

# THE SERAPH

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*The Sacrament of Matrimony*

# The Seraph

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**THE SERAPH**

# THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

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*Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD*

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The Sacrament of Matrimony, a Divine Institution by Jesus Christ, is a profound source of grace. The matter for this sacred union is the man and the woman; the form is the vows made to God. These vows, wherein spouses give and accept each other in a monogamous sacred union for the rest of their lives here on earth, carry a weight of Divine significance. The very intention of these holy vows makes the Sacrament of Matrimony so deeply meaningful.

While the Nuptial Mass and blessing often accompany Catholic marriage, these are not technically part of the Sacrament of Matrimony. These cannot be given during certain times of the year, but marriage without them may be permitted during these “forbidden” times. All Catholics approaching the Sacrament of Matrimony should do all they can to attend the Nuptial Mass and receive Holy Communion at this Mass and the Nuptial blessing if they can. Marriage is a problematic state of life,

and we need all the graces we can receive to succeed.

Marriage has existed since the beginning; however, it only became a sacrament when Jesus elevated it from a mere contract to a sacramental union. This He did at the “Wedding Feast of Cana.” Marriage is still examined as a contract, but with Catholics, it is elevated to the status of a sacrament to give us the grace necessary to fulfill the vows.

The primary purpose of marriage is the begetting of children. For this reason, the husband and wife must be open to accepting the life or lives of children that God may give them. Every unnatural or artificial means of preventing the conception and birth of children is contrary to the vows made to God on their wedding day. Husbands and wives are encouraged to abstain from the marital act occasionally but then should return to each other lest they fall into sin. “Let the husband render the debt to his wife: and the wife also in like manner to the husband.

The wife hath not power over her own body; but the husband. And in like manner, the husband also hath not power over his own body; but the wife. Defraud not one another, unless, perhaps, by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer: and return together again, lest Satan tempts you for your incontinency.” (*1 Cor. 7:3-5*)

There are secondary reasons men and women may enter marriage, such as mutual love, support, abstaining from sin, etc. We may enter marriage for these reasons, but we cannot deliberately exclude the primary purpose (cooperating with God in creating life). It is valid for those past childbearing age to marry for these secondary reasons.

From the contractual point of view, marriage must be between a man and a woman. The union is singular and exclusive. There cannot be multiple spouses, nor can the spouses be of the same sex. It seems peculiar to have to mention this, but we are speaking of biological sex rather than the illusionary “transgenderism” that has become the scourge of our modern world. Also, we speak of adults (man and woman) rather than children or those

who are mentally incompetent. Underage children are not capable of entering into a contractual agreement and, therefore, cannot validly marry. Nor can we enter matrimony with animals or objects.

Matrimony is a sacrament of the living; therefore, the spouses need to be in a state of grace before receiving this sacrament. This usually entails making a general confession before the wedding ceremony. Starting this new life out on the right foot is very important.

Catholics are bound to be married before a Catholic priest and two witnesses. The husband and wife are the ministers of the sacrament. Each administers the sacrament to the other (in the exchange of vows). The priest is the official witness of the Church. Vows are promises made to God, not to each other. While the worldly fashions are eager to have spouses compose their own promises to each other, these are not truly vows. The vow is given to God and is received by the other spouse in the place of God, and then the roles are reversed. The priest witnesses and verifies these promises made to God. This is a crucial point to make and to

understand. Breaking marriage vows is not simply a betrayal of spouses to each other. It is something much greater – breaking a solemn promise to God. “It is much better not to vow than after a vow not to perform the things promised.” (*Ecclesiastes 5:4*).

Spouses mutually give themselves completely and exclusively to each other until they are separated by death. This union is not just a legal contract but a spiritual bond that unites them as one. The husband is no longer his own man, as he now belongs to his wife. The wife is no longer her own woman because she now belongs to her husband. They are now not two but rather spiritually one. The goal of husband and wife is to no longer be “you and I” but rather “us” or “we.” Their choices and decisions must be unified – especially when they are blessed with the duty of raising children.

This brings us to the complementary physical, spiritual, and emotional attributes of men and women. Men and women are different, which is good; this is how God made us. Men and women are not meant to compete with each other but rather to complement

each other. Men's physical, emotional, and spiritual attributes are balanced and kept in check by women's physical, emotional, and spiritual attributes. Women's physical, emotional, and spiritual attributes are meant to be kept in check and balanced by men's physical, emotional, and spiritual characteristics. The husband and wife united in matrimony become something greater than the sum of their parts. The husband is a better man because of his wife, and the wife is a better woman because of her husband. Together in marriage, acting as one – in complete unity, they are capable of much more than they could have ever hoped to achieve singly or even collaboratively. The unmarried man (called by God to marriage) is incomplete and can only become his best and most authentic self when he is married to a good woman. The unmarried woman (called by God to marriage) is incomplete and can only become her best and most authentic self when married to a good man. We often like to compare this union to a single body. The husband is the head, and the wife is the heart. It is childish and foolish to argue over which is greater or better. A body without a

head or a heart is a corpse. Both are needed.

While it is generally accepted that the husband, as the head, is given the final decision in matters, this by no means implies that he is free to act independently of his wife. The head of a body cannot act independently of its heart. The head and the heart must be united and working together rather than against each other. Likewise, the heart must not act without or against the head. Decisions must be intellectual or logical but must also be balanced with love, compassion, and consideration. Ruling from mere logic tends to be cruel, and ruling from mere emotion tends to be whimsical. The extremes are always wrong or evil – virtue is in the middle. Head and heart work in a complementary balance, perfecting this middle course of virtue.

The common reason for marriage is “We love each other.” Love must be clearly distinguished from lust. Love is self-sacrificing, while lust is self-indulging. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (Saint John 15:13). How common it is that unmar-

ried couples fall into sexual sins under the guise of “love.” They are shocked when it is pointed out that this is not love but lust. If you entice your intended spouse into sin, you are enticing them into Hell. This is not love, but I would rather suggest that it is demonic hatred. It is truly a demonic suggestion that presents lust as love. Then follows the argument that if it is good and holy after marriage, it should be okay before marriage because they intend to marry soon. What is the difference? The difference is that God blesses one, and the other is cursed. The union with God’s blessing in matrimony is holy and pleasing. The union without God’s blessing is disobedient, unholy, lustful, abusive, and demonic.

It is worthwhile noting that love grows or increases while lust grows tired, bored, etc. Is it not fair to suggest that many marriages end in divorce or separation because they were entered into for lust rather than love? True love does not find the self-denial in giving and doing for others to be a burdensome cross but finds pleasure and joy in giving and sacrificing himself for those he loves. Jesus has promised that

He will make our daily crosses light, sweet, and joyful when we embrace them for the love of Him. “Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is sweet and My burden light.” (*Saint Matthew 11:29-30*) The same becomes true of the crosses we bear for the love of others; they, too, are turned into joy.

The true success of marriage is when spouses humbly and meekly love each other in and for Jesus. The more intimately God is incorporated into a

marriage, the more spiritually rewarding and successful it becomes. The contrary is also true. The less God is part of a marriage, the less spiritually rewarding or successful it will be.

We suggest that the time to start a family rosary tradition is not after the children are born, nor the day after the wedding, but even before the wedding. So many temptations and pitfalls could be avoided if couples came together in prayer even before they were bound to each other by holy vows to God.



“WHEN A HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE UNITED IN MARRIAGE  
THEY NO LONGER SEEM LIKE SOMETHING EARTHLY,  
BUT RATHER LIKE THE IMAGE OF GOD HIMSELF.”

~ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM



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# THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE POPE, THE COUNCIL, & THE WRITER

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*Father Anthony Lentz, OFM*

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## *The Pope*

On November 20, 1947, Pope Pius XII promulgated his encyclical letter *Mediator Dei*. We can consider this one to be his magnum opus among the forty-one encyclicals he issued. That is because it is devoted to the greatest visible expression of Catholic belief and identity, the Sacred Liturgy. We often hear the phrase Sacred Liturgy, but do we know what it means? It is simply the Roman Catholic Faith expressed in ceremony. As the Church evolved and its understanding of Divine Revelation developed over the centuries, so too did Her expression of that belief and Her devotion. We find no greater example of these, as expressed within the liturgy, than in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass itself.

In *Mediator Dei*, Pope Pius XII wanted to safeguard the Deposit of Faith by flaming the embers of devotion and understanding within the Church and to warn all the

faithful against abuses and errors. One of the errors that he expressly warned us about was *antiquarianism*. He writes:

*62. Assuredly, it is a wise and most laudable thing to return in spirit and affection to the sources of the Sacred Liturgy. For research in this field of study, by tracing it back to its origins, contributes valuable assistance towards a more thorough and careful investigation of the significance of feast-days, and of the meaning of the texts and sacred ceremonies employed on their occasion. But it is neither wise nor laudable to reduce everything to antiquity by every possible device. Thus, to cite some instances, one would be straying from the straight path were he to wish the altar restored to its primitive table form; were he to want black excluded as a color for the liturgical vestments; were he to forbid the use of sacred images and statues in Churches; were he to order the crucifix so*

*designed that the divine Redeemer's body shows no trace of His cruel sufferings; and lastly were he to disdain and reject polyphonic music or singing in parts, even where it conforms to regulations issued by the Holy See. (Mediator Dei, Section 62)*

Pius XII was ultimately ignored. And we ended up with....

### ***The Council – Vatican II***

The Novus Ordo Mass, the product of the “spirit” of the Second Vatican Council, was fully implemented on November 30, 1969. A few years prior, the faithful, in some locations, started to see some initial changes – the removal of the Communion Rails, receiving Communion standing and in the hand, the removal of the Last Gospel, etc. Those who lived through these years know these and many other examples. We were told by the hierarchy of the Novus Ordo, as early as John XXIII, that these changes were necessary so to breathe life back into the church. I guess the Church died, and nobody told us.

This change ultimately resulted in the Church losing Its identity. This then ushered in a

change in ideology. They stopped preaching that the Roman Catholic Church was the one true Church founded by Jesus Christ but was instead just one part of a larger Christian union. This teaching was a promotion of interfaith relations in the modern world. This “bowing down to modernism” was nothing less than ignoring the command that Christ, Our Lord, gave to the Apostles and His Church, *“Teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Those who will be baptized and who believe will be saved. Those who will not be baptized and who will not believe will be damned.”* In other words, there was less of a concern for conversions and more for “dialoguing.” Truly, there is no reason to talk to people about the Faith if you do not want to see them converted. They had lost sight of this, among other things; of course, I say this if we assume that they thought these changes would help save souls. The Tridentine Mass, the Latin language, the rites of the Sacraments, and so on and so forth were no mere affectations and preferences but rather an expression of the Catholic

identity within the liturgy. If you change the expression of belief, you will undoubtedly change what people believe. This is why the Novus Ordo is no longer Catholic but, in reality, a Protestant sect.

### *The Writer*

Through *Mediator Dei* Pius XII tried to warn us about this coming danger. Fortunately for him, he did not have to witness this liturgical, moral, and spiritual demolition of the Church. On the other hand, countless souls had to endure and stand up against these changes. Probably the most famous of these individuals was the Lord of the Rings author, J.R.R. Tolkien.

Tolkien was a devout Catholic, the son of a convert mother who understood that the faith was the greatest heritage she could have left him. His devotion to the Faith was unquestionable, and it was this devotion that inspired him to write so extensively about it in his letters. We are fortunate to have his letters extant and put into a single volume titled *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Through these letters, we are truly given a clear glimpse into the deep devotion that he carried his entire life.

In letter 306, which he wrote to his son Michael, Professor Tolkien explains his displeasure with the changes that happened during and after the Second Vatican Council. His arguments against these changes are nothing short of genius, reminding us of the erudite minds of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. He writes:

*“The ‘protestant’ search backwards for ‘simplicity’ and directness – which, of course, though it contains some good or at least intelligible motives, is mistaken and indeed vain. Because ‘primitive Christianity’ is now and in spite of all ‘research’ will ever remain largely unknown; because ‘primitiveness’ is no guarantee of value and is and was in great part a reflection of ignorance. Grave abuses were as much an element in Church liturgical behavior from the beginning as now. (St. Paul’s strictures on eucharistic behavior are sufficient to show this!) Still more because ‘my church’ was not intended by Our Lord to be static or remain in perpetual child-hood; but to be a living organism (likened to a plant), which develops and changes in externals by the interactions of its bequeathed divine life and history – the particular*

*circumstances of the world into which it is set. There is no resemblance between the 'mustard seed' and the full-grown tree. For those living in the days of its branching growth the Tree is the thing, for the history of a living thing is part of its life, and the history of a divine thing is sacred. The wise may know it began with a seed, but it is vain to try and dig it up, for it no longer exists, and the virtue and powers that it had now reside in the Tree. Very good, but in husbandry, the authorities, the keepers of the Tree, must look after it, according to such wisdom as they possess, prune it, remove cankers, rid it of parasites, and so forth. (With trepidation, knowing how little their knowledge of growth is!) But they will certainly do harm*

*if they are obsessed with the desire of going back to the seed or even to the first youth of the plant when it was (as they imagine) pretty and unafflicted by evils. The other motive (now so confused with the primitivist one, even in the mind of any one of the reformers): aggiornamento: bringing up to date: that has its own grave dangers, as has been apparent throughout history. With this 'ecumenicalness' has also become confused."*

### **Conclusion**

The simple conclusion is that the changes that came out of Vatican II were not part of the natural evolution of understanding and adaptability that has guided the Church through-out the centuries. They were rather a de-evolution into Protestantism.

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# VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

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*Very Reverend Lyman A. Fenn, S.S., D.D.*

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SIGNS OF A VOCATION:

#### Part Two

#### HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE

##### A. THE APOSTLES

That quality which Our Lord looked for in His Apostles seems more especially to have been humility. He knew that a proud disposition undermines or rather kills the spirit of humble and voluntary obedience, an obedience which is prompted by respect for authority and the will of another. As the functioning of His Church was to depend upon just such humble submission to authority, no wonder that He looked for it first among those whom He would have for His priests. With what scathing words He condemned the Scribes and Pharisees, who “love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogue.” Although they were the leaders of the Jews, better educated than the rest, knowing well that Old Law, which Christ had come, not to destroy but to fulfill, not one of the Pharisaic leaders was chosen to be among the Twelve.

Rather, He selected men of humble station, men who, though they made mistakes were quick to admit them. They were such as could cry so sincerely: “Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” They were those who would accept Christ’s commands without question, simply, and in a literal manner.

##### B. THE BOY

How do humility and obedience manifest themselves in an American small boy? When he is faced with the awesome question, “Do you want to be a priest?”, the first reaction of our average Catholic boy is to draw back in humility with the thought: “I am not good enough.” In fact, this humble attitude persists in some of the finest youngsters to such an extent as to become an obstacle to their deciding to enter the seminary. But the humility and obedience we look for here are rather those week-day qualities which show in every move the boy makes—in the classroom or on the recreation grounds, in the street, in the church, and in the home. If in all circumstances he does without grumble or question what he is told by

parent, by teacher, or by priests, then obviously he has a boy's obedience and the humility necessary to exercise it.

There is one type of boy we must eliminate from the ranks of candidates. He is the cross-grained grumbler who chafes under restraint. Every teacher knows him. The wry grimace, the stubborn little shrug of the shoulders greet commands or suggestions. Such youngsters have in their blood a tendency to fault-finding, take exception to everything, discover each new command as an occasion for growling, always know better than their superiors, whom they usually distrust. Characters like these, whose nature is one of pride and insubordination, are most emphatically not suited for the priestly state. Their chafing and grumbling would only grow in the solitary life of the priesthood, and the authority of their bishop, to whom every priest solemnly promises reverence and obedience on the day of his ordination, would be a source of irritation rather than of inspiration and comfort.

## GENEROSITY AND THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

### A. THE APOSTLES

Christ did not choose His disciples from among the wearers of purple nor from

those who were clothed in soft garments. True, He did issue a touching invitation to the rich young man to "go, sell what thou hast — and come, follow Me." But the sense of sacrifice was wanting in the youth, and "he went away sad, for he had great possessions." He who was to demand of every man who would come after Him that he deny himself and take up his cross, wanted generous characters, schooled in adversity and stiffened by strenuous work and abnegation. So the Twelve He chose were generous and self-sacrificing. Thus, as a simple matter of course the Gospel tells us of the readiness that two of them showed when Christ called them: "And they (James and John) *forthwith* left their nets and father and followed Him" (*Matt. iv. 22*). They all could exclaim: "We have left all to follow Thee," and tradition has it that every one of them (Judas excepted) endured the pains of martyrdom for the sake of Christ.

### B. THE BOY

Are our boys rugged enough in character to evince this apostolic spirit of self-denial? How often have we heard that American life is a soft one, and that the children of this generation are reared in an atmosphere of ease and comfort which is anything but

conducive to cheerful cross-carrying? Without doubt, there is much truth in the statement, but there are many boys, none the less, who even in boyhood show signs of a sense of sacrifice.

It is in the home where they best give practical evidence of the trait. Are they habitually thoughtful and helpful toward their mother, and toward other members of the family? If so, this already indicates a lack of selfishness and the beginnings of a generosity that can grow into a beautiful priestly and self-forgetting love of souls. The wise and honest mother often gives testimony of the presence or absence of the quality in her son. In talking to the priests or Sisters she will remark that her boy Johnnie is so thoughtful about the house, whereas "that other one, Jim, thinks of nobody but himself."

The characteristic of generosity also manifests itself in the school, in the recreation grounds, in Church, in fact everywhere, so long as the boy is acting naturally, not in a studied manner as he is apt to do when on parade. It is a good sign, for example, if the young lad keeps working with gritty, persistent effort when his lessons are difficult. It is a bad sign, if he gives up in the face of difficulties and is too easily discouraged by them. The

generous and sacrificing youngster will be reliable in a boy's way and with a boy's sense of responsibility, whenever duties in school or in the church are imposed upon him. He will be faithful at serving early morning Masses long after the novelty of the bell ringing and candle lighting has worn off.

This type of boy, given, of course, the other necessary qualities, makes a fine seminarian. Obedience and the long routine of the clerical training do not frighten or fatally discourage him. His high-mindedness, his boyish eagerness to do something worthwhile will not melt away under the telltale test of self-denial. There's the test! Does the boy deny himself, that is, is he generous and thoughtful of others in the normal, every-day happenings of his life? (The passing splurge of self-sacrifice during a Lenten period may only be his way of "showing off.") If so, we can reasonably expect that our candidate will spend a happy priesthood, not saddened and made cynical by its sacrifices, or long-faced before the hardships it entails. Perhaps no other single quality of character makes the priesthood such a congenial and happy existence than this one of generosity. Most failures seem to come from lack of it.

We must make sure, then,

reasonably sure that the boy we would recommend to the seminary possesses this indispensable gift of generosity. If the youngster lacks it, we must take equal pains to spare the seminary his presence. And are there any practical warning signs which would point out that lack? There is one that appears always to be trustworthy. Beware of the boy who is forever making excuses for himself. Boy language has a name for him; he is the "alibi artist." His soft answers turn away wrath, and his dodges get him out of the way of all attempts at correction. He is simply never wrong, and has a way of shifting the blame for failures and mistakes to others, even to his teachers. (Unfortunately, doting and foolish parents will often believe his story and take his side, with the consequent heartache to the teacher.) Such a boy does not last very long in the seminary, for he will never stand squarely in the face of his faults, and there is no way that the seminary influence can touch him. Making excuses and shifting blame may not be a serious and abiding fault in a little boy (especially if he be the youngest of a family); but, when it persists into the early teens, it has an ugly way of persisting throughout life. Benjamin Franklin made the sad remark that one who makes

excuses is never good for anything else.

There is another character trait which renders a boy very doubtful timber for the priesthood. It is the *over-weening* desire to seek attention. It is true that every boy (and man, unless he be a saint!) enjoys being noticed and is not indifferent to praise. But when this desire inspires all or most of the little fellow's actions and dominates his motives, then the seminary is no place for him. Whether the trait grows out of his home conditions, where perhaps he is petted, yielded to in his whims, and generally quite spoiled; whether it comes from too much attention at school; or whether it grows out of his peculiar temperament, makes no difference. When it is present in this exaggerated form, it is disqualifying. The seeker after attention is your overcultivated, self-conscious altar boy, who looks well in his red-sashed cassock on Easter Sunday and who knows it. His hands he keeps piously folded and his eyes demurely cast down, except when he glances furtively to see if "Father" or "Sister" is admiring him. In his games he will play to his audience, and boys have a name for him, too. They call him the "grandstand artist." This boy can seldom, if ever, develop that sense of independent sacrifice so essential in the

priesthood. Rather, he is more apt to degenerate into that very unhappy person who lives on self-pity.

## REVERENCE

### A. THE APOSTLES

The sturdy fishermen of Galilee possessed an innate sense of reverence and a solid piety even before they met the Master. They seem to have been faithful in their religious duties as Jews, going up to Jerusalem for the celebration of religious feasts. In fact, it was while on one of these journeys to the South that they first heard of John the Baptist, and were attracted to the man, who was preaching the doctrine of penance and the remission of sins. No lightheaded or impious men were these who were drawn by the stern voice of the one crying in the wilderness. They had a sense of religion which made them put the proper values on sacred persons and things. And the very first time they met the Lamb of God, they addressed Him, as we have remarked, by a name, given only to respected persons in Israel — Rabbi, Master or Teacher. They developed that reverence and devotion for the person of Christ as the years of their companionship with Him sped by. Even though they grew to know Him so well, even though

they were in many ways familiar and intimate with Him, even though they were called “not His servants but friends,” they never lost respect. Such was not the case of all the followers of Our Lord. His very familiarity, His lowliness, was for many a stumbling block to the accepting of His greatness. “Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” is the way they dismissed His teaching on the Bread from Heaven. But with the Apostles the very closeness to Jesus inspired and increased their confidence in Him. Faith deepened; love grew to be all-possessing until it gripped every fiber of their beings. Priestly, zealous hearts were thus built out of native piety and they came to be on fire for the love of the Master.

### B. THE BOY

We turn now to those lively, restless creatures of the classroom and ask: what should be the small boy's piety and reverence? Reverence is a subtle thing, which reveals itself in little, sometimes intangible ways. In older students of the college or university level it is more easily discerned, and its lack is more glaring. We have met with that abominable flippancy, that sophisticated indifference to the supernatural which some Catholic students affect. But the younger boys,

the ones we are more concerned with, still have their childhood simplicity. In their case it would be an easy matter to judge reverence, if we had but to count the number of novenas a boy makes in the course of a year, or the number of times he frequents the sacraments. These, however, may or may not of themselves indicate piety.

Reverence, rather, is divined by a particular accent in voice and manner in the presence of everything sacred, including the boy's own conscience. The chosen lad has a temple in his heart, a special presence of the Holy Ghost, creating reverence in him. He will possess the faith and religion of a boy with a boy's seriousness. He may be every inch a boy; we prefer that he is. He may fight with his companions, and play as hard or harder than the next. His very abundance of life gets him into trouble and out of it. He discovers pleasure perhaps not at all in arithmetic but with all his boy's real life, he has a capacity for the love of God which surprises his teachers when an accident reveals it to them. He may occasionally race with the other altar boys to see who can light the candles most quickly, but generally the church will not be a playground for him. Although he may feel at home in serving at the altar or in making his visits, he will

never show that familiarity and boldness which boys do evince who lack the sense of reverence.

He will, therefore, retain that charming reserve which respect for his consecrated elders inspires, before the sometimes familiar ways and special favors of priests and Sisters who take a marked interest in him. Were he lacking in reverence, he would follow up the advantages of their favors by a catlike freedom, thus showing by his actions that consecrated objects have cheapened in his eyes. (But may we insert here a word of warning! Reverence in the boy is a beautiful gift, which draws upon itself the admiration of older people. But priests, Brothers and Sisters can spoil or dim its luster by overmuch attention!)



*To Be Continued*

# THE COMMUNIST THREAT

*Father Joseph Noonan, OFM*

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## ***Part Thirty-Six: The Undermining of Education***

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

**1982**

Chester Finn wrote **“Public Service, Public Support, Public Accountability”** for the March 1982 issue of the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ Bulletin. Finn became a high profile figure in education circles with his appointment as assistant secretary, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, by Secretary of Education William Bennett. Finn’s article was quoted in Barbara Morris’s book, *Tuition Tax Credits: A Responsible Appraisal* (The Barbara Morris Report: Upland, Cal., 1983):

Short of scattering money in the streets or handing it out to everyone who wants some, the funding agency must define eligible recipients.... This means, in a word, “regulation,” the in-

evitable concomitant of public financial support.

Finn also believed the government is obligated to recognize that the private schools it helps support are different from public schools—that it is this “differentness” that makes them supportable. The other side of the coin, he says, is the obligation of private schools to recognize certain limits to their differentness and certain ways they must conform to the norms and expectations of a society that values and supports them....

Some, to be sure, like to think they can have it both ways; i.e., can obtain aid without saddling themselves with unacceptable forms of regulation. But most acknowledge the general applicability of the old adage that he who pays the piper calls the tune, and are more or less resigned to amalgamating or choosing between assistance and autonomy.

On March 29, 1982, at the **“Closed to the Public”**

**annual meeting of The Council of Chief State School Officers**, Secretary of Education T.H. Bell's top assistant, Elam Herzler, told the assembled fifty state superintendents of education:

One of the elements of an effective school is to monitor, assess, and feed back.... As little as 5 percent of a school budget K-12 would be needed over a period of 12 years to enable each student to have his own computer, and this is within our cost range.

**"Can Computers Teach Values?"** by Joseph A. Braun, Jr. and Kurt A. Slobodzian, assistant professors in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction of the Northern Illinois University School of Education in Dekalb, Illinois, was published in the April 1982 issue of *Educational Leadership*. The following are excerpts:

In helping children learn how to inquire and examine their own emerging value systems, most educators agree that unintentional negative reactions by teachers are deleterious to youngsters' self-concept. Couple this with potential ridicule from student peers, and one can readily see why values education has been a delicate

and controversial issue. However, a student using CAI [computer-assisted instruction] in the examination, evaluation, and acquisition of values would be able to do so with mature guidance in an environment free from potential rejection or scorn.

Another pitfall for teachers of values education is the invasion of a child's right to privacy. Well-intentioned teachers often expect self-disclosure beyond a student's limit of psychological safety (Lockwood, 1977) by demanding deeply personal revelations from participants who are not prepared to discuss their more private thoughts. The computer, in contrast, has no misguided need to get to know "the real you."

The computer, then, is ideally suited to the role of facilitator in values education. It inherently possesses the Rogerian [psychologist Carl Rogers] qualities of genuineness and congruence. It can even be programmed to positively regard anyone who uses it. A student using CAI gains a sense of protection as well as a constant source of appropriate feedback while exploring and integrating feelings, beliefs, and behavior.

Computers have also been programmed to pick out key words from a respondent's statements. The computer program then formulates open-ended questions from key words, which causes the respondent to focus and further clarify feelings. In other words, using a program called "Doctor," Holden (1977) describes a conversation between a computer and a troubled young woman who began with a common complaint:

Human: "Men are all alike."

Computer: "In what way?"

Human: "They're always bugging us about something or another."

Computer: "Can you think of a specific example?"

Human: "Well, my boy friend made me come here."

Computer: "Your boyfriend made you come here?"

Human: "He says that I'm depressed much of the time."

Computer: "I am sorry to hear that you are depressed."

Human: "It's true, I am unhappy."

Computer: "Do you think coming here will help you not be unhappy?"

Human: "I need some help.

That much seems certain."

Computer: "What would it mean if you got some help?"

Human: "Perhaps I could learn to get along with my mother."

Computer: "Tell me more about your family."

**The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview** *Volume One, a Christian View of Philosophy and Culture* (Crossway Books: Westchester, Ill., 1982) was published. In a treatise entitled "A Christian View of Philosophy and Culture: Back to Freedom and Dignity," noted Christian scholar and theologian Dr. Francis Schaeffer warned of B.F. Skinner and his methods:

Skinner says that up until the present time all of humanity has considered man to be in some sense autonomous — that is, that there is in each individual an "ego" or mind or center of consciousness which can freely choose one or another course of action. But, Skinner says, autonomous man does not exist, and it is the task of behavioral psychology to abolish the conception.... Skinner declares that everything man is, everything man makes, everything man

thinks is completely, 100 percent, determined by his environment.

After the publication of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* [1972], when he [Skinner] was at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, he spoke at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. There he said, "The individual does not initiate anything." In fact, he said that any time man is freed from one kind of control, he merely comes under another kind of control. Christians consider that man is autonomous in that he is significant, he affects the environment. In behavioristic psychology, the situation is reversed. All behavior is determined not from within but from without. "You" don't exist. Man is not there. All that is there is a bundle of conditioning, a collection of what you have been in the past: your genetic makeup and your environment. But Skinner goes a step further, subordinates the genetic factor, and suggests that man's behavior can be almost totally controlled by controlling the environment.... Some behaviorists would differ with him on this last point. How is it that the environment controls behavior?

Here Skinner brings up the concept of "operant conditioning." This notion is based on his work with pigeons and rats. The basic idea is that "when a bit of behavior is followed by a certain consequence, it is more likely to occur again, and a consequence having this effect is called a reinforcer." (p. 27) That is, for example, "anything the organism does that is followed by the receipt of food is more likely to be done again whenever the organism is hungry."

There are two kinds of reinforcers: negative reinforcers which have adverse effects, and positive reinforcers whose effect is positive. Skinner contends that only the positive reinforcers should be used. In other words, in order to reinforce a certain kind of behavior, one should not punish; he should reward. If a person is surrounded by an atmosphere in which he gets a sufficient reward for doing what society would like him to do, he will automatically do this without ever knowing why he is doing it.... Within the Skinnerian system there are no ethical controls. There is no boundary limit to what can be done by the elite in whose hands control resides.

The reduction of man's value to zero is one of the important factors which triggered the student rebellion at Berkeley and elsewhere in the 1960s. Those students sensed that they were being turned into zeros and they revolted. Christians should have sensed it long before and said and exhibited that we have an alternative.... We are on the verge of the largest revolution the world has ever seen—the control and shaping of men through the abuse of genetic knowledge, and chemical and psychological conditioning.

Will people accept it? I don't think they would accept it if (1) they had not already been taught to accept the presuppositions that lead to it, and (2) they were not in such hopelessness. Many of our secular schools have consistently taught these presuppositions, and unhappily many of our Christian lower schools and colleges have taught the crucial subjects no differently than the secular schools.

Schaeffer's "Conclusion" follows:

What do we and our children face? The biological bomb, the abuse of genetic knowledge, chemical engineering, the behavioristic manipulation

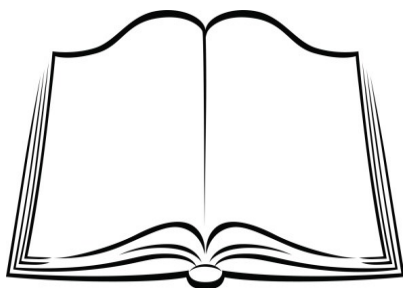
of man. All these have come to popular attention only a few years ago. But they are not twenty years away. They are not five years away. They are here now in technological breakthroughs. This is where we live, and as true Christians we must be ready. This is no time for weakness in the Church of Christ. What has happened to man? We must see him as one who has torn himself away both from the infinite-personal God who created him as finite but in his image and from God's revelation to him. Made in God's image, he was made to be great, he was made to be beautiful, and he was made to be creative in life and art. But his rebellion has led him into making himself into nothing but a machine. (pp. 374–384)



# *The Catholic Mother to Her Children*

*The Countess de Flavigny*

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## **TWENTIETH LESSON**

***EASTER DAY: A DAY OF GLADNESS***

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“This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad, and rejoice therein.” *Psalm 117:24*

My Dear Children, this feast has always been considered as the first and most solemn of all those the Church celebrates during the year. It is the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ’s Resurrection. In the ancient law, there was also a feast of Easter, and this name, which signifies *Passover*, reminded the Hebrew people of the passage of the exterminating angel, and also the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. Easter, in the new law, reminds all Christians, that Jesus Christ in His Resurrection has passed from death to life. The history of this marvelous event is as follows:

Our Lord’s Body had been already two days in the closed

tomb. On the morn of the third day, Mary Magdalen and several other holy women went to the sepulcher to anoint the Body of Jesus Christ. It was a custom amongst the Jews: and these pious women wished to offer this last homage after death, to Him whose lessons they had listened to, and whose virtues they had admired. As they walked along, they asked one another if it would be possible for them to open the tomb, for its entrance was closed by an enormous stone. Great then was their surprise when, on drawing near, they perceived the stone rolled back; a young man was sitting near the sepulcher; his face was all radiant with a celestial brilliancy; his clothes were white as snow; “Be not affrighted;” saith he to them, “you seek Jesus of Nazareth: He

is risen, He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. Go tell His disciples.”

The holy women hastened to inform Peter, the chief of the apostles, and John, called in the Gospel the disciple Jesus loved. Both ran in great haste to the sepulcher; but the angel had disappeared, the tomb was empty, the burial cloth only remained. Overcome with terror at the Angel’s apparition, announced by an earthquake, the soldiers appointed by Pilate to guard the sepulcher, had fallen down motionless; when they recovered their senses they fled in affright.

The two apostles hastened to tell the others of the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to prove the reality of this extraordinary event Our Savior made Himself visible several times to His disciples, while they were assembled together.

The miracle of this Resurrection, my dear children, is the most remarkable of all miracles, you will easily understand this. In the course of Scriptural History, we are told that sometimes holy men, the prophet Elias for instance, had obtained from God the power of recalling life to the dead. Our Lord had also restored to life persons, either to show His power, or to give

men a fresh proof of his love; but His own Resurrection is still more miraculous. Yes, indeed, Jesus Christ rose from the dead by His own power, and He had foretold this miracle, when He said: “The son of man must be put to death, and the third day He will rise again.”

His enemies refused to believe in the fulfilment of His prophecy, they had already triumphantly exulted over Him when they saw Him nailed to the Cross saying: “He saved others; himself he cannot save; let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him!” Even the faith of His disciples was shaken. They regretted Jesus Christ as a righteous man, they mourned for him as a friend; but they could hardly recognize a God in the being they had just seen put to death with so much suffering and ignominy. Therefore, the news of the Resurrection was received by them with no less surprise than admiration and joy.

My children, by His Glorious Resurrection, Jesus Christ most effectually proved His power and His Divinity. He did more than come down from the Cross; He rose alive from the tomb in which He had been put. By this miracle

Jesus Christ showed Himself to be truly God; indeed, without it our religion would not have existed.

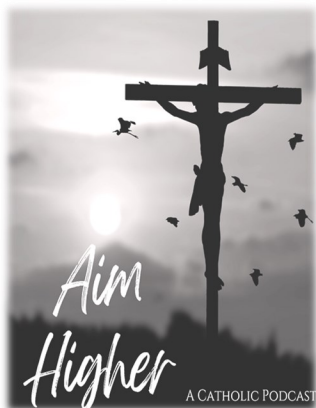
That is why the feast of Easter is considered by the Church as the most important one of the year. The faithful crowd the churches with more than ordinary eagerness on this holy day, and we see the ministers of our worship arrayed in their most beautiful vestments in honor of Easter. The prayers set apart to celebrate this feast are all canticles of joy. All Christian countries make this day a time of rejoicing, and in some, when friends meet, they congratulate each other in these words: "Jesus Christ is risen!"

My dear children, will you be content with merely praising Our Lord for the great victory he has won over death? No, certainly not. From this mystery you must learn a grand and useful lesson. Jesus in all the mysteries of His life has no other purpose in view than our sanctification. If He vouchsafed to become as one of us by taking upon Himself the nature of man, it was to raise us to Him, to show us the perfect being that man was destined to be, and which he should strive to become. If Jesus died on the Cross, it was

to teach us how to die a holy death; and finally, if He rose from the dead, it was to open the gates of Heaven for us, and make us partakers of His Resurrection.

But you may say, how can we hope to gain such a blessed destiny? Can we then die and rise again during this life? No, my children, but we can correct our evil propensities, destroy them, pluck them from our hearts; and replace them by the opposite virtues. A lazy, disobedient, violent child, may become meek, painstaking, and obedient. He can thus begin a new life. That is what St. Paul calls stripping off the old man and putting on the new one. This is, my children, the kind of Resurrection Jesus Christ expects of you in this world, in imitation of His own.

But your resurrection to a life of grace, besides being real and true, must have another quality, in order to bear a resemblance to that of your Blessed Redeemer; it must be permanent, as His was permanent, for He rose so as to "die no more."



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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 PARADISE

“Blessed, O Lord, are those who dwell in Thy house: they shall praise Thee for ever and ever.”

To dwell in the house of the good God, to enjoy the presence of the good God, to be happy with the happiness of the good God — oh, I what happiness, my children! Who can understand all the joy and consolation with which the saints are inebriated in Paradise? St. Paul, who was taken up into the third heaven, tells us that there are things above which he cannot reveal to us, and which we cannot comprehend. ... Indeed, my children, we can never form a true idea of Heaven till we shall be there. It is a hidden treasure, an abundance of secret sweet-

nesses, a plenitude of joy, which may be felt, but which our poor tongue cannot explain. What can we imagine greater? The good God Himself will be our recompense: *Ego merces tua magna nimis* — I am thy reward exceeding great. O God! the happiness Thou promisest us is such that the eyes of man cannot see it, his ears cannot hear it, nor his heart conceive it.

Yes, my children, the happiness of Heaven is incomprehensible; it is the last effort of the good God, who wishes to reward us. God, being admirable in all His works, will be so too when He recompenses the good Christians who have made all their happiness consist in the possession of Heaven. This possession contains

all good, and excludes all evil; sin being far from Heaven, all the pains and miseries which are the consequences of sin are also banished from it. No more death! The good God will be in us the Principle of everlasting life. No more sickness, no more sadness, no more pains, no more grief. You who are afflicted, rejoice! Your fears and your weeping will not extend beyond the grave. . . .The good God will Himself wipe away your tears! Rejoice, O you whom the world persecutes! your sorrows will soon be over, and for a moment of tribulation, you will have in Heaven an immense weight of glory. Rejoice! for you possess all good things in one — the source of all good, the good God Himself.

Can anyone be unhappy when he is with the good God; when he is happy with the happiness of the good God, of the good God Himself; when he sees the good God as he sees himself? As St. Paul says, my children, we shall see God face to face, because then there will be no veil between Him and us. We shall possess Him without un-easiness, for we shall no longer fear to lose Him. We shall love Him with an uninterrupted and undivid-

ed love, because He alone will occupy our whole heart. We shall enjoy Him without weariness, because we shall discover in Him ever new perfections; and in proportion as we penetrate into that immense abyss of wisdom, of goodness, of mercy, of justice, of grandeur, and of holiness, we shall plunge ourselves in it with fresh eagerness. If an interior consolation, if a grace from the good God, gives us so much pleasure in this world that it diminishes our troubles, that it helps us to bear our crosses, that it gives to so many martyrs strength to suffer the most cruel torments — what will be the happiness of Heaven, where consolations and delights are given, not drop by drop, but by torrents!

Let us represent to ourselves, my children, an everlasting day always new, a day always serene, always calm; the most delicious, the most perfect society. What joy, what happiness, if we could possess on earth, only for a few minutes, the angels, the Blessed Virgin, Jesus Christ! In Heaven we shall eternally see, not only the Blessed Virgin and Jesus Christ, we shall see the good God Himself! We shall see Him no longer through the darkness of faith, but in the

light of day, in all His Majesty! What happiness thus to see the good God! The angels have contemplated Him since the beginning of the world, and they are not satiated; it would be the greatest misfortune to them to be deprived of Him for a single moment. The possession of Heaven, my children, can never weary us; we possess the good God, the Author of all perfections. See, the more we possess God, the more He pleases; the more we know Him, the more attractions and charms we find in the knowledge of Him. We shall always see Him and shall always desire to see Him; we shall always taste the pleasure there is in enjoying the good God, and we shall never be satiated with it. The blessed will be enveloped in the Divine Immensity, they will revel in delights and be all surrounded with them, and, as it were, inebriated. Such is the happiness which the good God destines for us.

We can all, my children, acquire this happiness. The good God wills the salvation of the whole world; He has merited Heaven for us by His death, and by the effusion of all His Blood. What a happiness to be able to say, "Jesus Christ died for me; He has opened Heaven

for me; it is my inheritance. . . . Jesus has prepared a place for me; it only depends on me to go and occupy it. *Vado vobis parare locum* — I go to prepare a place for you. The good God has given us faith, and with this virtue we can attain to eternal life. For, though the good God wills the salvation of all men, He particularly wills that of the Christians who believe in Him: *Qui credit, habeat vitam aeternam* — He that believeth hath life everlasting. Let us, then, thank the good God, my children; let us rejoice — our names are written in Heaven, like those of the Apostles. Yes, they are written in the Book of Life: if we choose, they will be there forever, since we have the means of reaching Heaven.

The happiness of Heaven, my children, is easy to acquire; the good God has furnished us with so many means of doing it! See, there is not a single creature which does not furnish us with the means of attaining to the good God; if any of them become an obstacle, it is only by our abuse of them. The goods and the miseries of this life, even the chastisements made use of by the good God to punish our infidelities, serve to our salvation. The good God, as St. Paul

says, makes all things turn to the good of His elect; even our very faults may be useful to us; even bad examples and temptations. Job was saved in the midst of an idolatrous people. All the saints have been tempted. If these things are, in the hands of God, an assistance in reaching Heaven, what will happen if we have recourse to the Sacraments, to that never-failing source of all good, to that fountain of grace supplied by the good God Himself! It was easy for the disciples of Jesus to be saved, having the Divine Savior constantly with them. Is it more difficult for us to secure our salvation, having Him constantly with us? They were happy in obtaining whatever they wished for, whatever they chose; are we less so? We possess Jesus Christ in the Eucharist; He is continually with us, He is ready to grant us whatever we ask, He is waiting for us; we have only to ask. O my children! the poor know how to express their wants to the rich; we have only our indifference, then, to accuse, if assistance and graces are wanting to us. If an ambitious or a covetous man had as ample means of enriching himself, would he hesitate a moment, would he let so favorable an opportunity escape? Alas! we

do everything for this world, and nothing for the other? What labor, what trouble, what cares, what sorrows, in order to gather up a little fortune! See, my children, of what use are our perishable goods? Solomon, the greatest, the richest, the most fortunate of kings, said, in the height of the most brilliant fortune: "I have seen all things that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

And these are the goods to acquire which we labor so much, whilst we never think of the goods of Heaven! How shameful for us not to labor to acquire it, and to neglect so many means of reaching it! If the fig tree was cast into the fire for not having profited by the care that had been taken to render it fertile; if the unprofitable servant was reprov'd for having hidden the talent that he had received, what fate awaits us, who have so often abused the aids which might have taken us to Heaven? If we have abused the graces that the good God has given us, let us make haste to repair the past by great fidelity, and let us endeavor to acquire merits worthy of eternal life.



# FRANCISCAN SAINTS

**JULY 6TH**

**St. Thomas More**

*Martyr, Third Order*

St. Thomas belongs to that class of Tertiaries who have grasped the true spirit of their Seraphic Father. It is a spirit of deep-seated piety and of contempt for the world, as well as of unswerving fidelity to Holy Church practiced in an exceptional degree and sealed with one's blood.

His father was a knight. Thomas was born in London in 1480. Having spent a very devout youth, he became a lawyer. His services were constantly in demand, but nevertheless he always found time to attend holy Mass daily and to perform other pious practices.

As the father of a family, he was concerned that his children should be reared in the fear of God. He became famous for his book entitled "Utopia." By means of this "Kingdom of Nowhere" he

scourged in fine satire the evils that were eating their way into the Church and the State.

Through Henry VIII he became attached to the royal court and was finally appointed Lord High Chancellor. The time had now arrived in which our Tertiary was to manifest how sincerely he had grasped the spirit of the Saint of Assisi. As was to be expected, even as a statesman Thomas More continued to attend to his accustomed religious exercises. He set aside every Friday as a day of introspection. His charity was without limit.

He experienced special delight in serving the priest at Holy Mass, and he received Holy Communion daily. He was told, by way of reproach, that it was unbecoming for a layman with so much work to do and so much distraction to en-

counter to communicate daily. But he replied: "You are advancing the very reasons for the need of frequent Holy Communion. If I am distracted, Holy Communion helps me to become recollected. If opportunities are offered me each day to offend my God, I arm myself anew each day for the combat by the reception of the Eucharist. If I am in special need of light and prudence in order to discharge my burdensome duties, I draw nigh to my Savior and seek counsel and light from Him."

But it was not long before his doom was sealed. Blinded with unholy passions, King Henry divorced his lawful wife and married Anne Boleyn, a lady in waiting at the court. When Rome justly condemned this adulterous act, the king severed his connections with Rome and set himself up as the head of the Church in England. Whoever disapproved of his conduct, was doomed to die.

The first person who opposed the king was his loyal chancellor, Thomas More. He was cast into prison. There he wrote a pamphlet styled "Death Endured for the Faith Need Cause No Fear." When

his wife endeavored to persuade him to give up his opposition and prolong his life, he asked her just how long she believed he would still live. She answered, "At least twenty years." "Indeed!" said Thomas More. "Had you said a few thousand years, that might make a difference. But surely even he would be a poor merchant who would run the risk of losing an eternity for the sake of a thousand years." He was beheaded on July 6, 1535.

Pope Leo XIII beatified this truly Catholic Tertiary, and Pope Pius XI canonized him on May 19, 1935.

## ON LOYALTY TO CHRIST

1.) Remain loyal to Christ by the way you live. Christ, however, "began to do" (*Acts 1:1*), and then He went out to teach. Thomas More, His faithful servant, acted in like manner. His whole conduct showed that he belonged to Christ. He often remarked: "There are many people who purchase hell at so great an effort that one half of it would be sufficient to win heaven." — Manifest to the world with a good

Catholic life that you belong to Christ.

2.) Be loyal to Christ by your love for the Blessed Sacrament. Faith taught Thomas to behold in the Sacred Host Him who said: "This is My Body!" It was, therefore, his greatest delight and duty to attend the Holy Sacrifice daily, to serve the priests of Christ, and to receive Christ in Holy Communion. — Can this also be said of you?

3.) Be loyal to Christ by your loyalty to the Church. She is the living Christ and loved by Him even unto death (*Eph. 5:25*). St. Thomas refused to swerve a finger's breadth in his loyalty to his Church even though his fidelity was to be rewarded with prison and death. — Beg our saint for like fidelity, and you will share with him a like reward.

### ***PRAYER OF THE CHURCH***

ALMIGHTY AND ETERNAL GOD, GRANT US, WE BESEECH THEE,  
THAT WE WHO CELEBRATE THE FESTIVAL OF THY HOLY  
MARTYR THOMAS, MAY, THROUGH HIS INTERCESSION, BE  
FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN OUR LOVE FOR THEE. THROUGH  
CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

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