

THE SERAPH

December 2025

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THE CHILDREN'S RETREAT
ST. JOSEPH'S MISSION - UNION, KENTUCKY

The Seraph

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THE SERAPH

THE GIFT OF A RETREAT

CHILDREN'S RETREAT 2025

Sister Catherine, TOR

St. Joseph's Mission in Union, Kentucky, held its 10th Annual Children's Retreat this past summer, welcoming nearly forty children along with their parents and grandparents. We even had children returning from states like Wisconsin, Ohio, and New York.

The purpose of these retreats is to nurture the spiritual lives of Catholics, especially the youth today. It offers an opportunity to step away from daily distractions and engage in something far more meaningful. A children's retreat allows them to learn about God beyond their Sunday Mass and Catechism lessons. It's a chance for them to connect with others who share the faith and discover how to love God in everything they do — even during playtime. Participating in a retreat is truly a gift.

This year's retreat focused on Our Lord's Ministry and coincided with the celebration of Bishop Giles' 20th anniversary of his consecration

to the Episcopacy. We were honored to have a special guest, Bishop Madrigal from Mexico.

The retreat began on Wednesday and Thursday with Holy Mass, which included a brief sermon by Bishop Giles, OFM. After Mass, while breakfast was being prepared, the children enjoyed outdoor playtime. Following breakfast, Father Anthony shared a story with the help of his friend, Chesterton, the Catechism Dragon.

The children were divided into groups to participate in various activities related to the theme. Some of these activities included:

- Learning to sing the hymns "Faith of Our Fathers" and "O Sanctissima" with Mr. Lentz.
- Engaging in arts and crafts, including using clay to replicate the Wedding Feast at Cana and playing with a large parachute to illustrate how Jesus calmed the storm. Each craft was designed to provide an educational experience.

Before lunch, we went back to the church to pray. On Wednesday, we prayed the Rosary, and on Thursday, there was Benediction.

On Friday, we celebrated Bishop Giles' anniversary with a children's procession. This was followed by a Solemn High Mass, celebrated by His Excellency, Bishop Madrigal. He was joined by Father

Joseph from Texas as the Deacon and Father Martin from Mexico as the Subdeacon. Father Anthony served as the Master of Ceremonies.

Following the Mass, there was a reception that featured a concert performed by the children. It was a wonderful way to conclude an amazing week!



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ADVENT

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

In December, we begin a new Ecclesiastical year. Advent, a significant period in the Christian faith, is our time of spiritual renewal. It is a season of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas. The daylight hours in the Northern Hemisphere are noticeably growing shorter. Nature is preparing for the cold winter ahead. What God is doing with the seasons and His creation instructs us as to what we should be doing spiritually. Our spiritual harvest is ending, and the calmer season of winter approaches. It is time to take stock of our spiritual stores and make plans for our eternal future.

While many in the world associate December with Christmas, it's important to remember that most of the month is dedicated to Advent. Advent, a penitential season, is actually a time filled with joy and hope, as we eagerly anticipate the fulfillment of our spiritual desires.

We look forward to the celebration of Jesus' historical

birth. Yet, we also look forward to His birth in our hearts, minds, and souls. A lot of preparation is made in cleaning and decorating our homes for Christmas, and spiritually, we should be making even greater preparation in our souls.

It is foolishness to spend so much time, effort, and money to celebrate His physical birth, but then make no accommodation for Him in our souls. The accommodations that we can make in our souls cost us very little in material things. Spiritual accommodations take very little time. The most significant effort this will cost us is in simply willing it or desiring it. Do we want Jesus to come and dwell in our hearts, minds, and souls?

How can we make room for Him in our souls? Much can be achieved by striving for detachment from the things of this world. This means not being overly attached to material possessions, worldly desires, or even our own ego. Cleaning our consciences with a good examination of conscience, a

firm purpose of amendment, a good Confession, and the eager desire to do penance. This need not take long, but it needs to be true, solid, and from the heart. But this is only the beginning. Cleaning our homes of all the clutter is good, but this in itself is not sufficient preparation for the celebration of Christmas.

Our goal is not merely to serve as a temporary shelter or bed for Jesus to enter our souls. He was only in the manger, in the stable, in Bethlehem for a short time. He soon left these behind. Our goal is to prepare Him an unending place for Him to reside within us. We desire to keep Him alive in us forever. All the remaining days of our lives here on earth and then, on into eternity in Heaven.

As we die to ourselves, we make room and allow Jesus to live within us. The penance of Advent is a short time in the Ecclesiastical year, and we eagerly look forward to breaking our fast and penance to celebrate Jesus' Birth. Our spiritual goal is not to cease preparing our souls and return to selfishness, pride, and vanity, but rather to die more and more to ourselves continually and to have Jesus enter more and more into our lives. We

want to be able to say with Saint Paul, that it is no longer us, but Jesus living within us.

We rise from our rest for the love of Jesus. We labor for the love of Jesus. We rest for the love of Jesus. We patiently bear the pangs of hunger for the love of Jesus. We moderately eat for the love of Jesus. All that we do can and should be redirected from ourselves to Him. All that we say or do not say should be done for Jesus and for the love of Jesus. All that we think and desire should be thought and desired for Jesus and for the love of Jesus.

We are meant to be His Living Tabernacles. Our bodies and souls should be where Jesus constantly dwells. His historical/physical presence with us was only for a short time in history. However, His spiritual presence with us does not need to be temporary, but should be continuous, providing us with constant comfort and reassurance.

While His spiritual presence in our souls begins faintly, it grows in proportion to our consistent love and devotion. And it wanes or fades in proportion to our return to the world and its selfish pride and vanity.

The spiritual life of Jesus in our souls typically ebbs and flows, grows stronger or weaker, as our love, hope, and desires for Him ebb and flow. This need not be the case. And it should not be the case. We can and should prepare our hearts to receive Jesus and consistently seek to make them even better and more worthy places for Him to reside.

If we can establish, nurture, and maintain the Life of Jesus in our souls, our departure from this world will not be marked by fear, regret, or remorse. On the contrary, it will be met with joy, excitement, and anticipation – to finally be able to no longer be in this life away from Jesus, but now to be permitted to join Him in Heaven. To no longer have to hope and desire, but rather to be filled with everlasting beatitude in Him.

This is the birth and life that Jesus wants to have within each of us. This should be our true hope and desire as well. Our spiritual Advent need not end on December 25th. It should continue even with Jesus resting in our hearts, minds, and souls – striving always to clean our spiritual manglers more and more –

striving always to adorn our souls more and more. The life of Jesus need not end with us when we reach the end of Christmas tide at Septuagesima, but should continue, and He should grow and advance within us, inspiring us to strive for continuous spiritual growth.

In the spiritual life, there are invariably some days that feel dark and empty, as if Jesus has left us or abandoned us. This is not a sign for us to quit or give up. Instead, this is a tremendous moment of grace. It is easy to love when we are filled with consolation and joy with His presence within us, and this often causes us to become spiritually selfish or self-centered. He pulls back these consolations but not His presence within us, to strengthen us in our love and to test our love. It is on Calvary that we need to remember Christmas. From the manger, to the cross, and then to the altar we are to allow Jesus to live with us in this life. In doing this, we may have confidence that we will also rise with Him in glory on the Last Day.





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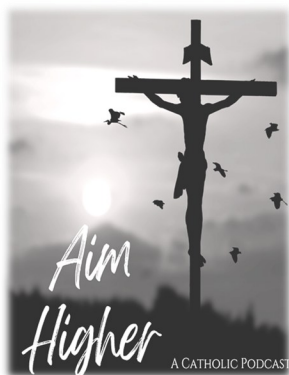
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GRATITUDE

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

On the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday), we read from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (4:4-7) "Brethren, Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous: but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We have much to be grateful for. God is in Heaven and He loves us. We are here right now because God created us. We have been in the Mind of God before all of eternity. God always knew that He would make us and place us here on this earth, at this time, in this place, and in these circumstances.

God has given us life – both material and spiritual. He has given us The True Church, Faith, our parents, neighbors, cities, states, and countries. All

that we are and all that we have are gifts from Him.

We are made in His Image and Likeness. We have been made to enjoy eternity with Him in Heaven.

We tend not to appreciate what God has given us, and we easily find fault with the things and people in our lives. For example, we are tempted to question God in this manner: Why must there be pain, suffering, and death in this world? If God loves me, why am I sick? Why did my loved one die? Why must my injury hurt so much? We focus on the negative and soon do not even notice all the good that God has given us.

Even the negative is genuinely good for us when we consider it in the Light of God's Grace. Pain is necessary to stop us or slow us down, thus preventing greater injury to our bodies. In the absence of pain, we would obviously destroy our bodies. In fact, we often wonder how much greater harm we are doing to ourselves when we try to hide or mask our pain with

pharmaceuticals rather than address the underlying cause of the pain.

The inconveniences of this life are constant reminders that this world is not our home. We were not made for this world. This world was made for us. We were made for God and Heaven. Our physical death is not so much a punishment or an evil, but rather a great good that frees us from the material restraints of this world. It frees us from the physical pains of this life. And most importantly, it opens the gate to eternity for us. Death, too, is a blessing from God's Loving Hands.

We should always strive to see the good in everything. We may not understand God's ways, but we can always know that His Ways are good and what is best for us. Even when God punishes us, it is because He loves us. When people choose to bring evil into their lives and even enter the gates of Hell for all of eternity, God shows His mercy in shortening the time here on earth and preventing them from doing even greater evil and making their eternity even worse.

He has lovingly given us free will. He loves us so much that He respects our wills even when they are defiantly opposed to His Will. However, in His

mercy, He often allows the defiant sinners to experience the logical consequences of their actions. Those who abuse their health frequently must suffer from ill health. Those who defiantly take risks usually suffer bodily injury. The consequences of our actions are not God's retaliation, but rather loving corrections that God has given or allowed. He desires that we should repent, correct ourselves, and live eternally with Him in Heaven. He does not want our eternal damnation. He will allow us to choose eternal separation from Him because He loves us so much that He respects our free choices, but this is not what He wants.

Because of our weakness, Jesus came to show us the love God has for us. He came to open the gates of Heaven that we had closed against ourselves. He came to show us the love of God for us in all our pains, sufferings, and even in death.

Jesus' Birth is our loving gift from God. His humble birth and life in this world demonstrate that what the world loves and cherishes is unimportant, while what the world despises is most important. Everything in this life is made to assist us. It is

made to help us. When we labor, serve, or make a god out of something that God has given to serve us, we invert proper order. Saint Paul tells us we must use the things of this world as if we did not use them. (1 Cor. 7:31). Everything is made to lead us to God, but when they lead us away from Him, we must turn away from them rather than turn away from God.

The repeated loving instruction that God continuously gives us is to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily for the love of Him. As He has lived and died in this world for us, we are expected to live and die in this world for Him. It is in dying to ourselves that we are born into eternal life with God.

As we draw near to our Christmas creches, let us adore

Him and recognize the tremendous, and even infinite, love that God has for us, and how humbling it is for the Son of God to take on our bodies and be born into this world. How humbling it is for Him to be born in the poorest and humblest circumstances, suffering the harshness of the weather as well as the harshness of His human creatures. To be unrecognized, unappreciated, hated, maltreated, and even killed on a cross, is an infinite act of love for us. We must see this and seek to understand and appreciate this. We conclude that we are truly blessed, truly loved, and our hearts are to be overflowing with gratitude as we strive to reciprocate this love through fidelity to Jesus, His teachings, and to the True Church.

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Christmas Day

“Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this word that is come to pass.”

Luke ii. 15.

O wondrous and ineffable love of God and My Lord Jesus Christ, wailing in the manger, Whom all the angels in heaven praise and worship! O what great thanks am I bound to render to the most loving Lord My Savior and My Redeemer, born for my salvation, Who refused not to be sheltered like a poor miserable man in a stable in the company of beasts. Certainly, I have no worthy praise-offering, but nevertheless I freely present Him a good will in sign of love and gratitude. What more? Shall I sing with the holy angels, or weep from compassion, thinking on the tears of the wailing infant? Each of these actions gives pleasure, each of these actions affords delight; both to weep with Jesus, and to praise Jesus with the angels. And all this I desire to do to the glory of God; and to humble myself before the eyes of His Majesty, Who humbled Himself even to the form of a little child. O Father of mercies and God of infinite goodness, I know in truth, I confess from the bottom of my heart, that in Thy sight I am a sinner of utter vileness, one who with downcast eyes, with groans and tears, should rather plead for mercy, than think of taking upon his polluted lips Thy most sweet Name, and dare to praise it.

And yet, trusting in Thy loving kindness and in Thy unfathomable goodness, I long to praise Thee. Therefore, I dare to bless Thee, heavenly Father, Who didst send Thy beloved Son into the world for our redemption. I bless Thee, only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who to redeem us men didst assume our nature. I bless Thee, Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, Who didst gloriously and wondrously perfect all the mysteries of our redemption from the beginning unto the end. To Thee be infinite praise and glory, O supreme, eternal Trinity. Amen.

From the book: The Babe of Bethlehem by Thomas á Kempis

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

From the Sunday Sermon Archives, 2022

Bishop Giles Butler, OFM DD

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Gospel records that during the Birth of Jesus, shepherds were watching their flocks by night. We are also reminded that the night before Jesus died, He asked His Apostles to watch and pray. Throughout His public life, Jesus instructs us to be vigilant and watch because we do not know when He will return. We see this in many parables, such as the wise and foolish virgins, the stewards, and the servants.

Alone among all the people in the country around Bethlehem at the Birth of Jesus, Angels are only recorded as having come to shepherds in the field. It seems important to note that they were not sleeping but were keeping watch over their flocks. Most of the world did not know what was happening because they were not watching or paying attention.

Our bodies need to sleep, and we cannot keep a constant vigil. Our souls, on the other hand, do not need to rest. Just as our hearts constantly beat within us

throughout our lives, we can keep a constant spiritual vigil looking and waiting for Jesus. Longing and waiting to see and be with Jesus go hand in hand with loving God. Many express desires to go to Heaven but quickly turn their hearts to the world. We say we love God but soon forget Him in our worldly pursuits.

What use is it for us to have intelligence and knowledge of God if we are not using it? Jesus tells us: Those who have eyes to see, let them see and those who have ears to hear, let them hear (St. Matthew 11,15; St. Mark 4,9). The proof and evidence of God are all around us if we only use the intelligence and senses that God has given us.

It is said that we cannot find what we are not looking for. The reason that only a few people find four-leaf clovers is that only a few people genuinely look for four-leaf clovers. We know they are there, and we have perhaps seen some, but we are not very motivated to go and find them ourselves. This

is, tragically, what happens on the spiritual level. Many people have heard or seen evidence of God, but very few are so motivated to search for Him.

The signs are all around us if we only want to see, hear and understand. What are we looking for this Christmas and the rest of our lives here on earth? What do we truly desire? Too often, we know Jesus was born, and we look forward to celebrating with friends and family — sharing food and drink. If this is all we want to find, if this is all we are looking for, this is what we will find. But on Judgment Day, will we hear from Jesus that we have already received our reward and have nothing to expect from Him in Heaven?

Material celebrations are not evil; what is wrong is the disordered pursuit of physical pleasure at the expense of true spiritual joy. Contrary to materialistic sentiments, Christmas is not all about family and friends. Nor is Christmas only about sentimentality. Our celebration of Christmas should be about loving, longing, and welcoming Jesus into our lives as we desire to be accepted into the eternal joys of Heaven. Jesus came to us so that we could go to Him. He opened the Gates of Heaven so that we can follow Him in.

We pray that our eyes may be opened to see past the worldly

materialism that has overcome this wondrous anniversary and into the true spirit of Christmas. We must spiritually keep watch both night and day, looking forward to the glorious coming of Our Lord and God — Jesus Christ. When we are genuinely seeing with the eyes of our souls and reasoning with the intelligence that God has given us and loving and longing with our hearts and souls for God and the place in Heaven, He desires that we fill, then Angels will come to us as they did to the shepherds. We, then, will know where and how to find Him. We will see with the eyes that He gave us to see with, and we will hear with the ears that He gave us to hear with. Peace will enter our hearts and remain there with us. Our voices will join the Angels in singing the praises of God.

As we seek Him in watching and praying, He comes to us to take us by the hand. We glorify Him in Heaven, and He gives us peace even here on earth. It is a spiritual peace and joy, but when it is genuinely seated in the depths of our souls, it soon emanates outward into our bodies and the material world around us.

Glory to God in the Highest,
and on earth, peace to men of goodwill!

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Father Joseph Noonan, OFM

This article was originally published in The Seraph in December 2018.

The world cares little for the Holy Seasons of the Church and less for the royal titles of Our Lord. It claims to want peace around the world but does everything possible to ensure continuous war. Much is made of the holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas, but only that which is necessary is mentioned concerning Our Lord's Birth. It promotes gift-giving for humanitarian or sentimental reasons but knows little of its relationship with Christ's Nativity. This is, indeed, a season filled with contradictions by those who are nothing but pretenders at best or in reality for the most, wolves in the red suit of the secular Santa.

Everyone, including those who do not have an understanding of a number of different things, wish to find what they believe is peace but fail because they do not use the correct means to accomplish this. The world is unable to provide peace because it is the world and knows nothing of this. Satan, and those

who have evil intentions, only desire the damnation of souls which is the very opposite of peace.

This leaves us with the true and correct means of obtaining peace within the soul. It is only through and with Our Lord, the Prince of Peace. The vast majority of those living know little or nothing of Christ and many others reject Him. Their efforts to find a true peace will always be futile because they have refused the source and means by which we are able to obtain peace.

Only those who know and love Our Lord have an opportunity to find a true peace. It is not by accident that the title of Prince of Peace is used more at the time of Our Lord's Birth than at any other time.

Only those who consider the mysteries of the Manger will in any way understand what is required for peace. A sincere love of God and the desire to detach one's self from this world will provide a foundation for peace.

There was a reason why Our Lord was born in a manger. It

was to teach the lesson that men are not able to find peace in this world through wealth, position or fame. To state this in another way, “the world cannot give what it does not have.”

There have been few wars fought for just reasons. We may conclude that the objective of unjust wars is not peace, but other nefarious purposes, i.e., money, power or control. The greatest loss in wars, whether just or unjust, is souls. How many souls have been lost because of the evil of men in causing wars?

Informed Catholics know that the greatest single means of obtaining peace is being in the state of sanctifying grace. If all Catholics were in the state of grace, the world would be in a far greater spiritual state than that which it presently is. If there was a greater consideration for the state of grace and avoiding sin, wars could be avoided more easily and peace could be attained in many more places.

It flows from this thought that Our Lord, the Prince of Peace does have ALL of the answers needed for peace in the world. Don't expect governments to have the answers needed for peace especially if they are godless. They neither have the interest or means by which to establish a lasting peace.

The Catholic Church through the years has provided detailed guidelines for peace in the world, usually to prevent or stop an existing war through the Principles of Just War. Unfortunately, in recent times the Zionist Jew or the Freemason who holds the reign of power is not interested in having the Church help negotiate peace. These godless men do not want a just peace particularly one that is defined with Catholic or ethical principles.

Herein lays the ongoing battle between good and evil. These enemies of the Prince of Peace do not want peace, for when there is peace their ability to influence the masses is limited to a great degree. Chaos and anarchy are the means through which these evil men work to gain control over an ever-increasing number of naïve people. Far too many people today have been influenced by these enemies but do not have any idea how they are being used by these experts of mind manipulation mixed with evil intentions.

The Holy Seasons of Advent and Christmas are prime examples of those feasts/events which occur each calendar year. Advent is meant to be a season of spiritual preparation for Our Lord's Birth. These godless men have purposely and

successfully distorted the Advent and Christmas Seasons in such a way so as to have the non-thinking masses begin to celebrate “Christmas” on the United States holiday of Thanks-giving! A thinking, reasonable person might wonder how it is that a person’s birth can begin to be celebrated about thirty days in advance. Frankly, this is the power of mass mind manipulation through lies and repetition over many years. It must be understood, though, this would not be possible if Catholics knew their faith and were willing to stand up for it.

The masses are not only celebrating the “holiday” during a penitential season, which undermines the spiritual preparation for the holy feast of Our Lord’s Nativity and the Holy Season itself, these human devils have also convinced too many Catholics that the Christmas Season ends a few days after His Birth. Where are the clergy who should be shouting from the pulpits about the purposeful distortion and undermining of the Faith? How many of them turned off their microphones on Sunday? How many have accepted the lies of the enemies of their Master?!

The end result is a nearly complete destruction of these Holy Seasons and the proper understanding of Our Lord’s royal title of Prince of Peace.

Advent has been nearly forgotten or purposely neglected and replaced with the celebration of Christmas out-of-season. The proper celebration of Christmas has been shortened and undermined. The Christmas Season begins on Christmas Eve and continues until January 13. Some will celebrate Christmastide until February 2.

All should celebrate Our Lord’s Birth during the Christmas Season. The Prince of Peace may then have the opportunity to reign in your heart as He should, and not only during the Holy Season. If the Prince reigns in the heart (and soul) of the individual, He will begin to have the intended effect in society. Let us be reminded that we will not have peace in our being if we do not go to the Proper Source of peace. We will not receive the effect if we do not go to the Proper Cause.

Let all celebrate the Birth of the Prince of Peace and do our part in bringing about peace in the world.





To the Infant Jesus in the Crib

Oh, how I love Thee, Lord
of Heaven above!
Too well hast Thou
deserved to gain my love;
Sweet Jesus, I would die
for love of Thee,

For Thou didst not disdain to die for me.

I leave Thee, faithless world, farewell! depart!
This lovely Babe has loved and — won my heart.

I love Thee, loving God, Who from above
Didst come on earth, a Babe, to gain my love.

Thou tremblest, darling Child, and yet I see
Thy heart is all on fire with love for me:
Love makes Thee thus a Child, my Savior dear;
Love only brought Thee down to suffer here;

Love conquered Thee, Great God,
love tied Thy hands,
A captive here for me, in swathing-bands;
And love, strong love, awaits Thy latest breath,
To make Thee die for me a cruel death.

~St. Alphonsus Ligouri

I AM A ROMAN CATHOLIC: THE NOVUS ORDO MASS & VATICAN II

Father Anthony Lentz, OFM

When I was a boy, I remember one Sunday after Holy Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary, Father Bernard was playing a video for the people. This video was about the Novus Ordo Mass, and it showed the various blasphemous things that would take place in some of the parishes. One clip I remember that made me shake my head was for a “Beachball Mass.” I am not sure what significance this beachball was supposed to have, but I sure saw the people in the congregation playing with it. This event was just one example of my exposure to the Novus Ordo Church. I recall that my father, grandparents, Great-Aunt Maggie, and other older church members would tell me about the changes that began with Vatican II and how they were gradually implemented. I remember being told about how certain parishes would have Polka-Masses or Clown-Masses. This was just ridiculous. Their Mass didn’t seem like a solemn ceremony to me, but rather a party. Even now, reconsidering these things, I

cannot help but remember the Gospel of St. Matthew 7:15-16 – *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them.”* So to better understand the qualities of a foreign fruit, we must first understand the tree from which it comes.

At the end of the last article, I said the next logical question that must be answered is, ***“Is what we know as the Novus Ordo Church actually a Modernist non-Catholic movement?”*** Upon reflection, I realized that I had proposed this question prematurely. Before we can go any further, we need to understand exactly what we are dealing with; we need to know the tree! We are going to discuss the Second Vatican Council and the Novus Ordo Mass.

We live in a marvelous age of technology. If you want to know something, you just have to type it into the search engine on your computer, and you will get an answer almost

instantly. Although I find the challenge of researching through books to be more rewarding, I Googled the answers to these questions. Before I am criticized, just remember: I did it, so now you don't have to.

I started by Googling **Novus Ordo**, and here is what I got:

The term “Novus Ordo” refers to the “New Order” of the Roman Catholic Mass, which was promulgated in 1969 after the Second Vatican Council. It is also known as the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, or the Mass of Pope Paul VI, and is the standard Mass celebrated in most Catholic churches today. Key changes include: 1) the use of local languages instead of Latin; 2) the priest facing the congregation; and 3) a new missal with changes to prayers and readings, including more Old Testament readings.

This explains why we refer to the “Novus Ordo Church,” as it follows the New Order of Mass. This Missal came out only a few years after the Vatican II Council concluded, and it had within it the “Spirit of Vatican II.” So, if we Google the “Second Vatican Council,” this is what we get:

The Second Vatican Council, also known as Vatican II, was an ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church, held from 1962 to 1965. It was convened by Pope John XXIII and then concluded by Pope Paul VI. Its purpose was: 1) to spiritually renew the Church and update it for the modern age (“aggiornamento”); 2) to seek unity among all Christians, including those separated from Rome; and 3) to address a wide range of issues. Such as the nature of the Church, understanding the Bible, and the Church’s role in the modern world.

We will discuss the theological implications of the **Novus Ordo Mass** in another article. Now we will focus our attention upon the orthodox Catholic response of Bishop Ngo Dinh-Thuc to this false council. In his memoirs, *Misericordia Domini in Aeternum Cantabo*, that appeared in the March 1984 issue of *The Seraph*, he tells us that he was present at the Council and he relates his experience:

The Second Vatican Council should have begun by recalling this principle: the triumph of the cross, the triumph of martyrdom. Consequently, resist Communism without God – or, rather, against God.

The Communist paradise is the same as the paradise of the Capitalist: an earthly paradise. The work which God imposed upon man is for his development: for the perfection of his intellectual activities, supernatural and corporal. It is not only to fill his belly. The Second Vatican Council appears to have had as its purpose the same goal as Communism: the earthly happiness of man. For this reason, the scandal exploded: the prohibition on saying anything about Communism. From this sprang the dogma of the "natural goodness of every religion." From this sprung

the Protestant axiom: freedom of thought and equality of all religious thought. From this came that pre-occupation to make the Catholic religion easier by shortening the prayers of the priests, in making the recitation of the Breviary optional and the same for meditation; the editing of a skeleton-key Mass that could be used by Catholics and Protestants, the former believing in Transubstantiation and the latter not believing in it while pretending that the Mass was only a memorial of the Last Supper consequently, no "Mystery of the Faith."

“BUT SINCE THE MODERNISTS (AS THEY ARE COMMONLY AND RIGHTLY CALLED) EMPLOY A VERY CLEVER ARTIFICE, NAMELY, TO PRESENT THEIR DOCTRINES WITHOUT ORDER AND SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT INTO ONE WHOLE, SCATTERED AND DISJOINTED ONE FROM ANOTHER, SO AS TO APPEAR TO BE IN DOUBT AND UNCERTAINTY, WHILE THEY ARE IN REALITY FIRM AND STEADFAST, IT WILL BE OF ADVANTAGE, VENERABLE BRETHREN, TO BRING THEIR TEACHINGS TOGETHER HERE INTO ONE GROUP, AND TO POINT OUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM, AND THUS TO PASS TO AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOURCES OF THE ERRORS, AND TO PRESCRIBE REMEDIES FOR AVERTING THE EVIL.”

POPE ST. PIUS X

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

“Be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.”

Romans 12:2

Do you love serving God and neighbor?

Do you find yourself increasingly unsatisfied by the life of the world?

Do you yearn for something more?

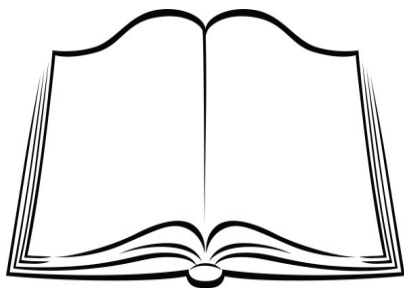
Not all of us are meant for marriage or a life in the world. Some souls are set aside by God for special tasks. These are the souls that find joy and contentment in the religious life or sacred priesthood.

Do not be deterred by what you think you know or by what the world tells you. Find out for yourself. If you feel called, then at least learn more.

Any happiness we may have on earth and all the joy we hope for in heaven depend on answering God’s individual call for us. The sooner we do His Will, the happier we will be.



Just Stories



Winfried Herbst, SDS

TRULY WONDERFUL

This would be a very long story, were I to tell it as well as it might be told. But that is what I am not going to do.

It happened in Poland. At Kiev, St. Hyacinth had built a large and beautiful church. One morning, however, while he was devoutly saying Mass in it, the news was hurriedly brought to him that the Tartars, then his people's greatest enemies, were at the gates, prepared for bloodshed, pillage, and plunder. Everybody else trembled with personal fear; but not so the saint. He feared only for the Blessed Sacrament — feared that it might be desecrated, insulted, in the profanation of the church which was sure to follow. Quietly opening the tabernacle, he took therefrom the ciborium containing the Sacred Hosts and placed it

under his garments, on his breast. Then, turning to the frightened religious who were gathered around him, he said:

“Fear not. Trust in God. He will care for us. Just follow me.”

But as they were leaving the church a mysterious voice called out insistently, “Hyacinth! Hyacinth!”

The saint paused. The voice came from Our Lady's statue on the altar. “Hyacinth,” the figure said reproachfully, “you take the Savior to safety and leave His Blessed Mother to the outrages of the heartless marauders!”

“But, O Mother,” the saint protested, “I am not strong enough to carry thy statue, much as I would like to.” For the statue was made of alabaster and was very heavy.

“Ah,” came the pleasing reply, “If you only had more love for me and greater confidence in God, you would find it easy.”

“But I do love thee and I do trust in God,” said the saint. And going to the altar he reverently took the miraculous statue into his arms. And – just think of it! – the image became to him as light and as easy to carry as a lovely flower.

With the ciborium resting on his bosom and the statue in his arms, the saint hastened to leave the city, followed by his awed companions. And his trust was double rewarded. God struck the Tartars blind while he passed in safety.

But a new obstacle presented itself. In order to reach Cracovia they had to cross a river. When they reached its banks they found no means of getting across. Full of confidence, however, in the power of the God he was carrying and in the intercession of His great Mother, the saint made the Sign of the Cross over the river and set foot upon the water. Yes, *upon* the water; for he did not sink, but walked over its surface as over a street of glass. Not even the soles of his sandals were made wet. Amazed at this repetition of

Peter walking on the waves, his companions followed; and they, too, reached the opposite shore dry-shod.

Still more astonishing is an accompanying miracle that was related at St. Hyacinth’s canonization: the footprints that he made in crossing remained upon the surface a long time afterwards, so that all could plainly see them.

When the saint arrived in Cracovia, he placed the Blessed Sacrament in a church, where there was grateful adoration. He put the statue of Our Lady upon the Virgin’s altar for the special veneration of the faithful.

Is not this a story truly full of wonders? And does it not make us proud of our great God and happy to be His devoted children? And does it not make us rejoice in having such a Mother as the Mother of God and fill us with tender respect for the images and pictures that represent her? Of course it does!

Well, let us remember that if only we had greater confidence in God and more love for Mary we could – What could we do? Can you answer?

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, emphasizing 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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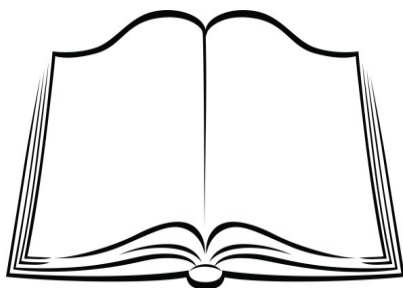
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The Catholic Mother to Her Children

The Countess de Flavigny



TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON

THE STEWARD'S FORESIGHT

There was a certain rich man, who had a steward; and he was informed that this steward had defrauded him. He, therefore, gave him warning, and demanded his accounts. The steward, foreseeing that he would be dismissed, had the prudence to curry favor with his master's debtors, and thus secured friends for himself, who would receive him into their houses. He called them together, and proposed to them to falsify their accounts, and make out their debts to his master to be less than they were. When his master heard his device, however angry he was at being cheated, he could not but feel a certain admiration for the man's foresight and worldly wisdom. Our Lord spoke this parable, and gave

the interpretation of it. He pointed out to His disciples, that "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." That is, people who are careless about securing their salvation, are often very careful to secure their interests here below. They cast about to find means to advance their good estate and prosperity. They try to secure "friends at court," as the saying is; rich benefactors, powerful protectors and patrons, and they will cringe to flatter them, and do all kinds of mean things to secure their favor. They are "wise in their generation," for they take means to succeed, and succeed they do; and they are "wiser than the children of light," for they take more forethought and pains, and

undergo greater self-denials, to make a fortune, and to rise in the world, than would have made them inherit a throne in the eternal happiness of Heaven. Blessed Thomas More said it even more strongly. His words were, in effect that many men take more pains to go to Hell, than would have secured their passage to glory. The great minister of a celebrated King of France said bitterly, on his death-bed: "If I had done for God what I have done for that man, I should have been saved three times over; and now, I know not what is going to become of me." So much for the children of this world. On the other hand, what are "the children of light" doing? They, too, have to make friends for the future; yes, for an eternal future in the world to come. "I say to you," Our Lord concludes, "make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." Mammon is a word for money, or wealth. Our Lord speaks of it as the mammon of iniquity, because it is so generally an agent in human sin. But gold is God's creature, not evil in itself. It is

like the steel of which you may make a knife, or a sword. You may turn that instrument or that weapon to a good purpose, or to a bad. And so it is with gold and silver. We may prepare for ourselves everlasting blessings with money, either in Heaven or in Hell. What does Judas now think of his thirty pieces of silver? Or the wicked rich man, of all he spent on his purple and fine linen, and his daily sumptuous banquets? On the other hand, is it not now a joy to St. Charles Borromeo, to remember how, while he was on his trial for eternity, he sold an estate for forty thousand gold pieces, and gave away that sum to the poor in a single day? And how he did the same with twenty thousand more, that came to him by a legacy? With what rejoicing was he welcomed into the "everlasting habitations" by his "friends," the poor whom he had benefited?

Then remember the cup of cold water, and the widow's two mites that make a farthing. Remember, too, how much you can do by spiritual almsgiving. No one is so poor in time, that he cannot spend many moments in the day, praying for others. As we

walk to and fro, about our daily duties; in little odd fragments of time which no one observes, and no one grudges us – moments that otherwise we might be spending in frivolous talk or idle thoughts – we may be praying for the conversion of sinners, for the success of

zealous priests and nuns in their apostolic work, for the Holy Father, the Poor Souls in Purgatory, for sufferers, for the tempted, and the dying. Not one little ejaculation of such spiritual mercy will be forgotten before God. “When we fail,” and are dying away out of life, we shall know it.



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FRANCISCAN SAINTS

DECEMBER 4TH

*Blessed Mary Joseph Rossello,
Virgin, Third Order*

It was in the little seaport of Albissola that our servant of God came into this world on May 27, 1811, in a truly Christian family and one richly blessed with children. When she was but sixteen years of age, she entered the Third Order.

She had spent seven years in the service of a wealthy but childless couple when she earnestly desired to enter a convent. But she was refused admission because she had no dowry. The couple for whom she worked hesitated to furnish the dowry, because they were unwilling to give up the girl whom they loved and intended to make their heir. So Divine Providence came to her assistance.

The bishop of Savona knew of the special talent Mary Joseph possessed, of gathering young girls about her and instructing them in their religion. So he purchased a house, furnished two rooms as classrooms, and entrusted the work of teaching to the servant of God and a few

other young women that were similarly disposed. And so, in the year 1837, there was organized the Institute of the Daughters of Mercy. A few years later the little band of women pronounced their vows.

Mary Joseph administered the office of superior during the space of forty years. She placed her community under the protecting care of Our Lady of Mercy and of St. Joseph. A favorite motto of hers, which she was often heard to repeat, was: "The hands should be at work, the heart with God."

Her own experience taught her a lesson, and so she received good girls in her community without a dowry. Her love for the sick sisters was expressed in the statement: "We must look upon our sick sisters as our most reliable support. They, by their patience, their suffering and their prayers maintain the house and, in fact, the whole institute, since they seek and obtain for us from the Father of Mercy the blessing of Heaven.

The community has grown in a remarkable manner. At its zenith, there were three thousand sisters in two hundred houses spread over Italy, Argentina, and the United States. Mother Mary Joseph departed this life on December seventh in the year 1880. The process of her beatification has been completed, and on November 6, 1938, she was solemnly beatified in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

ON IDLENESS

1. We should flee idleness. Holy Scripture says: "Idleness hath taught much evil" (Ecclus. 33:29). St. Francis calls it a cesspool of bad thought, and experience shows that idleness is the devil's workshop. Hence the servant of God held to the principle: "Hands at work." Work is the first law for everybody. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (*Gen. 3:19*). — Let yourself be guided by these principles and flee idleness as you would the plague.

2. We should avoid busy idleness. Those who neglect their

own duties while they concern themselves so much the more about the business of others pay toll to this form of idleness. Also those who occupy themselves with all kinds of hobbies, but do not want to carry the burdens of their own state of life. They are everywhere and nowhere, and are a burden to everyone. St. Francis compared this sort of people to flies, which seem to exist for no other purpose than to molest others. — Do you belong to these annoying flies?

3. We should endeavor to preserve ourselves from idleness. This can be done chiefly by following the admonition of the Apostle: "Let all things be done according to order" (*1 Cor. 14:40*). Hence, we should divide our day between work, prayer, and recreation. Besides this, we should reflect on the account we shall have to render of the time and the talents loaned to us. — Reflect that, according to the words of Our Savior, only faithful servants can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

BE MERCIFUL, O LORD, TO OUR PRAYERS AND HEAL OUR
INDOLENCE, SO THAT WE MAY OBTAIN THE REMISSION OF OUR
SINS AND AT ALL TIMES REJOICE IN THY BLESSING. THROUGH
CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

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