

# THE SERAPH

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**Coronation of the Virgin Mary**

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In essentia - Unitas. In dubio - Libertas.  
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# EDITORIAL

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## PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

The most perfect prayer is that taught to the Apostles by Our Lord Himself. Short and snappy – containing every aspect our human existence needs: our relationship with God, expresses our personal need – material and spiritual and, finally, the only true relationship with regard to others.

St. Francis taught his first followers who were not priests to say the Lord's Prayer – the "Our Father."

Our Lord also taught His disciples to pray always by giving them a parable. He used the example of an unjust judge (always an appropriate example!). He said:

"There was a judge in a certain town who did not fear God and did not respect man.

Now there was a certain widow in that town, and she kept coming to him, saying 'Do me justice against my adversary.' And he would not for a long time, but afterwards he said within himself, 'Although I do not fear God, nor even respect

man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will do her justice, lest by her continual coming she finally wear me out.'"

And the Lord said: "Hear what the unjust judge says; and will not God avenge his elect, who cry to Him day and night?"

I will tell you that he will avenge them quickly. Yet when the Son of Man comes. Will he find, do you think, faith on this earth?"

Will Our Lord find faith on this earth? The answer is not a reassuring one in view of the Great Apostasy raging throughout the entire world.

There are very few who pray "day and night." And among those who do pray day and night – such as contemplative monks and nuns – are their prayers ascending to God as a pure offering like the sacrifice of Abel? Or, perhaps they resemble more the unacceptable sacrifice of Cain?

If one were to judge the universal fratricide that takes place daily, too often by those who claim the name "Christian," we would have to say that there is very

little true prayer acceptable to God? What must be done? The answer is as simple as it is readily available; We must pray with attention and devotion and perseveringly. Furthermore, God does not hear the prayers of heretics or schismatics because they are His enemies.



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# The Bishop Speaks

Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM D.D.

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## TRUE DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Dear Mr. M,

Since the month of May is traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, I thought it would be appropriate to bring to your attention some very important information on this subject.

First of all, you are probably wondering why the use of the word “true” devotion and not just “devotion.” After all “devotion is devotion” – not so? Certainly, devotion is or it is not. Life should be so simple!

Ah! But it is – if we are truly with God. Most are not. Why? Because their religion is vain – empty of any substance; the product of a disordered imagination.

The great Franciscan Doctor of the Church, St. Bonaventure, said: **“whoever neglected Our Lady would perish in his sins and would be damned.”**

Where do you think that puts all those who have never uttered a

“Hail, Mary” or have been guilty of heaping obscenities upon her Holy Name?

The Blessed Virgin Mary has appeared in different places throughout the many years. Her message has always been to urge people to prayer and penance. If you take the two ns out of the word “penance,” what do you get? You get “peace.” Prayer without a change in life is not real. It is self-deception. It is lying to oneself. More – it is a mockery of God.

Because Our Lord placed all the merits of His Passion and Death in the hands of His Blessed Mother, the Church calls her the “Mediatrice of All Graces.”

This means that **no one comes to Jesus except through Mary.**

Mary is also called the “Co-Redemptrix” because she died the mystical death at the foot of the Cross on Calvary. This was prophesized by Simeon at the time of the Presentation: **“And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”**

(Luke 2, 35).

When the physical heart is pierced with a sword, death ensues. The soul leaves the body. But, when the sword pierces the soul, there follows a mystical death. The soul does not leave the body; the body continues to partake in this spiritual death experienced by the soul.

Just as Our Lord's Passion and Death are recalled in the Sacrifice of the Mass, so, too, the mystical death of Mary will endure until the end of time. Our Lady suffers this continuous sorrow until the number of the elect is reached. Whenever the Blessed Mother appears, it is always with a message to pray and do penance. This is the underlying message. Added to that basic message are particular details that emphasize the urgency prompting God to send the Blessed Mother to chosen souls.

There are two such apparitions of Our Lady that are very peculiar in that they reveal very disturbing information about the Church and have become the object of what we might call "deliberate confusion."

At this point, it would be useful to establish the foundation upon

which private revelations are accepted or, rejected. Whatever the accidental circumstances, ultimately it is the legitimate teaching authority of the Church that determines the credibility of such apparitions.

Who may speak for the Church – locally and universally? In an Encyclical Letter to the bishops of France (Feb. 11, 1906) Pope Pius IX wrote: **“Scripture teaches us, and the Fathers confirm it for us, that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, a body ruled by *pastors* and *doctors*, a society of men, hence, a society among whose ranks are to be found men who have full and entire power to govern, to teach, and to judge. It follows that this Church is in its essence *unequal* that is to say, it is a society comprising two categories, pastors and flock, those who occupy ranks in differing degrees of hierarchy and the multitude of the faithful. And these categories are so distinct from one another that in the pastoral group alone reside the right and authority necessary to promote and direct all the members towards the end of the society; as for the multitude of the faithful, they have**

**no other duty than to allow themselves to be led, and, like a docile flock, to follow their Shepherds.”**

A priest – no matter how holy or not – *is not anyone’s Shepherd*. He has no flock. That is why every priest must be under the bishop in whose territory he resides and wishes to exercise his priesthood. Anyone following a priest without a proper bishop is guilty of sacrilege and receives no grace from the sacraments boldly administered by such a renegade priest.

This truth is very important to keep in mind, because there are many false teachers in our day as warned by Our Lord Himself. Jesus spoke of “wolves in sheep’s clothing” for good reason. The “charming” priest with the obliging smile is a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” He is an example of the kind of scandalously disobedient clergymen plaguing the remnant Church. And those who blindly follow them, as was said, are not without guilt.

Again, let us refer to the highest authority in the visible Church, a legitimate Pope, Pope Pius IX: **“Let the authority of the**

**Bishops be sacred to the priests, and let priests understand well that the sacerdotal ministry, if it be not exercised under the direction of the Bishops, will be neither holy, nor wholly useful, nor respected. Consequently, the elite among the laity who love the Church, our common Mother, and who, by their words and writings, can bring a useful support to the rights of the Catholic religion, must multiply their labors for her defense.**

**Let their rule of conduct be to submit themselves with filial piety to the Bishops whom the Holy Spirit has established to rule the Church of God; let them respect their authority, let them undertake nothing without their leave, for in combats in defense of religion, it is the leaders who must be followed.”**

How great is the need to heed these words of a true Pope can be seen all around us. We will touch upon these things as we go along. Meanwhile, let us be convinced that if we do not take to heart these words of wisdom, we cannot call ourselves “Catholic.”

There are many papal statements concerning the authority of Bishops because of the evil influence of demonic elements in society that have infiltrated the Church to gnaw at her heart.

In order to give you another example of the devil's efforts to drag souls into Hell with him and his legions, consider the following, written to a Cardinal Guibert, Archbishop of Paris in 1885 by Pope Pius IX:

**“...among Catholics – doubtless as a result of current evils – there are some who, far from satisfied with the condition of ‘subject’ which is theirs in the Church, think themselves able to take some part in her government, or at least, think they are allowed to examine and judge after their own fashion the acts of authority. A misplaced opinion, certainly. If it were to prevail, it would do very great harm to the Church of God, in which, by the manifest will of her Divine Founder, there are to be distinguished in the most absolute fashion two parties: the teaching and the taught, the Shepherd and the flock, among whom there is one who is the head and the Supreme**

**Shepherd of all.**

**To the shepherds alone was given all power to teach, to judge, to direct; on the faithful was imposed the duty of following their teaching, of submitting with docility to their judgment, and of allowing themselves to be governed, corrected, and guided by them in the way of salvation. Thus, it is an absolute necessity for the simple faithful to submit in mind and heart to their own pastors, and for the latter to submit them to the Head and Supreme Pastor. In this subordination and dependence lie the order and life of the Church; in it is to be found the indispensable condition of well-being and good government. On the contrary, if it should happen that those who have no right to do so should attribute authority to themselves, if they presume to become judges and teachers, if inferiors in the government of the universal Church attempt or try to exert an influence different from that of the supreme authority, there follows a reversal of the true order, many minds are thrown into confusion. and souls leave the right path.”**

We will return to this subject again because of its essential importance. Its importance is like the foundation of a building. This is the reason why Satan seeks to undermine the authority of the Church by raising up false teachers

The Blessed Mother appeared on the mountain of La Salette, France on September 19, 1846. This apparition was approved to be authentic by the Bishop of Lecce. We may, therefore, take the contents as coming from the Mother of God.

Instead of taking the Blessed Virgin's word seriously, there are those who either tried to hide or have worked to "water-down" the message because of the shocking exposure of the general moral laxity of those dedicated to the service of God. The terrifying aspect about it concerns the highest office in the Church – the papacy!

What did the Blessed Mother say on this subject? She said: **“Rome will lose the faith and will become the seat of the Antichrist”**. There are many more things that Mary revealed at La Salette. But this prophesy about the papacy is very crucial

and has come true. There is a very close connection between the apparition of La Salette and the apparitions of Fatima.

Many people of all social ranks have observed the constant destruction of the Church *from within*. Few, however, have the courage to accept the consequences of this painful and tragic truth.

Why do those who boast of being Catholic refuse the truth. Yes, they refuse the truth even when all these things were all revealed in the Holy Scriptures and many of the Fathers of the Church. They will not accept the truth because they no longer have genuine supernatural faith. They are ignorant of their faith because they are ignorant of the Scriptures. Or, if they read the Scriptures, like heretics, they only read what serves their purpose.

Bear in mind that heretics cannot have the Holy Spirit to guide them.

True devotion to Mary must necessarily include a correct understanding of the contents of her apparitions. Here is where the confusion and controversies begin.

It was already briefly shown how the words of Our Lady have been obscured at La Salette concerning false popes who would occupy the Chair of Peter. This has come true. Since the death of Pope Pius XII, the Roman Catholic Church has been without a true, canonically elected Vicar of Jesus Christ, i.e., a legitimate Pope. As previously mentioned, the fact that the Church has been without a true pope is important for the correct understanding of the Fatima apparitions and their implications.

We must consider here the fact, as pointed out by St. Louis de Monfort regarding the great persecutions against the Church, that God has placed between the Blessed Virgin and Satan: **“It is principally of these last and cruel persecutions of the devil, which shall go on increasing daily till the reign of Antichrist, that we ought to understand that first and celebrated prediction and curse of God pronounced in the terrestrial paradise against the serpent. It is to our purpose to explain this here for the glory of the most holy Virgin, for the salvation of her children and for the confusion of the devil:**

**‘I will put enmities between thee and the woman and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel’ (Gen. 3:15).**

**God has never made and formed but one enmity; but it is an irreconcilable one, which shall endure and grow even to the end. It is between Mary, His worthy Mother, and the devil – between the children and the servants of the Blessed Virgin, and the children and tools of Lucifer.”**

Please note well these prophetic words of this great saint. He continues to give details so we won't be confused: **“The most terrible of all the enemies which God has set up against the devil is His holy Mother Mary. He has inspired her, even since the days of the earthly paradise – though she existed then only in His idea – with so much hatred against that cursed enemy of God, with so much ingenuity in unveiling the malice of that ancient serpent, with so much power to conquer, to overthrow and to crush that proud, impious rebel, that he fears her not only more than**

**all the angels and men, but in a sense more than God Himself. Not that the anger, the hatred and the power of God are not infinitely greater than those of the Blessed Virgin, for the perfections of Mary are limited; but first, because Satan, being proud, suffers infinitely more from being beaten and punished by a little and humble handmaid of God, and her humility humbles him more than the divine power; and secondly, because God has given Mary such great power against the devils that – as they have often been obliged to confess, in spite of themselves, by the mouth of the possessed – they fear one of her sighs for a soul more than the prayers of all the saints, and one of her threats against them more than all other torments.”**

Perhaps a further consideration of reality from God’s perspective – which is the only intelligent point of view – would help inspire a true devotion to Mary. No one is better qualified to instruct us than St. Louis de Monfort: **“What Lucifer has lost by pride, Mary has gained by humility. What Eve has damned and lost by disobedience, Mary has saved**

**by obedience. Eve, in obeying the serpent, has destroyed all her children together with herself, and has delivered them to him; Mary, in being perfectly faithful to God, has saved all her children and servants together with herself, and has consecrated them to His Majesty.”**

Because the Blessed Virgin Mary has been destined by God to exert her God-given powers over the devils in the last days, we can be certain that Satan’s attacks upon the children of Mary will increase in frequency and intensity. We must especially be on our guard against the many false visionaries that already abound. It is very painful to see those who once prayed with us no longer do so for the simple reason that the smoke of Satan has blinded them. This smoke of Satan is none other than spiritual vanity born of a false devotion to Mary. We may be certain that any devotion to Mary that does not inspire the obedient humility of Mary in our hearts is not from God, but is from the devil.

Wherever there is disobedience to the visible authority of the Church under whatever pretext, know that such is not the work

of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of truth and love cannot inspire lies or pride. All these are the work of the Father of Lies.

If we were to ask: What are some tools that Satan uses to deceive the multitudes? It would be necessary to single out several. Among the most wide-spread are two; the **EWTN (ETERNAL WORD TELEVISION NETWORK)** and the **INTERNATIONAL FATIMA ROSARY CRUSADE** - an enterprise of Nicholas Gruner, the man ordained with the new rite that has been shown to depart from the valid rite in use until the false council of “Vatican II” and who refused obedience to the bishop who “ordained” him and to whom he pledged obedience.

These and others – to be named in due time – pretend to work for the salvation of souls but have no status in the Roman Catholic Church.

Please refer to what has been written above concerning obedience by a legitimate Successor of St. Peter, Pope Pius IX.

God has kept the Blessed Mother in relative obscurity so that she might shine even brighter as she

is revealed to a sinfully proud world.

Praised by many Popes and proven by the holiness of those who have true devotion to Mary, St. Louis de Monfort gives the following characteristics of true devotion.

True devotion is **interior**. It comes from the mind and heart. It is not ostentatious.

True devotion is **tender**. It is full of confidence like a child. It is an expression of the words of Our Lord: **Unless you become as little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.** It is, therefore, childlike without being childish - as so much false devotion shows itself to be.

True devotion is **holy**. It leads the soul to imitate the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, especially her profound humility, her lively faith, her blind obedience to the will of God, her continual prayer, her universal mortification, her unflinching charity, her heroic patience, her divine purity, her angelic sweetness, and her divine wisdom. According to St. Louis, these are the ten principal virtues of Our Lady.

True devotion is **constant**. It

does not waver in the face of anything opposed to spiritual progress. It is not vanquished by failures but uses them to learn even greater humility

True devotion is **disinterested**. It leads the soul away from itself and inspires it to seek only God.

Let us consider the false devotions to Mary, and the false devotees. St. Louis enumerates seven kinds,

First in line are the **critical devotees**, these are generally proud scholars, rash and self-sufficient spirits. Although they have some devotion to Mary they criticize almost every devotion simple souls practice. They call into doubt all the miracles recorded by authors worthy of credence in the chronicles and narratives which testify the mercies and power of the Blessed Virgin. These kinds are always negative. They should not be confused with genuine scholars who “test the spirits” to make sure they are from God.

### **Scrupulous Devotees.**

These are the many who fear that honor given to Mary would detract from the honor due to the Son. An exaggerated form of this

can be found in Protestantism and in the Charismatic Movement.

### **External Devotees.**

These make every devotion external. They have no taste for anything internal simply because they have no interior spirit. They say many prayers and Rosaries, etc. But their prayers bear no fruit. If they happen to pray (?) with others, they readily attribute success to *their* prayers and not to the many others praying for the intention. If they do not feel any sensible consolation, they feel that their prayers are fruitless.

### **Presumptuous Devotees.**

These do not abandon their passions. They really love the world and do not give up their sinful lives. They wish to appear to others to be devotees of the Blessed Lady, but they try to hide their pride, avarice, impurity, drunkenness, anger, swearing, detraction. injustice or some other sin. They live in the illusion that the few prayers they say will be enough for the Mother of God to save them from hellfire. They are the most common among false devotees because of the Modernist heresies that are rampant today

in the name of “Catholicism”. Just look at the false slogans promoting this type of error: “unconditional love”, distorted “divine mercy” that excludes divine justice, Satan’s “menu” goes on and on.

### **Inconstant Devotees.**

These are the devotees who, as the word describes, are sometimes fervent and at times tepid. They pray according to the mood of the moment.

### **Interested Devotees.**

These are the devotees who only turn to Our Lady when some self-interest is involved. And should Our Lady hear their prayer, they just as quickly forget her.

### **Hypocritical Devotees.**

The word describes those who cloak their vices and sins with the respectable mantel of pretended devotion to be seen by men.

And so, my dear Mr. M. we have a very goodly amount of solid information to guide us in our necessary relationship with the Mother of God – and our Mother – without whose intercession no one can attain the kingdom of heaven.

As you can see, there is far more that true Catholics have to know besides the questionable memories of their childhood catechism, which are lamentably inadequate for adults. Until the next time, may the Blessed Virgin Mary, protect you from the many wolves in sheep’s clothing.

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# Franciscan Saints

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MAY 3

*VENERABLE JANE OF THE CROSS* Virgin,

Third Order

On the feast of the Finding of the Cross, May 3, 1481, Jane was born at Hazagna, not far from Toledo, Spain. Even as a child she gave signs of future holiness; for example, she took no food at all on Fridays. Her bodily as well as her spiritual development progressed so rapidly beyond her years, that, on the death of her mother, although she was only ten years old, she managed the household of her father.

Because of her special endowments, she was sought in marriage by a distinguished young man when she was but fourteen years of age. Her father urged her to consent, but Jane definitely declared that she would never enter the matrimonial bond and wished to serve God in a convent. When her father enlisted the help of relatives, all endeavoring to influence her toward marriage, Jane secretly took flight in men's clothing.

In Cuba, some hours' distance from her native town, Jane again

donned her own clothing, which she had brought with her in a bundle, and asked for admission into the convent of the Tertiaries there. She was invested on her fifteenth birthday, and on the same day of the next year she made her profession. She received the surname of the Cross, because of the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross.

Jane redoubled her zeal in mortification, in prayer, and in all the religious virtues. She had a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and a great desire for Holy Communion. Gladly would she have received every day, but in accordance with the custom of the time and the wish of her confessor, she contented herself with the general communion days of the sisters. But she was all the more zealous in receiving the Holy Sacrament spiritually. Her ardent desire led her to receive spiritually at almost every hour of the day, and through the practice she felt so wonderfully strengthened

that she sometimes cried out: "O my God, if the mere desire for Thy most holy Body has such marvelous effects, what strength must the actual reception afford!"

But she was also to stand in need of this strength. She had to endure much hostility and ill-treatment from her fellow sisters. True, later all of them recognized their injustice, and upon the death of the abbess, they unanimously elected her superior. But even in that position, although she greatly promoted the spiritual and temporal welfare of the convent, she met with such vehement opposition, within and without the convent, that she was deposed, until it was recognized that the complaints against her were calumnies and she was reinstated. Jane was also visited with severe physical sufferings; but that seemed to be her one desire, since she always prayed for more suffering.

Christ our Lord rewarded the fidelity of His true spouse with extraordinary graces. She saw her guardian angel visibly at her side and constantly received counsel and comfort

from him. She was gifted with wonderful insight into the mysteries of our holy religion, and discoursed on them in a manner that astonished the most learned men. Cardinal Ximenes, archbishop of Toledo, often came to the convent and manifested the greatest respect for her.

Our Lord once rewarded her love for the Blessed Sacrament with a marvelous miracle. She was going to church in order to adore the Blessed Sacrament at elevation, which was just about to take place. But the signal for elevation was given while Jane was still in the cloister hall. Promptly she knelt down, and, marvelous to say, the wall of the church seemed to part so that Jane could see the Blessed Sacrament. After the priest replaced the chalice with the Blessed Sacrament on the altar, the gap closed, but a mark of the marvelous opening was left on the wall. King Philip III himself came to the convent later to witness this miracle.

In the fifty-fourth year of her life Jane learned from her guardian angel that she should

now enter the celestial vision, and also that she would die in the shadow of the cross. On the feast of the Finding of the Cross, May 3, 1534, she departed after a prolonged ecstasy. God almighty glorified her after death with numerous miracles, which were examined and approved by the Church.

## CONCERNING SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Consider that Venerable Jane knew how to use spiritual Communion to advantage. In following the practice she preserved obedience to her confessor, avoided singularity, and yet fulfilled the ardent desires of her heart for union with her divine Savior. Spiritually she could communicate more frequently than was possible sacramentally. For this reason God almighty, who accepts the desire for the deed, strengthened her so marvelously. It is good to follow her example. Thomas a Kempis (4:10) says: "If at times a person is lawfully hindered, he should yet always have the good will and the pious intention of communicating, and so he will not be without the fruit of the sacrament." — Do you often communicate spiritually?

Consider how one goes about receiving spiritual Communion. The holy Council of Trent says that faith and love dispense the fruit and the effects of the Holy Sacrament to those who long for the heavenly Bread in spiritual

Communion. A person must therefore excite in himself a lively faith in the presence of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, be heartily sorry for all his sins out of love for God, and then express to God the loving desire to receive Him in the Holy Sacrament. Thus one communicates spiritually; and one ought never to omit the practice in holy Mass at the Communion of the priest.

Consider especially that spiritual Communion is a great help in the real reception of Holy Communion. It is the best preparation for it, so far as it nourishes our desire for the Bread of Heaven, and thus disposes us better for the graces of Holy Communion to take effect. And after Holy Communion it keeps alive in us the grateful remembrance of Holy Communion, so that the strength of the Holy Sacrament continues to produce its effects in us. Thus through spiritual Communion the Holy Eucharist proves to be not only the daily but even the hourly food of our souls.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(From the Mass of the Most Blessed Sacrament)

O God, who in this wonderful sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy passion, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive in us the fruit of Thy redemption. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

**CONFERENCES ON THE  
BLESSED TRINITY.  
BY  
THE REV. DR. J. J:  
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GASTON CO., N. C.**

CONFERENCE V.

ON THE DIVINITY AND PRO-  
CESSION OF GOD THE HOLY  
GHOST, THE THIRD PERSON  
OF THE MOST HOLY AND  
UNDIVIDED TRINITY

(CONTINUED)

The price of our redemption was paid by the Second Person, but it was applied only by the Third Person, otherwise it would have remained barren and ineffectual, and would only have irritated our wounds the more and made our sad condition more desperate. For centuries had we languished at the fountain of Bethsaida, and no friendly hand was found to help us to plunge into the healing waters. God had taken two steps towards us the first by creation and the second in redemption. He must take a step and come still nigher to us. We, need God the Holy Ghost to lift us up, enlighten our souls by faith, strengthen us by hope, and purify us by love — the promises

made through the prophet Joel (ii. 28): *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.* According to the vision of Ezechiel the entire world is a wilderness of dead men's bones. They shall be created anew; they shall live again.

In the work of our redemption the victim is prepared by the Holy Ghost. How can this be? asked the chaste spouse Mary. The Angel Gabriel answered that the mystery would be wrought by the Holy Ghost. *He shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee* (Luke i. 35). The Third Person created the human nature of our Lord, and all His faculties as man — a fact proclaimed thrice daily by the tongue of the Angelus bell all the world over as the sun tells his shining hours: "The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived of the Holy Ghost." Sublime mystery and announced to the world as plainly as the starry hosts of night proclaim the might of God.

Our blessed Lord's journey to Calvary may be traced by His blood; no less marked are the steps of the Holy Ghost in His divine co-operation. Our Savior grew from infancy to manhood like an ordinary man, and until His thirtieth year

the prodigies that clustered about Him were apparently produced by outward agency. An angel admonishes the shepherds, directs the flight into Egypt, a wondrous star conducts the kings from the remote East to Bethlehem, and all Judea and Jerusalem are in consternation.

Now another point is reached and a new era begins in His life, inaugurated by the Holy Ghost. The Father promises the Baptist a sign from heaven by which he will infallibly know that Christ is the Messiah: *He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him . . . adore; this is the Son of God* (John i. 33, 34). True, His humanity was created in the chaste womb of the Immaculate Virgin by the Holy Ghost, but hitherto He seemed to be separated from it externally. Now He takes solemn and visible possession of this marvelous temple of God in the form of the dove and at His baptism — the new birth in its Christian institution.

The public ministry of our Lord begins; no longer does the current of His life steal quietly on in the sequestered vale of Nazareth, but it is manifested to all mankind and is directed towards Jerusalem.

That His mission may be the more definitely marked and His co-operation in the work of our redemption more specifically pointed out the Holy Ghost did not descend while Christ remained on earth. Could the human mind conceive a greater advantage than the visible and permanent presence of Christ on earth until the last day? Would not all doubts be removed, all difficulties solved, sin and error be put away, and the earth become the paradise of God? Greater advantages will accrue from the descent of the Holy Ghost, and in order to obtain them it is to our advantage that our Lord should leave the world. *It is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you.*

*Moses* and the prophets announced the advent of the son of God, but Jesus Christ is by excellence the prophet, of the Holy Ghost. The Baptist was the precursor of our Lord, but our Lord is the precursor of the Holy Ghost. But He not only promises Him; He prepares the way for His coining by the shedding of His Most Precious Blood for our redemption. He instructs His disciples how they are to prepare themselves to receive Him in a becoming manner. They are not to depart from Jerusalem; they must withdraw from all inter-

course with the world, and in recollection and *prayer* be ready for the accomplishment of the mystery of the descent and indwelling of the Third Person in the Church, Which He will animate as the soul does the body, lead into all truth, vivify, purify, strengthen, and in which He will abide till time shall be no more.

Our Lord's teachings must be supplemented, a channel must be instituted for their presentation and communication to all men. Like the body of Adam before receiving the breath of life, the body of the Church was materially fashioned, but not till the day of Pentecost did it receive a living soul the Holy Ghost. Hence her doctrines are the veritable teachings of God; her worship, her laws, her discipline, her ceremonies, all divine. Willful disobedience to her authority is disobedience to God and her chief in the chair of Peter, the infallible teacher of all mankind in the way of salvation. The absolute perfections of the Holy Ghost, His self-subsistence, His action on the Church and on the souls of the faithful, are all plainly taught, by holy Writ. I select a few passages from many:

*I will ask the Father, says our Lord, and, He shall give you another*

*Paraclete, that He may abide with, you forever; . . . the Spirit of truth. . . . He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatever I shall have said to you. . . . Whom I will send you from the Father. . . . Who proceedeth from the Father . . . I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come He will teach you all truth . . . He shall receive of mine and shall show it to you (John xiv. xv. et seq.)*

The Holy Ghost is not an energy nor a detached grace, or gift, but, the Adorable Majesty of heaven. *They were all with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak* (Acts ii. 4). This He did not as an inspiration but as a Person. He directs Peter to go to Cornelius, and commands Saul and Barnabas to be set apart for the ministry (Acts x. 26).

From this divine Person is derived the mission and authority of the apostles and their successors, the bishops, to instruct, to rule, and to govern the Church of God to the end of time (Acts xx. 18).

Revelation, foreknowledge, the personal knowledge of all the hidden things of God, sanctification,

the bestowal of all divine gifts, and all that is claimed for the Father and the Son are equally asserted by the pages of inspiration for the Holy Ghost, for THESE THREE ARE ONE.

*It hath, seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,* was the announcement by the apostles, through the mouth of St. Peter at the Council of Jerusalem, and which must, be held of all the general councils of the Church for nineteen centuries. The doctrinal teachings of all the successors of the Prince of the Apostles during that long period and for all future times are the very teachings of God the Holy Ghost, thus verifying the declaration of the prophet, that *all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.*

## II

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire and became the living soul of the Catholic Church; and He will animate it for all time, carrying the grace of redemption to every human being. Otherwise Christ's promises failed and Christianity perished with His last breath on the cross. When did He abandon his mystic Body, His Spouse and Church? The visible descent of the Holy Ghost on the

Church was solemnized by many of the wonders that always attested the manifestation of the majesty of God to our race. The *voice* of nature is heard: the thunder and lightning of Sinai, the splendors of Tabor, the earthquakes of Golgotha, are all renewed with a greater still, in order to rebuke the impiety that denies to God the power to remain with us under the appearance of bread. He comes down under the appearance of tongues of fire.

In the mystery of the Incarnation Christ entered. into the bosom of the Blessed Mother only. He did not take possession of each of us individually. He assumed Our nature, and not our person; He is my brother but His is not I. He bequeathed His humanity and divinity under the form of bread and wine, and thus loved us to the term of His possibility.

We have no adequate idea of the extent of the ruin wrought within us by original sin and our own personal transgressions. A new creation alone can remedy all our evils and restore us to our pristine soundness. The royal prophet uttered the petition of humanity when he exclaimed: *Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created; and Thou shall renew the face of the earth* (Ps. ciii. 30).

This second and more perfect creation is wrought by the Holy Ghost. Mark well the narrative of the Gospel: *And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them* (Acts ii. 3). He descends on each individually and dwells in each, making of the very body *the temple the Holy Ghost*. Without assuming our nature or person, he unites Himself with us by an ineffable union, not only indwelling but purifying, enlightening, changing, deifying in a manner by His grace, which is a Participation of the divine nature. In the language of the apostle, He creates a new man, who henceforward will beam and be inflamed with the love of God and of his fellow-man; his heart will be a deep over which the Spirit of God now reigns, and whose purified waters not all the worlds ever created could contain. Only the shoreless ocean of God's existence can hold them.

Witness the transformation of the apostles, the pillars of the new heaven and the new earth. Although for years in the company of the God-Man and sharers in His power, they were timid, worldly-minded, almost without faith, without love, without perseverance, attached to God externally, but severed from Him in mind and

heart. No sooner do they receive the Holy Ghost than they are superior to the combined powers of the world and hell. The gentiles mistake them for gods.

You may as reasonably attempt to count the sands on the sea-shore or the stars of heaven as our saints, whom none can number. Each is the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, The persecutions of the worldwide Roman Empire, armed with flames, and the sword, and the rack, and the wild beasts, could not subdue the fortitude of a maiden in her teens nor of a hoary pontiff tottering under the weight of years. Ye millions of martyrs, of virgins, of confessors, of priests, and bishops, of monks and hermits, and ye countless hosts of the laity — hidden saints — I hail you as the new creation, the most perfect work of the Omnipotent Trinity, the cloud of witnesses proving that our Lord's word has not failed — that the Holy Ghost has not forsaken His Church, but *will abide with her for ever*. As truly as the person of Christ is perpetuated in the Blessed Eucharist the Holy Ghost is conferred by confirmation as really as He descended on the apostles and was imparted by them to the faithful, but without the miraculous signs, for the reason that miracles are not the special gifts

of the Holy Ghost and were performed by the disciples before the day of Pentecost.

The gift of miracles is for others and makes no alteration in the soul of the possessor, but is dangerous to his humility. The seed of the Word, they are intended chiefly for one class of unbelievers — those who have no other means of learning the truths of religion. To those who believe, they are generally useless and are calculated to diminish the merit of faith. For the enlightened, who can ascertain the truth of the miracles recorded in Scripture, they are superfluous, and also for those who fall away from the faith. The standing miracle in proof of religion is the miraculous preservation of the Catholic Church for nineteen centuries despite the combined powers of earth and Satan. If the evidences of belief were not conclusive its rejection could not exclude from heaven and condemn one to everlasting flames.

It is by grace that the Holy Ghost acts on the soul. It is a supernatural gift, gratuitously bestowed for our salvation, and without which, if abandoned to our own natural efforts we could no more reach heaven than the fiend or the beast of the field, even though as learned

as the philosopher and endowed with all the natural virtues of which man is capable in his most civilized condition. *Without me you can do nothing*, says our Lord.

Though easily defined, not the brightest intellect can comprehend the stupendous gift of sanctifying grace. Its manner of existence, its incessant operations under the impulses of actual grace, the perfect freedom of the will under its almost omnipotent influence, neither St. Paul nor St. Augustine could unravel.

As we breathe the air that surrounds the earth, so do we live in the atmosphere of grace and inhale its incessant inspirations. God alone can tell the number of graces given to each individual according to his state, disposition, and condition in life. To confess one's sins to a priest, to pardon an injury, to resist a temptation are supernatural acts which created energy cannot produce. Each requires a mission of the Holy Ghost, an indwelling of God. It is Himself, and not His gifts separately, that is bestowed.

The infinite gulf between God and man is bridged over; and though at times, especially in seasons of sorrow and suffering, vehement showers of grace are rained on us,

each is a greater work than the millions of worlds which illumine the firmament at night. Each additional degree is worth more than the universe. St. Joseph, to whom is accredited the forfeited primacy of the fallen chief of heaven's hosts, might willingly descend from his brilliant throne and taste over again all his old sorrows, in order to obtain the merit of giving one cup of water to the least deserving of the human race.

God is honored by the receiving of His favors, and in this He has fixed His outward glory. As He could not create a being capable of comprehending the Deity, or, in other words, as it is impossible for Him to make us Gods by nature, He has made us Gods by grace, says a profound theologian, enabling us to possess the same beatitude, the same kingdom, and the same end. *You are Gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High*, said the Psalmist. *The kingdom of God is within you*, said our Lord. "The soul of the just is the throne of God," exclaims St. Augustine.

The miraculous gift is best known by its effects; these are twofold a proneness to good or a concupiscent which inclines the will to embrace virtue, to love and practice purity and honor and truth and

all virtues, to prepare for death and be always ready to meet the summons to eternal rest and peace. Next divine grace instills into the soul an aversion for evil — an aversion not only for the impiety that stalks boldly through the land and shocks decency by its notoriety and excesses, but all aversion also for every infraction of the divine law, even in thought. Such is the operation of divine grace, and its result is a peace which the world cannot give nor destroy. The sinner cannot possess it; it belongs to virtue alone. It consoles under all adversities; the tears of the penitent inebriate with gladness; the lash cheered the confessors, and the martyrs sang hymns of joy when their flesh was burnt and their bones broken. These are the waters springing into eternal life, and with which the Holy Ghost inebriates every man who obeys His voice and forsakes the madness of sin, in which is shame, remorse, and perpetual death. Although gratuitously given, it is in our power to increase or diminish our graces in proportion as we obey or reject their inspirations; which explains the progressive sanctification of the virtuous and the perversity of the wicked.

**To be continued**

# Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

*Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.*

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## THE NINE FIRST FRIDAYS

Catholic churches in the United States are veritably crowded with worshipers on every first Friday of the month. Men, women, and children, in countless thousands, receive Holy Communion. Most of the readers of *THE MESSENGER OF THE SACRED HEART* make the Nine First Fridays. We wonder how many of them could intelligently explain the origin and meaning of this devotion.

In many private revelations made by our Lord to St. Margaret Mary, He taught her the beautiful practices of devotion to His Sacred Heart. Among these is the Nine First Fridays, based on the Great Promise. Every well-instructed Catholic understands that a private revelation is not a part of the “deposit of Faith”; that the Church cannot make such a revelation an obligatory belief of the Faithful, for the Church’s infallibility does not extend to deciding on the authenticity of private revelations. It is well to remember, however, that the Church, by inserting the text

of the Great Promise in the Bull of Canonization of St. Margaret Mary, shows that she accepts it as authentic.

The authenticity of the Great Promise has been studied and acknowledged by such scholars as Archbishop Gauthey, Vermeersch, Hamon, Bainvel, Thurston, Le Bachelet, Estébanez, Boudinhom, Galeazzi. To doubt its authenticity is to be unreasonable. As the eminent canonist, Father Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., states in his “Pratique et Doctrine de la Devotion au Sacré-Coeur,” “any insistence [on its authenticity] is now superfluous, since the text of the ‘Great Promise’ has been inserted in full in the Bull of Canonization of St. Margaret Mary.”

Our Divine Savior, in His private revelations to St. Margaret Mary, made various promises of great spiritual favors to those who practice and promote devotion to His Sacred Heart. The words of the Promise are:

*“I promise thee in the excessive*

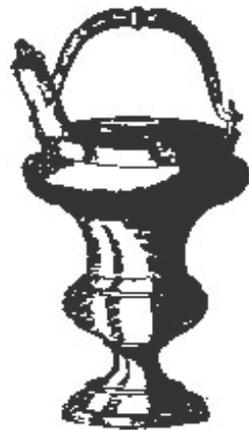
*mercy of My Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final penitence; they shall not die in My disgrace nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment."*

The devotion consists in receiving Holy Communion on nine First Fridays without any interruption. No other day can be substituted; if there is any break, the novena must be begun again. This clearly follows from the words of the Promise. They must be worthy Communions. Hence, any presumption of making the novena with the intention of later leading a sinful life would be sacrilegious and would impede the fulfillment of the Promise. Experience shows that those who once practice this devotion usually continue to do so for life.

The words "their Sacraments" do not necessarily mean the attendance of a priest at the hour of death and the conferring of the Last Sacraments. What the Sacred Heart promises is: that those who duly fulfill

the conditions will receive such Sacraments as may be necessary to secure the state of grace before death. Nor does the Promise say that these Sacraments will be received immediately before death.

The Great Promise is based on the human testimony of St. Margaret Mary as to her private revelation. We may use it with moral certainty that it is true. But as no one has absolute certainty that he or she has fulfilled the conditions of the Great Promise, we must never presume on God's love and mercy, merely because we have made the novena.



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