles. I would wonder at the mysterious baby in the creche scenes in front of churches during Christmas. And finally at fourteen, a year after my parents' bitter divorce and seeking answers (and living on Crespi Street, so named for the Franciscan Friar who gave the City of Angeles its name in 1769), I got my mom to take me to a Catholic Mass (or so what I thought was one). However after that, life got in the way. I was placed in a very competitive private all girls school that espoused militant feminism and a career as the only option in life.

The early desire for Faith and a sense of answers and belonging wasn't completely

smothered, but I spent my energy on doing well in school, and collecting various advanced degrees from prestigious universities. I see now that I was in some way blindly seeking worldly honors and perfection in order to compensate for the spiritual desolation I felt inside. I remember sitting at my desk at the world's top public relations firm, my degrees on the wall, and feeling a sense of devastation that having these honors didn't bring the happiness that my schools, society, or family promised. I had played the game and played it well, yet I was still a loser. This pushed me to seek deeper. I knew the answers would be in the Catholic Church. Why, I don't know. I just *knew*.

After two years of poor catechesis in the Novus Ordo (I couldn't be baptised the first year, as I was 'two weeks late' in signing up for the classes), I was baptised. A month later, I found myself on a pilgrimage tour of Italy, roaming the medieval streets of Assisi. I marveled at the Basilica, stood at the Baptismal font of Saint Clare, and gazed at the cerulean blue skies from a rock that Saint Francis used to pray on. I'd like to think that

unbeknownst to me, graces from Father Francis on that trip propelled me forward on the next ten years of an incredible journey best summarized by my Confirmation Saint Augustine's observation, "To seek God is the greatest adventure, to find Him the greatest romance."

I spent six months going to a conservative Novus Ordo after Baptism before I realized there was something wrong. It felt empty, lacking in depth, and irreverent. I then spent the next six years attending various diocesan indult Latin Masses where I began to catechize myself on the True Faith by reading old books. I then began going to an Ecclesia Dei group where my husband and I were married, and then to another Ecclesia Dei group. After Antipope Francis cracked down on the Ecclesia Dei groups and I saw that the reaction from the groups' leaders was somewhat ambivalent, I knew something was wrong, again. We began going to the SSPX for six months, and that's the first time I was exposed to conversations on the Catholic Sedevacantist position. Years earlier when converting all I had heard was, "Sedevacantists are crazy, stay away!" and I sadly didn't

question the people I trusted to tell me the truth.

As I spent weeks researching Bishop Ngo's life, it became dramatically clear that he knew that the confluence of political and ecclesiastical Freemasonry had usurped the Chair of Peter as well as the world. I realized we were living the Apocalypse, a New Testament Davidic Void, a new Arian heresy on steroids, and the prophesied End Times of theologians and Saints. I realized the gaslighting of the *Ecclesia Dei* groups pushing us to 'recognize and resist' was in stark opposition to established Church teaching, namely Vatican I. I was shocked at the information regarding the 1968 episcopal changes to end the priesthood. Put simply, I knew I wasn't in communion with antipope Francis, so I didn't want to attend a Mass where I was assisting in communion with him. I wanted my yes to mean yes, my no to mean no. I also knew I wasn't in communion with any antipope that formulated or assented to Vatican II's claim that God willed all religions, making them canonically unfit for the Chair anyways. If that made me a 'schismatic heretic' in the eyes of my friends, I knew I was finally a loyal daughter

of the Church in the eyes of the Lord, and that was enough.

I remember quickly Googling where the nearest Sedevacantist chapel was near me, feeling like a contestant on Wheel of Fortune, praying the spinner would come somewhat close to my house as I had a hunch there were not many Sedevacantist chapels. We were blessed to find a chapel within reasonable driving distance, and attended our first Mass with the Franciscans on Good Friday of 2022. While at first we were hesitant about all that this new change would bring us, we found that Our Lord's yoke was sweet and burden light in that we gained so much more than we lost. We've found a spiritual home, a caring pastor, a protective bishop, and a community of brothers and sisters in Christ. While *stat Crux dum volvitor orbis* ('the Cross stands while the world revolves') is the motto of the Carthusians, it very much applies to being at a Franciscan chapel today -- they, with their centuries-old spirituality blessed by Popes and Saints alike, keep the Cross an ever-fixed oasis of *pax et bonum* amongst the increasingly spinning tumult of the world.

I now live the quiet life of a housewife, my degrees collecting dust in a basement box somewhere. I wear a Franciscan cord, and spend my free time learning the spirituality of the Saint whom Our Lord loved so much. When asked how I converted I used to tell people the things I

had done, the steps I had taken. But now, I look back and realize it was all grace that a young woman born in the depths of modernist depravity could ever find her way out. Like the Vietnamese prelate I owe my current Sacraments to, 'the mercies of the Lord I will sing forever'. (Ps 88:2)



“IF GOD SEEMS SLOW IN RESPONDING, IT IS BECAUSE HE IS PREPARING A BETTER GIFT. HE WILL NOT DENY US. GOD WITHHOLDS WHAT YOU ARE NOT YET READY FOR. HE WANTS YOU TO HAVE A LIVELY DESIRE FOR HIS GREATEST GIFTS. ALL OF WHICH IS TO SAY, PRAY ALWAYS AND DO NOT LOSE HEART.”

~ST. AUGUSTINE

THE COMMUNIST THREAT

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part Twenty-Seven: The Undermining of Education

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

BIG SCHOOL CHANGES PROPOSED was printed in the *Bangor (ME) Daily News* on November 30, 1979. The article covered what could easily be described as futuristic plans for Vermont public education. It stated in part:

Montpelier, VT — A blue ribbon commission has recommended a radical restructuring of education in Vermont with year-round, ungraded schools and a policy of allowing some students to drop out at age 13. In addition, the commission suggested creation of a 4,000 student, residential school for students ages 4 through 19. The state-run school would be a center for educational research and teacher training.... The commission recommends students should be permitted to drop out of formal schooling at age 13, as long as they get a job or enroll in an alternative training program.

Charlotte Iserbyt's Note This extraordinary plan for radical restructuring seemed beyond the pale in 1979. However, it doesn't seem so out of reach in 1999 when most of its recommendations are being introduced nationwide. Year-round school has been proposed in many locales, being adopted in some in 1999. Boarding schools have been openly proposed by former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, but have not been widely embraced. However, the concept of allowing students to drop out at age 13 has its parallel in school-to-work efforts which force students to select a career emphasis by the end of eighth grade.

In the November 1979 issue of **EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**, monthly publication of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, "Mastery Learning: The Current State of the Craft" by James Block was published. Excerpts follow:

Indeed, with the help of dedicated practitioners and administrators, innovative teacher

training institutions, progressive national and international educational organizations (ASCD, NEA, NASA, UNESCO, IEA), leading educational publishers (McGraw-Hill, SRA, Westinghouse Learning Corp., Random House), and powerful news media (The New York Times, CBS), Mastery Learning has helped reshape the face of contemporary educational practice, research, and theory.... Entire school districts throughout North America (Chicago, Denver, D.C., New Orleans, Vancouver) are actively testing the value of Mastery Learning for their particular educational situation.

Charlotte Iserbyt's Note: The above quote by James Block calls to mind the 1921 entry in this book which chronicles the establishment of the Council on Foreign Relations. In that entry a quotation from Propaganda by Edward Bernays, Sigmund Freud's nephew, also remarks on the power of opinion to move an agenda forward: It remains a fact in almost every act of our daily lives, whether in the sphere of politics or business, in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by... small number of persons... and technical means have been invented and devel-

oped by which opinion may be regimented.

Super-Learning by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, with Nancy Ostrander, (Dell Publishing Co., Inc.: New York, 1979) was published. Beneath the title on the cover is an explanation of *Super-Learning* as "New stress-free, fast learning methods you can use to develop super memory and improve business and sports performance." In reality this "learning technique" is an updated version of ancient practices drawn from many religions and a grab bag of philosophies, most presented to the chosen rhythms of certain music. The following are excerpts from the book:

Georgi Lozanov (Lo-san-ov), a Bulgarian doctor and psychiatrist, who didn't set out to be an educator... did set out, following the old adage, to study the nature of man, of the human being in all its potential. Like just about everybody else, he concluded that we're only using a fraction of our capabilities. Lozanov devised ways to open the reserves of the mind and, as a doctor, put them to work to improve the body, to heal mental and physical disease. But in investigating what the whole human being can do, he couldn't help being drawn into creative and

intuitive areas. Then still investigating, almost by necessity, he became one of the leading parapsychologists in the communist world. At the same time, Lozanov realized that with his new techniques, the average person could develop super memory, could learn factual information with unheard-of ease. (p. 9)

...Among others, we were going to talk to a Bulgarian scientist, Dr. Georgi Lozanov, who had investigated a number of people with extraordinary mental abilities like Keuni's. Lozanov had come to claim that super memory was a natural human ability. Not only can anyone develop it, he said, but one can do it with ease. To prove his point there were supposedly thousands of people in Bulgaria and the Soviet Union who were well on their way to acquiring super memory of their own. (p.14)

...Dr. Lozanov greeted us in his office. Like the brilliant flowers in the garden outside, the room was awash with bright, vivid colors. As we'd already discovered at the conference in Moscow, Lozanov had a "holistic" sense of humor and a "cosmic" laugh like the Maha rishi of TM fame. A lithe, compact man with warm brown eyes and a great cloud of curly, graying hair, he could

be as kinetic as a handball one minute and deeply serene the next. "Suggestology can revolutionize teaching," he asserted. "Once people get over preconceived ideas about limitations, they can be much more. No longer is a person limited by believing that learning is unpleasant; that what he learns today he will forget tomorrow; that learning deteriorates with age."...

He grew philosophical, "Education is the most important thing in the world. The whole of life is learning—not only in school. I believe that developing this high motivation—which comes through the technique—can be of the greatest importance to humanity."...

"What exactly is the technique of suggestology?" we asked. To create this new "ology," Lozanov and his co-workers had drawn from an almost dizzying array of specialties: mental yoga, music, sleep-learning, physiology, hypnosis, autogenics, parapsychology, drama, to name some. Suggestology's deepest roots lay in the system of Raja Yoga. "There is really nothing new about suggestology," Lozanov explained. "The application is the new thing."...

Lozanov's suggestology is basically "applied" altered states

of consciousness for learning, healing, and intuitive development. (p. 17)

Charlotte Iserbyt's Note: Lozanov's methodology has been implemented in school systems across the country — including Henry M. Levin's Accelerated Schools Project participants — and promoted as being physically healthful and psychically helpful. Its roots, as pointed out in the quotes above, are in techniques associated with religion and mind control. In the appendix to *Super-Learning* a "Recap" is written, part of which this writer wishes to leave with the reader so that its connection to what is being presented to teachers and parents in 1999 under the guise of "research-based" theory and practice can be more readily understood:

How does it work? A very specific kind of music has a psychophysical effect and creates a relaxed, meditative state in the body. Physiological research showed this particular music slows body rhythms to more efficient levels. This music-induced relaxation brings health benefits. It overcomes fatigue and enhances physical and emotional well-being. It's a bit like mantra meditation for it is a mind/body link that helps open up inner aware-

ness. Physiological research also shows this calmed state of the body facilitates mental functioning and learning. The body uses less energy, so there's *more* for the mind. [emphasis in original] This particular music induces alert relaxation — alert mind, relaxed body.

How can you, at will, retrieve what you perceive? The answer is rhythm. The connection is made through synchronizing rhythms. Data to be learned is chanted with intonations in rhythm in time to the music. The person learning breathes along rhythmically in a relaxed state. So data, intonations, music, breathing, and body rhythms are all synchronized to a specific rhythmic cycle. The rhythm, intonations, music, and breathing make links with the conscious mind. Harmonized rhythms strengthen the information signal. Conscious awareness of unconscious perceptions is opened up through this link so you become aware of what's in your memory bank.

Finally, super learning is about learning to learn. There is a snowballing effect once you begin to use the techniques. How do you go about doing super learning on your own? The process is very simple. In advance, get the music, organ-

ize your material and tape it, reading it aloud at slow-paced intervals over the specified music.

Then, just relax and listen to your material as you breathe along to the music.

The roots of the above “learning” process grow deep in the mire of the ancient practices that have come to be called “New Age.” The reader is urged to remember the rhythmic chants and sing-song recitations being offered as direct instruction “learning.” Again, some of the therapeutic benefits from music and what is called “music therapy” are most often observed among the mentally ill and, for a lack of another designation, the learning disabled. The same areas from which most of the “research-based” data—often called “scientific”—draw their reported “success.”

Steps to Better Writing: A Systematic Approach to Expository Writing by Gene Stanford (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.: New York, 1979) was published. An exercise from this book is an example of the humanistic influence exerted in a writing textbook format:

EXERCISE C. In each of the introductory paragraphs below, underline the thesis sen-

tence. Then indicate in the blank which construction (funnel or contrast) was used. Finally, number the factors in the preview of main supporting points....

[Sample paragraph] 2. Too often parents think the way to rear a child is to give him guidance in the proper way to think and act. This “guidance” too often becomes an actual molding of his personality to suit the parent, as is seen in parental lectures beginning with the old clichés, “If I were you I would...” or “When I was your age I....” These parents, while they may have the good of the child at heart, are nevertheless making a grave mistake by trying to compel him to act or think in certain ways. What the teen needs instead is a type of love which gives him the freedom and confidence to develop his own opinions in matters such as religion, morality, and choice of friends. (p. 87)

Charlotte Iserbyt’s Note: The 1991 article entitled “Seniors’ Church Attendance” from Education Week (June 12, 1991) shows how successful this type of “academic” curriculum has been in changing our children’s values.

Next: 1980

To Be Continued

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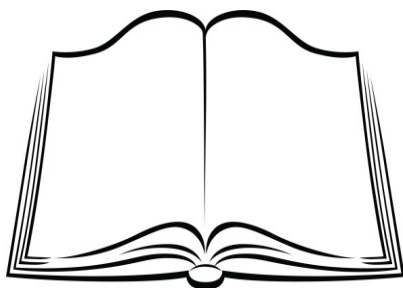
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The Catholic Mother to Her Children

The Countess de Flavigny



TENTH LESSON

ASH WEDNESDAY: THE NECESSITY AND SALUTARY EFFECTS OF PENANCE

“For what is your life? It is a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away.” St. James 4:10

In the first centuries of Christianity, my dear children, great sinners, at least those whose sins, having been committed publicly, had given bad example, were condemned by the Church to perform a public penance more or less long and severe, according to the importance of their sins. At the beginning of Lent, penitents went barefoot to the cathedral; there the Bishop exhorted them to repent, after which, taking some dust and marking them on the forehead, he said at the same time these words: “Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shall return.” Then

the Bishop turned the penitents out of church, and they were not allowed to return thither until the time of their penance was ended.

My children, if we are now treated less severely, you must not conclude that our sins have become more excusable, or that we are less obliged to atone for them; though the Church now spares us the shame of public penance, we are none the less obliged to do sincere and real penance in the depths of our hearts, and we shall not cease to hear the necessity of penance preached during this holy time. In remembrance of this ancient custom, the Church, considering that all her children are sinners as of old, has adopted this ceremony of the giving of ashes on the first day of Lent,

named accordingly Ash Wednesday. The words uttered by the Priest whilst he marks our foreheads with the ashes, remind us that we must die someday, that it is good for us to think of our latter end, so as to atone for the sins already committed and to avoid committing others.

These serious thoughts can be of all the greater use to us at a time of the year, which gives to many the opportunity of acting foolishly and of grievously offending God in His goodness. As for you, my dear children, during these days of folly, I know that you amuse yourselves under your parent's guidance and by their

leave; however, it may be needful to remind some of you, who too deeply lament over the shortness of these days of pleasure, as, for instance little girls, who perhaps at a party, have been rather vain of their beauty or of their dress; I say that it is needful to remind them, that we are not in this world merely to amuse ourselves, and that our poor bodies, being made of dust and destined to fall once more into dust, it is folly to be so very proud of them. On Ash Wednesday, let us then ask God, my children, to cure us of our vanity.

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THE LITTLE CATECHISM OF THE CURÉ OF ARS

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



EXPLANATIONS AND EXHORTATIONS ON PRIDE

Pride is an untrue opinion of ourselves, an untrue idea of what we are not.

The proud man is always disparaging himself, that people may praise him the more. The more the proud man lowers himself, the more he seeks to raise his miserable nothingness. He relates what he has done, and what he has not done; he feeds his imagination with what has been said in praise of him, and seeks by all possible means for more; he is never satisfied with praise. See, my children, if you only show some little displeasure against a man given up to self-love, he gets angry, and accuses you of ignorance or injustice towards him. . . . My children, we are in reality only what we are in the eyes of God, and

nothing more. Is it not quite clear and evident that we are nothing, that we can do nothing, that we are very miserable? Can we lose sight of our sins, and cease to humble ourselves?

If we were to consider well what we are, humility would be easy to us, and the demon of pride would no longer have any room in our heart. See, our days are like grass — like the grass which now flourishes in the meadows, and will presently be withered; like an ear of corn which is fresh only for a moment, and is parched by the sun. In fact, my children, today we are full of life, full of health; and tomorrow, death will perhaps come to reap us and mow us down, as you reap your corn and mow your meadows. . . . Whatever ap-

pears vigorous, whatever shines, whatever is beautiful, is of short duration. . . . The glory of this world, youth, honors, riches, all pass away quickly, as quickly as the flower of grass, as the flower of the field. . . . Let us reflect that so we shall one day be reduced to dust; that we shall be thrown into the fire like dry grass, if we do not fear the good God.

Good Christians know this very well, my children; therefore they do not occupy themselves with their body; they despise the affairs of this world; they consider only their soul and how to unite it to God. Can we be proud in the face of the examples of lowliness, of humiliations, that Our Lord has given us, and is still giving us every day? Jesus Christ came upon earth, became incarnate, was born poor, lived in poverty, died on a gibbet, between two thieves. He instituted an admirable Sacrament, in which He communicates Himself to us under the Eucharistic veil; and in this Sacrament He undergoes the most extraordinary humiliations. Residing continually in our tabernacles, He is deserted, misunderstood by ungrateful men; and yet He continues to love us, to serve us in the Sacrament of the Altar.

O my children what an example of humiliation does the good Jesus give us! Behold Him on the Cross to which our sins have fastened Him; behold Him: He calls us, and says to us, "Come to Me, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." How well the saints understood this invitation, my children! Therefore, they all sought humiliations and sufferings. After their example, then, let us not be afraid of being humbled and despised. St. John of God, at the beginning of his conversion, counterfeited madness, ran about the streets, and was followed by the populace, who threw stones at him; he always came in covered with mud and with blood. He was shut up as a madman; the most violent remedies were employed to cure him of his pretended illness; and he bore it all in the spirit of penance, and in expiation of his past sins. The good God, my children, does not require of us extraordinary things. He wills that we should be gentle, humble, and modest; then we shall always be pleasing to Him; we shall be like little children; and He will grant us the grace to come to Him and to enjoy the happiness of the saints.

ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

An Autobiography

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A CANTICLE OF LOVE

My beloved sister, you have asked me to leave you some token, and with our Mother's permission I am glad to talk awhile with you who are doubly my sister, with you who lent me your voice when I could not speak, promising in my name that I would serve Jesus only. The child who writes these lines tonight, dear godmother, is the child whom you offered to Our Lord, and who loves you as a child loves its mother. In Heaven only will you be able to fathom the gratitude that fills my heart.

You wish to learn the secrets which Jesus confides to your godchild, and yet I know these secrets are already yours, for it was you who taught me to listen to His teaching. I will try, however, to tell you something, though only too conscious how impossible it is for human speech to put into words what the heart itself can scarcely realize.

Do not think that I am overwhelmed with consolations. Far from it! My joy consists in being deprived of all joy here

on earth. Jesus does not guide me openly; I neither see nor hear Him. Nor is it through books that I learn, for I do not understand what I read. Yet at times I am consoled by some chance words, such as the following, which I read this evening after a meditation passed in utter dryness. "Here is the Master I give thee, He will teach thee all that thou shouldst do. I wish to make thee read in the Book of Life wherein is contained the science of love." The science of love — how sweetly do these words re-echo in my soul! I wish for no other knowledge, and like the Spouse in the Canticle of Canticles, "having given up all the substance of my house for love, reckon it as nothing." I understand clearly that through love alone can we become pleasing to God, and my sole ambition is to acquire it.

Jesus deigns to point out to me the only way which leads to Love's divine furnace, and that way is self-surrender: it is the confidence of the little child who sleeps without fear in its

father's arms. Through the mouth of Solomon, the Holy Ghost has said: "Who-soever is a little one, let him come unto, Me, "and elsewhere the same Spirit of Love declares that "to him that is little, mercy is granted." In his name, too, the Prophet Isaias reveals how on the last day the Lord "shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather together the lambs with His arm and shall take them up into His bosom."

And, as though all these proofs were insufficient, the same Prophet, whose inspired gaze penetrated the depths of eternity, cried out: "Thus saith the Lord: You shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees they shall caress you. As one whom the mother caressed, so will I comfort you."

O my beloved sister, after such words one can only be silent and weep for very love. If all weak and imperfect souls such as mine felt as I do, none would despair of reaching the summit of the mountain of Love, since Jesus does not look for deeds, but only for gratitude and self-surrender.

Does He not say: "I will not take the he-goats from out of thy flocks, for all the beasts of the forest are Mine, the cattle on the hills and the oxen. I

know all the fowls of the air. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bullocks, or shall I drink the blood of goats? Offer to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving."

This is all Our Lord claims of us. He needs our love; He has no need of our works. True, the same God who declares He has no need to tell us if He be hungry, did not disdain to beg a little water from the Samaritan woman; but when He said, "Give me to drink" He, the Creator of the Universe, was asking for the love of His creatures. He thirsted, indeed, but He thirsted for love. And Our Divine Lord's thirst is more intense today than ever. Among the disciples of this world, He meets with nothing but indifference and ingratitude, and alas! among His own how few are the hearts that surrender themselves without reserve to the infinite tenderness of His Love!

Happy indeed are we who are privileged to understand the intimate secrets of Our Divine Spouse. If you would but set down in writing all you know, what beautiful pages would be given us to read! But you prefer to keep the secrets of the King hidden in the depths of

your heart. . . To me you say it is “honorable to reveal and confess the works of God” yet I think you do well to keep silent, for no words of earth can communicate the secrets of Heaven.

As for me, after writing page upon page, I should still feel I had not yet begun. So varied is the outlook, so infinite the number or tints, that the palette of the Divine Painter will alone be able, when the night of this life has passed, to supply me with the colors needed to portray the wonders my soul describes.

Since, however, my dearest sister, you have expressed the wish to penetrate into the sanctuary of my heart, and to have in writing an account of the most consoling dream of my life, together with my “little doctrine,” as you call it, I will comply with that wish in the following pages. I will address myself to Our Lord, for by so doing I shall be better able to set down my thoughts. You may find my expressions somewhat exaggerated, but I assure you there is no exaggeration whatsoever in my heart—there all is peace and calm.

O my Jesus, how tenderly and how gently Thou dost lead my soul! . . .

The storm had raged within me since Easter, the glorious feast of Thy triumph, until, in the month of May, there shone through the darkness of my night one clear ray of Thy grace.

While dwelling on the mysterious dreams which Thou dost sometimes send to Thy favored ones, I thought that such consolations were not meant for me, for in my soul it was always night, darkest night. Then I fell asleep amid the fury of the storm.

The following morning, May 10th, at the first glimmer of dawn, I dreamt I was walking in a gallery alone with our Mother when suddenly, without understanding how they had entered, I perceived three Carmelites, wearing their mantles and long veils. I knew they came from Heaven, and I thought how glad I should be if I could only see the face of one of them. As if my wish had been heard, the tallest of the three Saints advanced towards me. I fell upon my knees and an inexpressible joy took possession of me as she raised her veil, or rather, threw it round me.

To Be Continued



FRANCISCAN SAINTS

JUNE 21ST

The Servant of God

Leonore Gusman

Virgin, Second Order

Leonore was the daughter of the duke of Medina-Sidonia, one of the wealthiest and most distinguished gentlemen of Spain. When she was eight years old, she had lost both her parents and was placed in the care of an uncle at Seville, who provided for her with a truly paternal love. She requited his affection with child-like attachment and obedience until the time arrived when there was question of a state of life.

When Leonore was eleven years old, at which age Spanish girls were often promised in marriage, her uncle believed he was obliged to provide for his foster-daughter, and proposed an excellent opportunity to marry. But Leonore rejected the proposal. When her uncle praised the bridegroom he had chosen for her, and desired that she should at least make his acquaintance, she explained that she had already chosen the heavenly Bride-

groom and could not give her attention to anyone else without marring the fidelity she owed to Him.

A few days later she asked for permission to visit her aunt, who was the abbess of a convent of Poor Clares. Leonore used this opportunity to slip into the enclosure of the convent, and nothing could prevail on her to leave it again. Her uncle and other relatives became very much embittered at the turn of events. A complaint was even brought to the king, together with a request that Leonore be forced to return home.

The king decided that Leonore should be taken from the convent of her aunt to another convent of Poor Clares, where she should freely express her wishes before the archbishop and the royal governor. There she declared that in accordance with the desire of her heart she had freely chosen the religious state, adding that she

had rather be torn into a thousand pieces than be unfaithful to her vocation. So she was permitted to return to her aunt's convent, where, at the age of twelve, she received the holy habit.

Leonore was a model for all the sisters in extreme poverty, deep humility, strict penance, and persevering prayer. After she had practiced perfect obedience as a subject for twenty-eight years, she was elected abbess, which office she administered worthily for the space of forty-one years, until her death. Thirteen months after her death her grave was opened and her body was found entirely incorrupt, for which reason she was buried in a beautiful tomb in the choir of the church.

ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

1.) "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land" (*Exod. 20:12*). Thus almighty God spoke solemnly upon Mount Sinai, and thereby made respect and obedience toward parents and their representatives a strict obligation. But did our Leonore not fail in this respect when she did not wish to follow the will of her uncle

and foster-father in regard to marriage? No, because as a commandment of God it requires obedience only in matters that are just and pleasing to God. Children should, indeed, have the advice of their parents, especially when they are about to choose a state of life, and they should seek their parents' blessing in whatever choice they make. But parents may neither force their children into any particular state, nor restrain them from following a proved vocation. If they do so, their children are in no way bound to obey them. It is as the Child Jesus said to His sorrowing Mother: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (*Luke 2:49*).

2.) Consider, however, that in all matters that are legitimate and pleasing to God, obedience to parents is a holy obligation for children. After our duties toward God are set forth in the first three commandments, this commandment is placed at the head of all the duties we have toward men. To whom could we be more indebted than to our parents? And who will be more concerned about what is truly best, than Christian parents on behalf of their children? Hence Solomon, the Wise Man, after saying, "The fear of

the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” immediately adds the precept, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother” (*Prov. 1:7, 8*). That holds not only for the years of childhood, but as long as one lives in the parental home and in the relation of a child. In that spirit the younger Tobias spoke to his father when the latter sent him on a long journey: “I will do all things, father, which thou hast commanded me” (*Tob. 5:1*). What higher praise can come to a young man than if parents say of him what the parents of Tobias said: He is “the light of our eyes, the staff of our old age, the comfort of our life, the hope of our posterity” (*Tob. 10:4*). — Could your parents say this of you?

3.) Consider that in the fourth commandment almighty God adds a promise: “That thou mayest live a long time, and it

may be well with thee in the land” (*Deut. 5:16*). General experience definitely confirms the truth that he who honors his parents insures for himself long life and a share in the good things of this world. On the other hand, not infrequently the curse of God rests already in this life upon such that do not honor their father and mother. “The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despises his mother, let the ravens pick it out, and the young eagles eat it” (*Prov. 30:17*). But, if it appears too humiliating to you to obey the orders of your parents, then reflect on the example of Jesus Christ and on the little saying found in the children’s catechisms:

“Obedience is the grandest choice, its act true greatness claims; Obedient was God’s only Son, and He in heaven reigns.”

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O GOD, WHO WITHSTANDS THE PROUD AND GIVES THY GRACE TO THE HUMBLE; ENDUE US WITH THAT TRUE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY, THE PATTERN OF WHICH THINE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON DID SHOW IN HIMSELF TO THE FAITHFUL; AND MAY WE NEVER BY OUR PRIDE, PROVOKE THEE TO ANGER, BUT RATHER IN LOWLINESS ACCEPT FROM THY HANDS THE GIFTS OF THY GRACE. THROUGH THE SAME CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

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