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Contents

The Faithful Departed	1
The Sacrament of Holy Eucharist	6
I am a Roman Catholic: Part Two	12
The Best Thing for the Poor Souls	16
Vocations to the Priesthood	19
Pro Parentibus	24
The Catholic Mother to Her Children	28
Franciscan Saints	31

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THE SERAPH

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

During November, we are reminded of the Faithful Departed. The Mystical Body of Christ (The Church) is made up of three parts: The Church Triumphant (those in Heaven), The Church Militant (us here on earth), and The Church Suffering (The Poor Souls in Purgatory). November First is a holy day of obligation, the Feast of All Saints, and we pay tribute to all the Saints in Heaven. We honor on this day all our Brothers and Sisters in Heaven. Many in Heaven are never officially placed on our Calendars, and this day is set aside to honor them as well as ask their intercession for ourselves. They have successfully traversed this life and have arrived at their destination in Heaven. They now bask in the love of God and know our woes from their own experience and love us more than we can imagine. The intercession of these saints in Heaven should be a daily prayer of ours, but on the First of November, we all

(The Church Militant) unite in reciprocating that love of God and neighbor that flows so freely from Heaven.

On the Second of November, our attention is drawn to the suffering Souls in Purgatory. These, too, are our brothers and sisters in the Mystical Body of Christ; they are physically separated from us but not yet completely united with the Saints in Heaven. They must first purge any remaining sins from their souls. They left this world without the stain of mortal sin, but not without the stain of lesser sins. Their time of laboring or working for eternal merits or rewards is over. They are unable to increase their merits once they leave this world, and so they must remain in the purging fires of Purgatory until their souls are completely purified, because nothing stained can enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Though the Poor Souls cannot help themselves, we can help them. Just as the Saints in

Heaven can help us, we can help the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Our prayers, mortifications, and sacrifices offered on their behalf are capable of lessening their time in Purgatory. We are encouraged and motivated, especially on this day, by our love for our brothers and sisters in Purgatory. If we can alleviate their suffering in whole or even in part, we have gained a dear friend who will be grateful and intercede for us when they enter Heaven. All those in Purgatory will one day be in Heaven. They will not go to Hell. Their time for gaining merit is over, but so is their time for offending God.

Reflections on these two parts of the Mystical Body of Christ (The Church) naturally draw our attention to death. Bodily death is the point of separation for us. All the Saints in Heaven and all the Souls in Purgatory were once here on earth, where we are now. We must one day follow them, and that must be through the portal of bodily death. Though we may not morally do anything to hasten the coming of death – Thou shalt not kill – we should not go to the other extreme and fear and flee from it. Our bodily death is not a

punishment to us but is actually designed to be the end of our punishment here on earth so that we may enter into the blessings of Heaven.

Even for the souls damned to Hell upon their bodily death, it is an end of their sinning and offending God. This too is a kind of grace of God, because now they cannot worsen their eternal misery anymore.

Saint Ambrose, speaking ‘On The Death of his Brother, Satyrus’ said:

“One type of death, then, is spiritual, a second natural, and a third penal. But natural death and penal death are not identical. For the Lord did not give death as a penalty, but as a remedy. Hence, when Adam sinned, one thing was prescribed as a punishment, and another as a remedy. The punishment is contained in the words: ‘Because you have listened to your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which alone I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat, cursed be the ground in your work; in toil shalt you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your brow you shall eat

bread, till you return to the ground, out of which you were taken” (Gen. 3:17-19).

“Here we have freedom from punishment, for these words contain the penalty decreed against the thorns of this life, the cares of the world, and the pleasures of riches which shut out the Word. Death has been given as a remedy, as an end of evils. For God did not say: ‘Because you listened to your wife, you shall return to the ground.’ This would have been a penal sentence, as is this: ‘Cursed by the ground. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you.’ But He said: ‘In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground.’ You see that death is rather the limit of our punishment, because by it the course of this life is ended.”

“Therefore, death, far from being an evil, is even a good. Accordingly, it is sought as a good, for it is written: ‘Men will seek death and will not find it’ (Apoc. 9:6). For they will seek it who will begin to say to the mountains: ‘Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us’ (Luke 23:30). And the soul also that sins will seek it. The rich man lying in hell, who wishes to have his tongue

cooled by the finger of Lazarus, he, too, seeks it (Luke 16:24).”

“So we see that this kind of death is an advantage, while this life is a punishment. ...”

Saint Ambrose continues:

“Death, in fact, was not in nature, but it became a part of nature. God did not establish death in the beginning, but gave it as a remedy. Let us then consider it, lest it seem the opposite. For, if death is good, why is it written that ‘God made not death: but by the evil of men death came into the world?’ (Wisd. 1:13, 2:24) Death was really not necessary to the Divine plan, since for those placed in paradise, a continual succession of all good things flowed forth. But after Adam’s transgression and humanity’s condemnation to long labors and unbearable sorrow, his life became wretched. Consequently, an end had to be established for evils, so that death might restore what life had lost. For unless grace should breathe upon it, immortality would be rather a burden than an advantage.”

“If we consider that matter carefully, this death is not that of our nature but of evil, for

our nature remains, but evil dies. That which was rises again, and would that, as it is free from sinning, so it may be without former guilt! But this itself is proof that there is no death of our nature, namely, that we shall be the same as we were. Hence, we shall either pay the penalty for our sins or we shall obtain a reward for our good deeds. For the same nature will rise again, all the more distinguished for having completed its service to death. Accordingly, 'the dead in Christ will rise up first. Then we who live, who survive, shall be caught up

together with them in clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so we shall ever be with the Lord' (*1 Thess. 4:16,17*). The dead will be first, and the living will be second; the dead with Jesus, and the living through Jesus. For the dead, life will be sweeter after rest. But while the shortening of their life on earth will be welcome to the living, they will have no knowledge of the remedy."

"There is nothing, therefore, which we should fear in death, nothing over which we should grieve. ..."



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THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY EUCHARIST

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

Having explored the other Sacraments in *The Seraph*, we now come to the pinnacle of our spiritual journey—the Holy Eucharist. Unlike the other Sacraments that lead us to Heaven, the Holy Eucharist brings Heaven to us here on earth. It is the real and physical presence of God with us. Just as our ultimate joy in Heaven is to be in the Presence of God, in the Holy Eucharist, we experience this divine Presence. We not only receive the grace of God, but God Himself.

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is intimately bound up with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is made possible by the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Sacrifice of the Mass is made possible by the Holy Eucharist.

The word “Sacrament” broadly means a sign or symbol. This is something that points or directs us to something else. Crucifixes, statues, pictures, etc., are signs that direct us to something else: to Jesus’ death

on the Cross, the Saint portrayed in the artwork, etc. The signs on the highways direct us to our destination. The specific Catholic definition of the word “Sacrament” is much more than this. The Catechism is very clear that a Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. The Sacraments do not just point to or show us the way to receive grace, but the Sacraments themselves actually give grace.

The Sacraments are visible and tangible signs that point to supernatural or spiritual things (while simultaneously giving us graces). They were instituted or given to us by Jesus Christ. And lastly, they give the very grace that they point to. The Sacraments are sources of grace, in themselves, not just symbolically. Theologically, we say that they give grace through themselves, as long as we do not put an obstacle in the way (sin).

The validity of the Sacraments requires three specific things: correct matter, form, and in-

tention. In each of the Sacraments, theologians go to great effort to demonstrate or delineate the correct matter or material thing, the correct form or words to be used, as well as the intention that is required. Our fallen natures seem to gravitate to pushing the boundaries or limits of everything, so theologians seek to define the minimum required of matter, form, and intention that is necessary for the Sacraments to be valid or true Sacraments according to the specific definition of the Church. We must use the correct matter, we must use the correct words, and we must have the correct intention. But often, the bare minimum is illicit or illegal but still valid. This can be very confusing. Valid matter for the Holy Eucharist is wheat bread and grape wine. In the Eastern rites, they often use leavened bread, but in the Western or Latin rite, unleavened bread must be used. Bread made from rye, barley, oats, or some other grain is invalid matter, therefore rendering the Sacrament invalid, null and void, not a true Sacrament at all. True grape wine (fermented –alcoholic) is necessary for validity. Any other drink, including grape juice, any other fruit juice, other

fruit wine, or liquor, is also an invalid matter.

The form or words necessary to confect the Sacrament are the very words Jesus Christ used the night before He died, after He ate the Passover or Last Supper with His Apostles. The intention is to confect Transubstantiation – a term used to describe the change of the bread and wine into the Living Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This change is not a physical one, but a change in substance, while the appearance of bread and wine remains. The Mass is the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary, and Jesus Christ is made truly present in the Mass at the Consecration. The Sacrifice of Calvary is truly renewed. Jesus is really and truly present in the Holy Eucharist and offers Himself to His Father in Heaven for us. When we receive Him in Holy Communion, we unite our offerings (sacrifices) with His, and this makes our offerings to God acceptable and pleasing to Him.

It is God's delight to be united with us. "My delights were to be with the children of men." (*Proverbs 8:31*) Haydock's commentary on this passage says: "God saw that all

was good, but delighted most in His own image. He prefers man before all other corporeal creatures. To him alone below, He has granted understanding, and a soul capable of virtue. The Son has also assumed our nature.”

It is a source of great joy for God to be united with us – to be intimately united with us in Holy Communion here on earth, even before we enter Heaven. This should also be our joy, as well, if we truly love God.

Receiving Holy Communion invariably gives us tremendous grace. The only obstacle that could stand in the way of these graces is sin. Those in mortal sin should not presume to receive Holy Communion. However, the question invariably is: “What happens when someone in mortal sin receives Holy Communion?” They have validly and truly received Jesus into their bodies, but they have done so illicitly or illegally. Added to their previous sin, they have now committed another mortal sin called Sacrilege. We must strive never to commit this sin of forcing the Living Jesus into our dead souls. He does, for a time, patiently bear this insult in the Holy Eucharist, just as He pa-

tiently bore the insults of humanity on Calvary. However, unless we repent before our judgment, we will face the eternal wrath of God. This underscores the importance of repentance and the role of the Sacraments in forgiveness. God’s mercy is always available to those who approach Him with a humble and contrite heart.

While we must do all that we can to avoid this Sacrilege, we must not become scrupulous and remain aloof from the Sacraments. The Sacraments can only heal us when we worthily receive them. Jesus came not for the just but for the sinners. We receive Holy Communion not because we are just or good, but rather because we are unworthy sinners. What is required of us is to make an honest and thorough examination of our consciences. As long as we are not aware of any deliberate serious sins, we can make an Act of Contrition, pray for an increase in faith, hope, and charity, and then humbly approach Jesus in Holy Communion to receive forgiveness for our venial sins and the graces we so desperately need.

In the early days of the Church, there was a lot of se-

crecy to protect the Blessed Sacrament and the early Christians from abuses from non-believers. The Blessed Sacrament was often sought out for abuse to mock God, the Church, Catholics, etc. It is for this reason that we see in so many early documents euphemisms about the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Holy Eucharist, and Holy Communion. References to “Bread,” a “commemorative meal,” “breaking bread,” etc., were used to avoid exposing the truth to non-believers and prevent them from abusing and committing sacrileges against God.

The Agape or “love feast” often preceded or followed the Sacrifice of the Mass, and this lent an additional weight to the euphemism of a “meal” or “supper” associated with the Mass. But these should not be confused by Catholics, as Saint Paul warns us not to confuse the bread of our supper with the Bread of Christ. Or to confuse the Agape with the Mass. “When you come together therefore into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord’s supper. For everyone taketh before his own supper to eat. And one indeed is hungry, and another is drunk. What, have you not houses to

eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Do I praise you? In this I praise you not.” (*1 Cor. 11:20-22*).

Haydock’s commentary on this passage says: “The Lord’s supper – So the apostle here calls the charity feasts observed by the primitive Christians; and reprehends the abuses of the Corinthians on these occasions, which were the more criminal, because these feasts were accompanied with the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Sacrament. Everyone taketh before his own supper to eat. – The sense seems to be, that he took and brought with him, what he designed to eat with others, and give at that supper: but as soon as some were met (without staying for others, as he orders them, when he again speaks of these suppers) the rich placing themselves together began this supper, and did not take with them their poor brethren, who had brought nothing, or had nothing to bring; by this means, one indeed is hungry and another is drunk, that is had at least drunk plentifully, while the poor had nothing but shame, and confusion. By this means of eating and drinking

without temperance and moderation, they were by no means disposed to receive afterwards the Holy Eucharist. He tells such persons who have committed these disorders that if they are so hungry that they cannot fast, they should eat before they come from home. We find these Agape forbidden to be made in the Churches, in the 28th canon of the council of Laodicea, a little before the general council of Nice. In S. Chys.'s time, and from the first ages, everyone received the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist fasting, as it is probable this was one of the things which S. Paul gave orders about, when he came to Corinth. We must not imagine that because Christ instituted the holy Sacrament and gave it to His apostles after He had supped with them, that the apostles, or the pastors of the Church, their successors, could not order it to be received in a state of fasting and kneeling, for greater reverence and devotion. ... He says that though it is evident the apostles did not receive the Body and Blood of Christ fasting, yet we must not, on that account, calumniate or blame the universal Church, in which it is received only by those who are fasting. He says, it is most

insolent madness to dispute against what is a custom in the universal Church."

The Protestant and Modernist heretics' use of these early euphemisms is an attempt to undermine the true belief and doctrines of Jesus Christ and the Church. Protestants and Modernists frequently speak of and refer to their ceremonies and celebrations as: commemorating the Last Supper, having a Meal, breaking Bread, Agape, etc., to undermine all references to Christ's Sacrifice in the Mass. His actual Presence in the Holy Eucharist, and truly receiving Him, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in Holy Communion. They are not trying to protect the Sacred Species from non-believers. They are trying to destroy any true faith that may remain in true believers.

While Catholics find great inspiration, comfort, and solace in signs or sacramentals (Pictures of saints or holy things, rosary beads, scapulars, candles, any blessed objects, etc.), and even in holy relics of the saints or of the True Cross, the Holy Land where Jesus walked, etc., none of these can even begin to compare with the True Presence of the Living Body and

Blood of the Son of God present in the Holy Eucharist. Words cannot describe the reality of Jesus becoming Physically Present and becoming Life Giving Food for our souls.

To assist at Holy Mass, no matter how humble or remote the surroundings or circumstances may be, is much greater than visiting the Holy Lands. It is greater to be in the very Presence of God than it is to be in the same place where He once was, or to touch something He once touched. It is much greater to assist at the unbloody renewal of the Holy Sacrifice of Calvary than it is to visit the actual place where Jesus was nailed to the Cross many years ago.

I do not wish to detract from the holiness of pilgrimages to holy places, true devotion to sacred relics, or the many sacramentals. There are many graces to be found in honoring the holy objects touched or associated with Jesus (the True Cross, the nails, Veronica's veil, the Shroud of Jesus, etc.). Still, none of these even begin to compare with the Love of God in giving Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist. To receive Jesus (God) is much greater than to touch or own

something that was once associated with Him.

To visit and honor Him in the Tabernacle, even in the humblest and simplest of chapels, is much greater than visiting the Holy Lands where He once walked. To be in His actual Presence is better than to be where He once was.

When the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered in our modern catacombs (rented rooms, homes, etc.) It is still greater than the Holy Lands where Jesus was, but is no longer present.

We may never be able to truly grasp the wonder of the Love of God for us, His generosity to us in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, His True Presence in the Holy Eucharist, and His desire to be intimately united with us for a brief time in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We are, however, able to fan the flames of grace and faith and continually seek to increase our love and reception of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.



I AM A ROMAN CATHOLIC: MODERNISM

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

“What is modernism?” This was a question I didn’t really have to ask when I was growing up. I am what people would refer to as a “cradle Catholic.” By the time I was born, in December 1984, my parents and grandparents had already returned to the Latin Mass and had begun attending Our Lady of the Rosary Roman Catholic Church in Milwaukee, WI. We did not yet have the building on 52nd and Lisbon, which would become our church and schoolhouse, at this time. I know that my timeline is accurate because there are pictures of me being baptized in the basement of a bank, one of the many places where Mass was offered. When I was old enough to attend school, things were in full swing. Father Bernard was established as pastor, and Sister Antonina had brought her years of experience to the classroom. Our school day always began with morning prayer and religion class. We would attend Holy Mass every day, at one point, during my tenure, at 11:15 a.m., and at another

point at 8:00 a.m. I do not know the reason behind this, so please do not let apparent perplexity be the only thing you take from this article. Every day, we would have a “Dialogue Mass,” where we would say the Mass responses with the server. We would be encouraged to go to Confession every Friday, and on Fridays, we would finish the school week by praying the Rosary or the Stations of the Cross during the Lenten season.

We had all the academic courses you would expect – reading, writing, arithmetic, and so on. We had music class and gym class, which would often be dodgeball, or as I would like to call it, “Father Joseph’s meditation time” – he usually threw the balls and laughed while he did it. Every year, we would have a science fair and a social studies fair. These were always on Tuesday nights. I think the reason for this was that we had Mother of Perpetual Help Devotions on that night. Father Bernard would do anything he could to

help accommodate the people's spiritual needs. We would go on field trips a few times a year and, of course, there was the yearly Christmas play.

All in all, we had a very well-structured and normal parochial upbringing, but of course, something was different. The older I got, the more apparent this difference became. For example, sometimes during our religion class, Sister would talk about the Novus Ordo Mass by referring to it as "the mess." Why would she make this negative description? I was not oblivious to the fact that there was a Catholic Church, Corpus Christi, which was only a few blocks away from my house, with a parochial school attached, but we didn't attend church there. Why did we have to go elsewhere? I was also not oblivious to the fact that my uncles and aunts called themselves Catholics, and still, we were not able to attend Baptisms, First Communions, or Confirmations of my cousins. Are they not Catholics? These were the type of thoughts that would enter my mind from time to time. We were learning the Catholic Faith, but why was it different from the Novus Ordo? One thing for which I am truly grateful is having adults who would discuss and

explain these issues with me. Sister Antonina was particularly influential in laying the foundation. I remember that she would constantly teach us that as Catholics, we must believe all that the Roman Catholic Church believes and teaches. She would follow this by stating, "If you deny any one of these, then you deny them all." In short, if you obstinately hold to a false opinion, then you are no longer a Catholic but a heretic. The most recent name for this spirit of rebellion is known as Modernism.

Modernism is challenging to define because it encompasses a diverse range of issues. It has been described as the "synthesis of all heresies." Where do we trace its origin? Many events throughout history have laid the groundwork for Modernism. The Roman Catholic Church reached its zenith in the 13th century. She was truly the mother of All Catholic Europe; to be European was to be Catholic. It was during this time that her authority and teaching held greater influence. She was not without rivals, though, for even during the reign of Pope Innocent III, the most capable man of his time, she faced opposition from Emperor Fredrick II, a man of

very questionable morals. It was in the 14th century that European nations began to develop an exaggerated form of “nationalism,” ostracizing each other from their unified Catholic culture, which played a part in the Western Schism. The 15th and 16th centuries marked the beginning of what is arguably the most misrepresented time in our world’s history – the Renaissance. It is praised as a time when art and culture were celebrated. It was a return to the classics of Rome and Greece; it was a return to the cult of man. The Protestant Reformation, or rather Revolution, began during this time with its denial of Church authority and its promotion of “Sola Scriptura” – Scripture Alone. In the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, we saw Scholastic Philosophy, the harmonization of Church teaching with Aristotelian philosophy, put aside and replaced by the Enlightenment Movement. This movement posited and developed many of the theories we are familiar with today, such as Materialism, Deism, Atheism, evolution, and subjectivism. Historically speaking, we can understand Modernism as a movement that, in one form or another, depending on the individual’s agenda, embraces false and dangerous ideologies and seeks

to use them to influence Catholic teaching and culture.

The popes of the late 19th and 20th centuries sought to warn the Catholic world of this demonic movement. Pope Saint Pius X was especially influential with Encyclical Letter *Pascendi* and the decree *Lamentabili Sane* (Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernist). He also issued the *Oath Against Modernism*, which was required to be taken by all the clergy.

To give you an idea, here are a few examples of the errors condemned by Pope Pius X:

The “Church learning” and the “Church teaching” collaborate in such a way in defining truths that it only remains for the “Church teaching” to sanction the opinions of the “Church learning”.

The organic constitution of the Church is not immutable. Like human society, Christian society is subject to a perpetual evolution.

Dogmas, Sacraments and hierarchy, both their notion and reality, are only interpretations and evolutions of the Christian intelligence which have increased and perfected by an external series of additions the little germ latent in the Gospel.

Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and all men, but rather inaugurated a religious movement adapted or to be adapted to different times and places.

The chief articles of the Apostles' Creed did not have the same sense for the Christians of the first ages as they have for the Christians of our time.

The Church shows that she is incapable of effectively maintaining evangelical ethics, since she obstinately clings to immutable doctrines which cannot be reconciled with modern progress.

Scientific progress demands that the concepts of Christian doctrine concerning God, creation, revelation, the Person of the Incarnate Word and Redemption be re-adjusted.

Modern Catholicism can be reconciled with true science only if it is transformed into a non-dogmatic Christianity; that is to say, into a broad and liberal Protestantism.

(Taken from Lamentabili Sane – Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernist – A Decree Issued by Pope St. Pius X July 3, 1907)

With this information, we can give a definition. Here is the Q&A:

Q: What is Modernism?

A: Modernism is an ideology that embraces all heresies in one form or another. It was formed from Masonic and Protestant principles. It is designed to challenge Divine Revelation and the Authority of the Church, while claiming to want to improve the Church. It especially attacks those teachings that have been dogmatically defined and must be believed with supernatural faith. It seeks to apply critical analysis to dogmas and doctrines, particularly Sacred Scripture, thereby re-interpreting Divine Revelation in the spirit of the modern world.

The next logical question we must answer is, “Is what we know as the Novus Ordo Church actually a Modernist non-Catholic movement?”



THE BEST THINGS FOR THE POOR SOULS

Winfried Herbst, SDS

Everybody knows that we can help the poor souls in purgatory and hasten their entrance into heaven. And everybody knows how — by hearing Mass for them, by offering Holy Communion for them, by prayers and pious practices, like sprinkling the graves of the departed with holy water and countless other ways, by giving alms, by acts of mortification. But nothing avails so much to help them as having Masses said for them. About this I'll tell you a little story.

It's about Blessed Henry Suso, O.P. He once made an agreement with a fellow Dominican that the one who would outlive the other should say a certain number of Masses for the repose of the one who died first. A few years later this friend of Henry Suso's died. When the sad news reached him Blessed Suso could not at once say the promised Masses, as other intentions had been given

him. But he prayed earnestly for his friend; he fasted; he scourged himself in his behalf. But what do you think happened? I'll tell you.

One day his departed friend suddenly appeared to him, looking unspeakably sad, and said to him — O so reproachfully, "False friend, why have you not kept the sacred promise you made me?"

You can imagine how startled and alarmed Blessed Suso was. "O my friend, be not angry with me," he pleaded. "I really could not say the Masses as yet; but I have offered many prayers for you; I have fasted, I have chastised my body for you."

But the apparition answered, "Your prayers are not powerful enough to deliver me out of the torments I endure. The Blood of Jesus Christ, consecrated and offered up in Holy Mass, alone avails to set me free. If

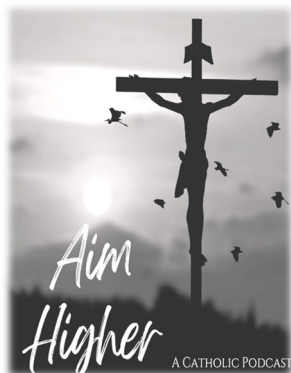
you had said the promised Masses I would be released from my prison by this time. It is all your fault that I am still a prey to the devouring flames.” And many other things of a like kind did he say. Then he disappeared.

Father Suso was overwhelmed with grief and sorrow. As soon as he could, he hastened to his Superior, told him all that had occurred, and begged his permission to set aside for a time the other

Masses and be allowed to say those he had promised to his friend. Of course the permission was gladly given.

When the Masses had been said the soul of the dear departed again appeared to Blessed Henry Suso. “I am now at rest,” he said, in a voice full of the joy of heaven, “and I will pray for you.”

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Prayers for the Dead

St. Alphonsus Ligouri

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

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

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

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

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

VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

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

CHAPTER THREE

MEANS OF FOSTERING VOCATIONS

1. TALKS ON VOCATION

Teachers of high schools and of the upper grades or grammar schools have wonderful opportunities to present the question of vocation to their young charges and to hold up to them the divine beauty of the priesthood. In God's Providence they may be the very ones destined to arouse the curiosity of the small boy in the priestly life. They have many chances to explain what a vocation is and to set forth its various marks. They may often propose the priesthood as a life of utter devotion to Our Savior, and of self-sacrifice for the salvation of souls, a life, at the same time, which brings great happiness to those who live it. They may point out the grand powers given to "another Christ"; his power to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to distribute the Bread of Life to hungry souls; the power to

heal wounds in the confessional and to bring Christ's strength to the sick and dying. It will be well-nigh impossible in our talks to make the round of the many-sided beauty of the priesthood.

And let us not suppose that the twelve or thirteen year-old boy cannot appreciate, at least vaguely, the sublimity of the priesthood. Underneath his restless, mischievous behavior, there is an unspoiled taste for goodness and an attraction for things that are noble and of good reputed. We who have lost so much of the spirit of childhood may fail to realize the capacity of a child's heart for the love of God. With God's grace the boy can and will, if he has the stuff of which priests are made, respond to his teacher's suggestions.

If he is a hero worshiper, then propose Christ as his Hero. If he dreams of conquests, and what boy doesn't, let human souls become his prey. Urge him to join the ranks of the

recruits of the Church Militant to battle as a brave warrior under Christ's standards against the world of malice and deceit. Thus we may assist the genesis in the heart of a boy of that proper and fitting desire which leads him of his own decision to the portals of the seminary.

There are difficulties, however, that will probably arise out of these public talks. A teacher, or any one with any degree of cleverness and enthusiasm will be able to stir a great many boys, at least in the beginning. The sixth and seventh graders will come running; but the crowds in the sixth thin out in the eighth. Your eighth graders lean to the side of the sophisticated; they begin to be conscious of their dignity, and, as adolescents, in their boyish methods weigh values and count the costs of the priesthood. Many, like the young man in the Gospel, turn away sad.

As this thinning out process itself serves as a sifting of the desirables from the undesirables, it is useful to begin talks on the priesthood in the lower grades, even the fifth or sixth, so as to be able to watch boys over a period of years.

This enables the teachers to discern the stable from the unstable, the persistent desire from the passing fancy, and also gives time to check whether a boy has the requisite qualities that mark out a vocation.

Some of the undesirables who lack this or that necessary trait will, nevertheless, arrive at the end of the eighth grade still persisting in their desire to enter the seminary. Perhaps they come from good families of the parish, or perhaps younger brothers or sisters will be in the teacher's class in a year or so, and it will be necessary to keep in the good graces of the family as far as possible. This is embarrassing for the pastor, the teacher or the principal of the school who, when asked to write a letter of recommendation, cannot in conscience do so. At least a noncommittal letter may be given to the boy, so long as a very pertinent one is sent privately to the seminary, disclosing the reasons that render the boy's application unacceptable. The seminary can find means of rejecting the applicant without betraying the confidence of the pastor or teacher.

2. FREQUENT ATTENDANCE AT MASS, HOLY COMMUNION, SANCTUARY SOCIETIES

Love and intimacy with Our Blessed Lord beget a yearning to do Christ's priestly work, for true love always begets action. And how can we better help to foster that love than by encouraging the frequent attendance at the sacrifice of the Mass and frequent reception of the Body of Christ. By this means once again we are directing the promising boy to the very Source of holiness. Pointing out Christ's loveliness we ask the young and generous soul to draw near, to "come and see." By his frequent contacts with the holy and powerful personality of our Saviour, the little fellow's affectionate nature is drawn to the Sacred Heart, and there springs up that friendship with Christ which is so vital in the priesthood. Our Blessed Lord, you will recall, kept His chosen ones close to Himself. "They were with Jesus." So, too, is the heart of a boy kept close to Him through the Sacrament of the Eucharist. With his Holy Communion and his little visits, the spontaneous allegiance to

Christ takes root in his soul. Thus, when the invitation comes to spend his whole life in the company of Our Lord as a priest, his will be a ready and personal response.

Another means of bringing promising youngsters closer to Christ and to things sacerdotal is to get them into the sanctuary society. Serving the priest in all things connected with the Sacrifice of the Mass gives the young lad a proximity to the Altar, which does much to interest him in the priesthood; for, as we know, "wings grow in flying." Besides, altar boys participate in a very special manner in the fruits of the Mass.

VOCATION WEEK, VOCATION RETREATS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

In many dioceses one week of each year is set aside as "vocation week." Schools are expected to participate in the movement and many do so by having little retreats or tridua. Some teachers seize the opportunity for asking their students to write autobiographical sketches, stating their ambitions and what they wish to be.

All such methods are useful in keeping the vocation question alive. They serve to make the young people face the problem of their future, set them thinking about it, and act as so many wedges to reach into the heart of a boy.

THE CONFESSIONAL

“Talk to your confessor.” “If you are thinking of becoming a priest tell your confessor about it.” Here is advice which should frequently be given to those who are inclined to the priesthood. This in no way compromises the hidden hopes of a timid boy, whose Catholic instincts prompt utter confidence in the secrecy of the confessional. Moreover, a candidate for the clerical life should first obtain the approval of his confessor, who, perhaps best of all, knows what virtues or what faults lie rooted in the innermost recesses of his soul.

On the confessor’s own side, his confessional will prove a most practical and fruitful means of contacting boys. When a sterling youngster, clean of heart and earnest of soul, comes into the box, the question, “Have you ever thought of becoming a priest?”,

often elicits a negative answer. One missionary priest uses this suggestion effectively: “Say three Hail Marys every night to our Blessed Mother to learn God’s will and your vocation. Then write to me in a month, and I’ll be praying, too.” Again the shy boy’s secret is respected; yet it serves to draw him out or set him thinking.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PAMPHLETS ON VOCATIONS

The distributing of pamphlets on vocations, or the leaving of them in the sacristy, in the church, in the classroom rack, or in some readily available place, where the boy may take them unknown to his companions, further serves to keep the vocation question fresh. There are dozens of such pamphlets on the market, paper-covered booklets that are inexpensive.

PRAYER

We have left to the last the most powerful means of fostering vocations. To busy ourselves with the work of discovering and developing vocations, yet to neglect praying to God to grant them would, at the lowest estimate, betray an idea of the priestly office which is lacking in

supernatural vigor. A vocation to the priesthood is God's work. As in any other grace, and much more explicitly in this special one, God expects us, yes, even commands us to ask Him through our prayers to send laborers into the harvest. There is a boy, there are several, whom you believe God has molded to be vessels of election. You have suggested the priesthood to them. You have them frequenting the sacraments and raising their boyish minds and hearts to God in prayer. You have given them little books to read. There remains but one thing more for you to do, and it is more important than all the rest. But if your zeal has carried you thus far, surely you have been doing it all the while. Beseech Almighty God in prayer that He will sow the seeds of a vocation in good ground — in the souls of these young boys, “who in a good

and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience” (Luke viii. 15).

PRAYER FOR THE INCREASE OF VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Antiphon, Why stand ye all the day idle, go ye into my vineyard.

V. Ask the Lord of the harvest.

R. That He send laborers into his vineyard.

LET US PRAY

God, Who willest not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live; grant, by the intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and of all the saints, laborers for Thy Church, fellow laborers with Christ, to spend and consume themselves for souls. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord. Amen.



PRO PARENTIBUS

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

CATHOLIC PARENTS AND THE MASS

The Catholic Church teaches that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the principal form of public worship for Catholics. It is the unbloody Sacrifice of Calvary. It is the renewal of Christ's Death on the Cross. It is the greatest and most significant act in the history of humanity. The redemption of man resulted from Christ's great act of love.

The importance of Holy Mass is demonstrated by the fact that attendance at Mass is required to satisfy the Sunday obligation, unless, of course, Mass is not available.

In an ideal world, Catholic parents would be taught all about the Mass in their elementary and high school years. Generally speaking, parents who were taught before 1960 had a better understanding of the Mass. They understood at least the fundamentals of the Holy Sacrifice. Since the Catholic school systems have not been

trustworthy since the 1960's parents or trusted teachers have been left to teach their children the Catholic Faith. The results have been mixed; some parents have instructed their children well, others have failed to pass on the Faith to a measurable degree. Too often, it has been the blind leading the blind.

Many of our parents, and now our grandparents, were exposed to the New Mass and all the Modernist changes in the liturgy and faith. They have had to learn or relearn the Catholic Faith and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

How many parents have taken the time and made the effort to teach their children all the essential points of the Mass, emphasizing the central dogmas of the Sacrifice? Have you been a good example by attending at least weekly Mass and receiving the Sacraments regularly? The importance of a good example cannot be overstated. This is a vital area where the children will follow the example of their parents.

The enthusiasm for the Mass will be seen long before the

family enters the church doors where they attend Mass. The destruction of the Roman Rite and Catholic education has brought about a real “dumbing down of the Mass.” How many parents have a correct understanding of the Eternal Sacrifice?

So much of this ignorance is due to the Modernist clergy redefining Holy Mass. The heretical evolution has taken us from sacrifice to a meal; from an altar to a table.

Teaching children about the Mass is one of the primary responsibilities of parents. They should not leave it entirely to appointed teachers. It is sad to see so many parents shirk their religious duties in such a cavalier manner.

Some parents may try to excuse themselves by saying they don’t know enough about the faith to teach their children. This is not a news flash, but parents need to take the time to educate themselves first so they can educate their children properly.

Too often today, parents will try to use the excuse that they don’t have the time to teach their own children. This is truly pathetic. I have seen parents spend endless hours pursuing secondary interests and invest a significant

amount of money in them. Yet, they won’t lift a finger or spend a dime on their children’s religious education. The core of the problem with worldly Catholic parents is that they care more about their children’s academic education than their religious education. They care more for the body than for the soul. It is truly sad to witness two individuals who are most responsible for their children’s souls care so little, if at all. I believe negligent parents are ignorant of the severity of their judgment.

Understood correctly, they are the two most powerful people in the world. They should not underestimate the influence they can have in the world. There are numerous examples of Catholic parents who took the time and made the effort to teach their children about the Mass and to love it. How many of these children were inspired to become priests or religious because of their love of the Mass, which began with their parents teaching them about the Holy and Eternal Sacrifice? Parents should not neglect to tell the children of Our Lord’s love for us as was demonstrated on Calvary.

It is worth repeating that children will follow the example of their parents at

Mass. Are the parents attentive? If possible, do the parents use a missal to pray the Mass prayers with the priest? Children need to see their parents kneeling and adoring God. The examples speak volumes to children, demonstrating to them the importance of praying to God in public during Holy Mass in church. When children see this over the years, it becomes confirmed in their minds, hearts, and souls. This type of impression can be instrumental in helping children become good, practicing Catholics and, more importantly, achieve a higher degree of sanctity. This ought to be the spiritual goal of every Catholic parent.

Do parents typically strive to arrive at church ten to fifteen minutes before Mass begins? Do they ensure the children are settled in their pews? Do they ensure that children who can read have a prayer book or missal?

It is best to have children sit in the front pews where distractions are minimized. Are the parents monitoring their children's behavior? Contrary to the opinions of some, children should attend Holy Mass each week. This means that parents should take

the time at home to explain the importance of good behavior in church, perhaps practicing how to remain quiet for a specific period. When young children become unruly, it is best to remove them from the church until they are calm and settled. Parents should NOT use a child as an excuse to sit in the vestibule or cry room until the end of Mass if the child has become quiet. One has repeatedly witnessed parents taking their children out of the church because they are misbehaving, and then allowing them to continue misbehaving in the vestibule or cry room. Too many parents fail to understand that one of their primary duties while attending Mass is to make sure the children behave. It is a mistake for parents to continue using their missals while their children are misbehaving or being unruly. This is disrespectful to Our Lord and to those attending Mass.

Parents should again set an example for the children by wearing their "Sunday best." This means the parents should wear the best they possess. This will vary according to the family's economic means.

The Franciscan Friars do not require men to wear a coat and

tie on Sundays. Does this writer believe boys and men should be wearing a coat and tie as a general principle? Yes, with exceptions depending on the circumstances. Why? It is an external sign to God of one's desire to give one's best to God on the Sabbath. It ought to be an extension of the desire to tithe or one's best contribution to God according to God's Will as stated in the Scriptures. This is why blue jeans, T-shirts, and similar clothing are unacceptable. The dress code for women adheres to similar principles, em-

phasizing modesty and avoiding distractions in church.

There are several factors to consider for parents regarding the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The essential desire to adore God through this public form of worship, and how to teach their children to not only know the Mass but also to love it. How can one not love it when one comes to realize the act of love it represents?

Know the Mass, love the Mass, and love to teach it to your children.

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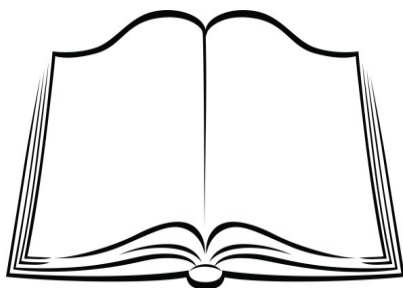
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The Catholic Mother to Her Children

The Countess de Flavigny



TWENTY-THIRD LESSON

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES

The Gospel represents to us Our Blessed Lord standing on the shore of the lake, then entering the boat of Simon Peter, and teaching the multitudes from it. He wished to show, even so early in His public teaching, that St. Peter was chief of those Apostles by whose words He would instruct His Church to the end of time. Then Peter, James, and John are bidden by Him to launch out into the deep, and let down their nets for a draught.

They had toiled all night in their fishing, and had caught nothing. Yet, “at Thy word,” answered St. Peter, “I will let down of the net.” When they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes,

and their net broke.” The fish were taken in such numbers, that two boats were nearly sinking with the weight of them.

Simon Peter, overawed by such tokens of Divine Presence and power, “fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. . . And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things they followed Him.

A second time Our Lord worked the same miracle; and that was after His Resurrection. St. Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, with St.

Thomas and Nathaniel, were fishing all night again, and again they caught nothing. Jesus, standing on the shore, and concealing His glory, bade them cast the net on the right side of the ship, and they should find. "They cast therefore; and now they were not able to draw it, for the multitude of fishes." Then the disciples knew it was Jesus, When they landed, He gave to St. Peter the charge so well-known to us all, that he should feed all his flock, sheep and lambs alike, teachers and taught. This universal charge He repeated thrice.

Now, from these two miracles, we learn that all our best efforts can do nothing towards saving our souls, without the grace of God, and without obedience to His direction.

Secondly, we learn, as St. Paul says that we can do all things, through Christ Who strengthens us. The three Apostles, and then again the five, toiled all night, and took nothing. How many people's lives are described in these few words! They toil, and toil, and wear themselves out, and at the end of their little span of

life they find their hands very empty: why? Because they have toiled, trusting in their own strength, and so have failed.

Or because they toiled by a rule they chose by their own self will. Or because they did not begin with a right and pure intention. This is like casting the net on the wrong side of the ship and so taking nothing. A good confessor is a far better guide in our case than we can be to ourselves. So let us cast the net on the right side of the ship; let us ask our spiritual guide how to cast it, and to teach us to direct the throw.

In the second place, if we do this, and act earnestly, with perseverance, we may take such a multitude of fishes, that it may seem miraculous. The greatest things have been done in the Kingdom of God by those who seemed the least, and the least likely. Who were the Apostles, themselves, when Our Lord called them? Poor fishermen. What unlikely men to over-throw the religion of the great Roman Empire! "God," says Paul, "has chosen the weak things of the world, that He may

confound the strong;" and base things, contemptible things, and things that are not — and why all this? "That no flesh should glory in His sight."

St. Teresa was going to build a convent; but she had only half a ducat to begin with. Yet she began; and finished it, too. "For," said the Saint; "Teresa and half a ducat are not much; but Teresa and half a ducat, with Almighty God to help, are a great deal."

So, let us cast the net on that side of the ship pointed out by obedience to our spiritual guide. This is good fishery; and thus, instead of toiling in vain, we may draw a great many fish to land. We shall secure our own salvation and that of others; for Our Lord

will have made us "fishers of men"— not, indeed, like the Apostles, by preaching and miracles, but by consistent good example, by a wholesome word in season, and by persevering prayer of intercession for all whom we know to be in need of our prayers. We must intercede for others humbly, all the while, as those who are not worthy to be heard even for themselves.

So we shall not be like those proud fishermen, of whom the Word of God says, that they "sacrifice to their net." We shall acknowledge that if our prayers are heard, it is through Our Lord's mere goodness. But if we succeed only with some small fishes, yet what a joy to bring souls to the feet of Jesus on His throne!

"CHRIST HAS NO BODY NOW ON EARTH BUT YOURS, NO HANDS, NO FEET BUT YOURS. YOURS ARE THE EYES WITH WHICH CHRIST LOOKS OUT HIS COMPASSION TO THE WORLD. YOURS ARE THE FEET WITH WHICH HE IS TO GO ABOUT DOING GOOD. YOURS ARE THE HANDS WITH WHICH HE IS TO BLESS US NOW."

~St. Teresa of Avila



FRANCISCAN SAINTS

NOVEMBER 6TH

**Blessed Margaret
of Lorraine**

Widow, Second Order

Margaret was born of the ancient noble family of the dukes of Lorraine. Her earnest efforts to lead a virtuous life attracted attention in wide circles very early in her life.

After the death of her husband, Duke Renatus of Alencon, she assumed the government of the duchy. In this she was guided solely by Catholic principles, and by means of prudent economy, she managed to save a neat amount with which she rendered aid to the poor and the needy. She took particular pleasure in nursing the sick and the lepers. She built churches, convents, and hospitals everywhere.

The subject matter taught in the schools and the education of God-fearing persons were objects of particular solicitude to her. Hard-hearted landlords and selfish officials were dealt with by her with the greatest severity. Withal, she remained very humble, and spent a great

part of her day in meditating on the sufferings of Christ and in performing works of penance.

In later years, after she had turned the government over to her son, she was invested with the habit of the Third Order. And when that no longer satisfied her desire for perfection, she entered the convent of Poor Clares at Argenton, which she herself had founded. There she died a saintly death in the year 1527. Pope Benedict XV approved her veneration.

ON ASPIRING TO PERFECTION

1.) Every Christian is obliged to strive after perfection. It is not without reason that our Lord says: "Be you therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matth. 5:48). This obligation does not re-

quire the impossible of us. Everyone can love his neighbor, can do good, can overcome himself. Blessed Margaret aspired to perfection as a child, a woman, a ruler, a widow, a religious, and she succeeded in achieving her goal. — Imitate her in this endeavor.

2.) This aspiring to perfection may become a difficult task. At one time because of human associates, at another because of external circumstances. Blessed Margaret did not permit herself to be restrained in her efforts to reach perfection, neither by human beings, nor by the high station in which she found herself. But we must above all bear in mind

that perfection does not consist in external practices, but rather in the disposition of our heart. The motive must be the love of God. All for the love of God! — Let this sentiment grow in you, and you will grow in perfection.

3.) Obstacles assist our efforts to attain to perfection. The Apostle writes: “Patience hath a perfect work” (James 1:4). Let us, therefore, preserve patience in all the vicissitudes of life, meet all opposition with patience, evince patience in sickness and trials, and we shall be assured that we are on the road of perfection and will advance on it. — Rejoice if you are put to the test.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O GOD, THE AUTHOR OF EVERY VIRTUE, WHO DIDST ILLUMINE
WITH EXTRAORDINARY MERITS THY BLESSED SERVANT
MARGARET IN EVERY STATION IN LIFE, GRANT US AT HER
INTERCESSION, THAT WE MAY LIVE HOLILY IN THE STATE TO
WHICH THOU HAST CALLED US, AND MAY EVER GIVE A GOOD
EXAMPLE THEREIN. THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

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