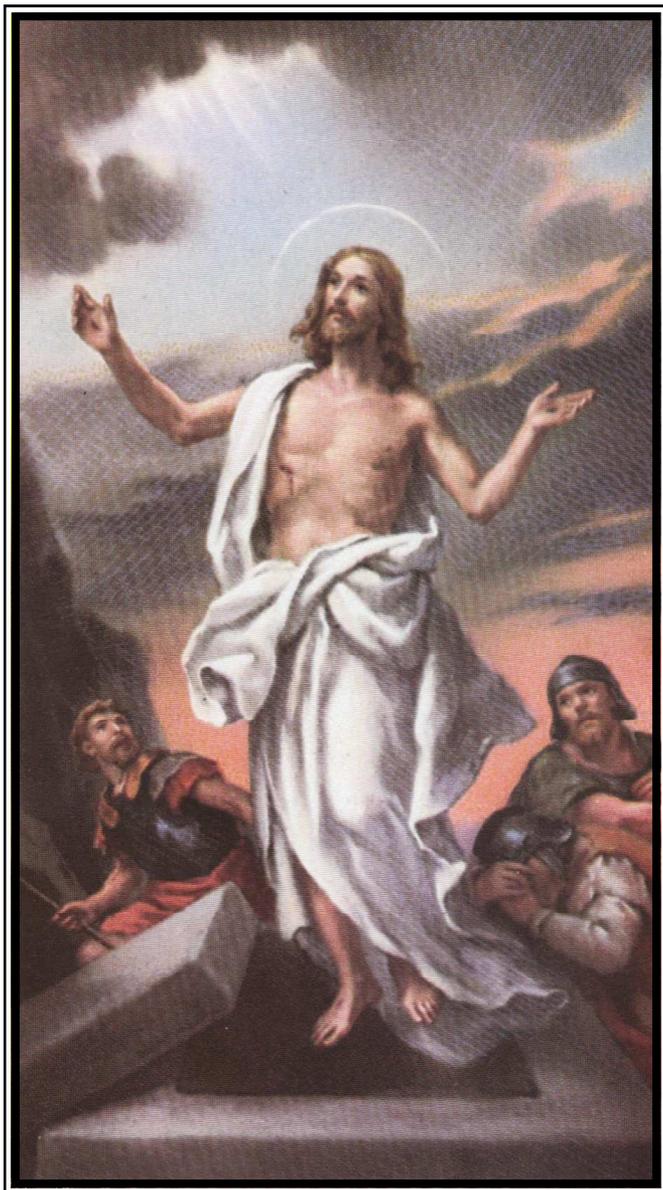


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EDITOR

Bishop Giles O.F.M.

PRODUCTION

Mr. Francis Y. No
Bishop Giles O.F.M.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bishop Bonaventure O.F.M.
Fr. Joseph O.F.M.

CIRCULATION

Bishop Giles, O.F.M.

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The SERAPH
3376 MOUNT READ BLVD
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14616
Tel. (585) 621-1122
e-mail: friars@friarsminor.org
web sites: friarsminor.org and
franciscanfathers.com

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The Greatest Act of Love

The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ contains a wealth of insight for all who desire and pursue a greater spiritual life.

We traditionally begin our contemplation with Jesus at the Last Supper or in the Garden of Olives. However, if we examine it a bit closer, we see that Jesus from the moment of the Incarnation began His suffering. From all of eternity, God knew He would perform this sacrificial act. Even before it was accomplished in time, it was already an accomplished fact in eternity.

In eternity there is no time. There is no past or future with God. Everything is in an eternal present. The suffering of Jesus Christ in human flesh took place in time. As God, He was well aware of His purpose in taking Human flesh. So even as a tiny infant in His mother's womb He knew all things. Though He appeared as a helpless infant, He remained God: all knowing, and all powerful.

What is perhaps even more wondrous, is that Jesus as God has thought of us from all of

eternity. He has thought of us all in a collective sense, but even more importantly, He has thought of us each individually. He loves each of us just as He loves all of us. He desired to suffer for each one of us, just as if each one of us were the only ones in need of redemption.

As we look upon our crucifixes we often think of how Jesus died for all of mankind, but we need to look closer and understand that Jesus died for each one of us specifically.

We think of the three hours of agony and our hearts rush to Him in empathy and love. There is much more than this three hours of agony. In truth, Jesus from the moment of His Incarnation suffered for you and me. Can we even begin to contemplate the suffering caused by the humbling of God in taking upon Himself our bodies of flesh? The suffering and sorrows He endured in living a hidden life; appearing ignorant, and humble to the world as a mere child! As a man; being rejected, despised, and hated by the very creatures that He has made; even by the Israelites, His chosen people.

All this, and even more than we can imagine, God suffered for you and me individually as well as collectively.

Alas, to the further and greater sorrow of Jesus, most of us will not benefit from His all loving and generous Sacrifice! For most of mankind, Jesus' Sacrifice is wasted. Not because there is something lacking in this work of God, but rather, because men refuse to allow Him to apply the merits of His Sacrifice to themselves.

We now must ask: What is it that God wants from me as an individual? When He thought of me from all eternity, what is His plan? What is His Will or desire for me? As He hung upon the Cross what was He thinking of me?

We do not need to wonder for long or spend a lot of time searching for the answer to these questions. Jesus has clearly told us what He wants. He wants our love. From the beginning that is what God desired from men. His will was that Adam and Eve should love Him more than anything else. This is just as it should be. We should love our Creator, Provider, Sustainer. Because God is God we should

love Him. This love should come naturally and easily to us, but sin has entered in and misdirected our hearts from the all Good and Eternal God, to affections for the passing things of this earth. We have loved the creature rather than the creator. We have inverted right order.

When God became Man, He came to show us how little we should value the pleasures, and joys of this earth, and how greatly we should value the love of God. This human flesh was readily sacrificed by Jesus for us. He only desires that we be ready to sacrifice our own bodies and all its pleasures for Him.

The first and the greatest of all the Commandments is to love God with our entire being, with a preferential love. This is truly a great humiliation for us, that we must be commanded to love God. We have to be commanded to do something that should come easily and naturally to us.

As men were still unable to love even after it was spelled out in a Commandment, Jesus came to show us how. He invites us through example to live humbly and simply, and to despise everything that becomes an obstacle to loving God. He shows

us that we must even be ready to sacrifice our own physical lives for the love of Him. He shows us how He gave all for us, so that we might be inspired to give all for Him.

Love is sacrifice of oneself for another. Jesus' passion and death is the greatest act of love and is given to us as an example to follow. If we truly love we give ourselves to accomplish the desires of the one we love. We must give our entire lives to the accomplishment of the Will of God. Only in this way can we say that we love Him.

St. Bernard says, "Who is not carried away to hope and confidence in prayer, when he looks on the crucifix and sees how Our Lord hangs there, the head bent as though to kiss, the arms outstretched in an embrace, the hands pierced to give, the side opened to love, the feet nailed to remain with us."

With every day, and every activity, we must do them for God and in conformity with the will of God. When we rise each day, let us ask ourselves what God wants us to do today, and then resolve to do it. With every activity let us make sure this is what God wants of us at this moment and do it to the best of our ability for the love of Him.

Let us often reflect upon the words of Christ: "If you love Me, you will keep My Word." We must constantly remind ourselves to return this great love of God for us.

Only in this manner can we truly rejoice in the Resurrection of Christ. We will see that there is a purpose to His Sacrifice and that likewise there is a purpose to ours. For if we are faithful in loving God to the point of following Him in sacrifice, we too will rise glorious with Him in the Last Day.

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When did Christ rise from the dead?

— Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death.

Christ had often *foretold* His resurrection.

He said of His own Body: “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). Before entering Jerusalem He said to His Apostles that He would be put to death and “rise again on the third day” (Matt. 20:19). On the night of the Last Supper He said: “But after I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee” (Matt. 26:32).

Even *His enemies knew* that He had predicted His resurrection. This is why they obtained Pilate’s permission to seal the sepulcher and set guards to watch it.

They said to Pilate: “Sir, we have remembered how that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, ‘After three

days I will rise again’ “ (Matt. 27:63).

Today the entire Christendom celebrates *Easter Sunday* in memory of the Resurrection. It is the Feast of feasts, commemorating the completion of our redemption by Christ.

Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday following the first full moon of spring; the feast therefore is moveable, and can fall between March 22 and April 25. The Paschal season lasts till Trinity Sunday; till then the joyous *alleluia* resounds.

Why did Christ remain on earth forty days after His Resurrection?

— Christ remained on earth forty days after His Resurrection to prove that He had truly risen from the dead, and to complete the instruction of the Apostles.

Christ’s resurrection is an *undoubted fact* on which rests the Christian faith.

St. Paul says: “*If Christ has not risen; vain then is our preaching, vain too is your faith*” (1 Cor. 15:14). And

according to St. John, an eyewitness: “Many other signs also Jesus worked in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:30-31).

In the first place, Christ *really died*. His death was witnessed by many, both friends and enemies. It was proved by the soldier who plunged his spear into His side. It was communicated officially to Pilate. His bones were not broken, because He was found already dead. His Mother and disciples would never have buried Him had they suspected the least chance of life.

Some unbelievers urge that Christ was dead only in appearance and after an interval recovered from His swoon and left the grave. The loss of blood following the scourging alone would have been enough to *cause death*, not to mention the wounds He received on the cross.

In the second place, Christ *really came to life*. On the first Easter morning He appeared to Mary Magdalen and the other women who sought Him at the sepulcher. Then He appeared to Peter. In the evening He walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. At night He appeared to the assembled Apostles.

Nor were these witnesses easily deceived. The Apostles did not at first believe the women who told them the Lord had risen. They *would not even believe* their own senses, thinking the risen Savior was a ghost. Christ

had to call for something to eat, to prove that He was not a ghost. St. Thomas refused to believe the other ten Apostles, who had seen Christ first. He only believed when Our Lord appeared to him and bade him touch His wounds.

The Jews *bribed* the guards to say that while they were asleep, the disciples had stolen the body of Christ.

Such an act was made impossible by Christ’s enemies themselves. They had *sealed and guarded* the tomb. “So they went and made the sepulcher secure, sealing the stone, and setting the guard” (Matt. 27:66). Even supposing the guards to have fallen asleep, the great stone which covered the sepulcher could not have been moved without waking some at least of the guards. Finally, it is a remarkable circumstance that the guards were *not punished* for this breach of duty.

Christ *really arose* from the dead. For forty days He appeared to many. He conversed, walked, and even ate with them. He spent much time instructing the Apostles.

One of His most important appearances was to *five hundred* disciples on a mountain in Galilee, when He gave the Apostles the command to go forth into the world and teach. The Evangelists have recorded nine apparitions: but it is evident from their writings (for example, Acts 1:3) that there were other and unrecorded occasions when Christ appeared. Countless of Christ’s followers *laid*

down their lives in testimony of the truth of the resurrection. “During forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

Why did Christ rise from the dead?

— Christ rose from the dead to show that He is true God, and to teach us that we, too, shall rise from the dead.

The Resurrection is the most important of Christ’s miracles. He Himself chose it as the most conclusive *proof* of His divine mission; the Apostles appealed to it to confirm their teachings. The fact of the Resurrection, by itself alone, proves Christ God.

Christ said repeatedly that He is the Son of God; He said He would rise again from the grave. He did rise, unaided, by His own almighty power; therefore He is as He said, the Son of God. If He were an impostor, God would not have permitted Him to rise again. “But take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Christ bore on His body the marks of the five *wounds*. The qualities of His risen body were:

- (a) *Agility*. It could go with the quickness of thought to all places.
- (b) *Subtility* or spirituality. It was free from hunger, thirst, fatigue, and other needs. It could penetrate material substances.
- (c) *Clarity* or brightness. It shone with splendor.
- (d) *Impassibility*. It was immune to pain, disease, and death.

We are fortunate in having today for

veneration a number of *relics* of the Passion.

The tablet with the inscription “I.N.R.I.” is in the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Rome. One nail is said to have been thrown by St. Helena into the Adriatic to calm a storm; another is in the iron crown of the Lombards. Veronica’s towel is in Rome. Part of the pillar of the scourging is at Rome, part in Jerusalem. The winding sheets are in Turin, and in Cadonin, France. Of the crown of thorns, part is in Paris, part in Toulouse. All these remind us of the time when “they entreated Him to let them touch but the tassel of His cloak” (Matt. 14:36).

Will all men rise from the dead? —

All men will rise from the dead, but only those who have been faithful to Christ will share in His glory.

Like Christ, we, too, shall rise from the dead on the *Last Day*, and our bodies will be reunited with our souls.

“He who raised up Jesus will raise us up also with Jesus” (2 Cor. 4:14). “As Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Those who have been faithful to Christ will be *rewarded* with the glory of heaven; those that have been unfaithful will be *punished* in the depths of hell.

“If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, ... not the things that are on earth.” The rewards are given only to the faithful.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

CHAPTER VI

RAGING OF THE STORM (CONTINUED), 1536-1538

Disaffection among the people — The Pilgrimage of Grace — Share of the Franciscans in the northern rising — Renewed hostilities against them — Three Franciscan martyrs: Ven. Antony Brookby, Ven. Thomas Cort, Ven. Thomas Belchiam.

After the suppression and expulsion of the Franciscans, a series of events in England conspired to allay for a time at least the rebellious pride of Henry VIII. "There was hardly any period of his reign," Gasquet writes, "when the king and his counsellors were more harassed than during the latter half of this year (1535). The foreign relations of the country were becoming strained. The people at home were restless and disheartened. The longest memory could not recall a summer more unfavorable to agriculture. The corn harvest was well-nigh a complete failure,

the yield being scarcely more than the third part of an average crop. It had rained, so said the people, ever since the execution of the Carthusians, and they looked upon this as a mark of divine anger at the misdeeds of Henry."¹ The following January when it was learned that Queen Catherine had passed away, a cry of heartfelt sympathy and regret rose from the masses; which was changed to one of triumph and gratification, however, when, four months later, Anne Boleyn, the cause of the late disturbances, mounted the scaffold to pay the penalty of her many crimes.

Meanwhile, especially in the north of England, the suppression of the lesser monasteries was creating widespread discontent, and in the autumn of 1536, the commons rose in armed protest against the encroachments of the crown on their religious and political freedom. "The suppression of the abbeys," says Gasquet, "was felt to be a blow to religion in those parts no

¹ Gasquet, *Henry VIII . . . Monasteries*, Vol. I, p. 244.

less than a hardship to the poor, and a detriment to the country at large. The royal supremacy was looked upon as founded only on Henry's whim and as a pretension without precedent in history, while the renunciation of papal authority was held to be subversive of the principle of unity in the Christian Church, and the first step towards diversity of doctrine and practice."²

The insurrection, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, broke out in Lincolnshire and in a short time spread over the whole of northern England. In October, 1536, 40,000 armed citizens headed by Robert Aske and reinforced by about 5,000 knights and gentlemen, marched to Doncaster, where the Duke of Norfolk had united his forces with the armed tenantry of the Earl of Shrewsbury. Wholly unprepared to quell this formidable array by force of arms, Henry resorted to lying and treachery. At the suggestion of Norfolk, Robert Aske had the demands of the commons drawn up in twenty-four articles. These were sent to the king for approbation, who feigning some reluctance, at last made far-reaching concessions and even offered the insurgents a general pardon.

2 Ibidem, Vol. II, p. 101.

Not suspecting the king's base design, Aske prevailed on his followers to disarm and return to their homes. When, however, the king's promises were not fulfilled, the people became restless and in January rose a second time. Now Henry was prepared to meet them. What followed was a series of cruel and bloody measures against the leaders of the rebellion and of renewed hostilities against the religious houses of the kingdom. "The collapse of the movement," Gasquet maintains, "removed every restraint upon the autocratic power of the crown and opened the way for further seizure of monastic and church property."³

Precisely what share the Franciscans had in these northern risings is hard to determine. That many of them were still living with the Conventuals in these parts and were again exerting their influence for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people, seems certain from the fact that of the twenty-four articles drawn up by the insurgents the sixth one read, "To have the friars Observants restored to their houses."⁴ Furthermore, during the subsequent court proceedings

3 Ibidem, Vol. II, p. 158.

4 Stone, *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 88.

against the insurgents, William Stapleton testified that “one Sir Thomas Johnson, otherwise called Bonaventure, an Observant friar, who was sworn . . . and assigned to the said (Grey Friars’) house of Beverley . . . was very busy going betwixt . . . the wild people, oft laying scriptures to maintain their purpose;” and that he even “offered himself to go into the quarrel in harness to the field and so did to the first stay.”⁵

Naturally, these weighty accusations, whether true or false, re-enchanted the king’s hatred of the friars. Hardly had the rebellion been put down when, on March 17, 1537, he wrote to the Duke of Norfolk that “from my lord of Durham’s declaration and other evidences, we see that the Friars Observants are disciples of the Bishop of Rome, and sowers of sedition. You shall therefore do your best to apprehend the friars as prisoners, without liberty to speak to any man, till we shall determine our further pleasure about them.”⁶ What this “further pleasure about them” amounted to, became clear a few months later when three Franciscans died a martyr’s death for their

allegiance to the Holy See.⁷

Among the Franciscans imprisoned in 1534 was Venerable Antony Brookby (or Brorbey), a man of singular holiness and profound learning. During the early part of the reign of Henry VIII, he was engaged as lecturer in divinity in Magdalen College, Oxford, where he had received the licentiate in theology and enjoyed the reputation of being a master of Greek and Hebrew.⁸ He was, moreover, a forceful preacher, and his eloquence together with his zeal and learning made him a most formidable opponent of the king’s encroachments on the rights of the Holy See. Hence, in 1534, when the religious persecution broke out, Fr. Antony was lodged with others of his Order in prison. Later, it seems, he was released and placed with the Conventuals in London. Here, having obtained license to preach, he again went about instructing and confirming the people in their holy faith.

It was apparently in the spring of 1537 that, during a sermon

7 Our chief source of information regarding these three martyrs is Bourchier, *Hist. Eccl. de Martyrio FF. Ord. Divi Francisci*, pp. 11-28. As the historical value of the narrative, see *supra*, p.

8 See Parkinson, *Antiquities of the English Franoiscans*, p. 289.

5 Gasquet, *Henry VIII . . . Monasteries*, Vol II pp.137 seq.

6 Stone, *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 75.

held in St. Lawrence Church, he boldly denounced the king for his wanton rupture with Rome and seizure of the religious houses. Suddenly, he was interrupted by a man in the audience, who leaped to his feet and threatening him with the king's vengeance demanded that he hold his peace. It was one of Cromwell's spies. But fear had no meaning for Fr. Antony; although he realized what the sequel would be, he quietly continued his sermon. Without delay, the spy reported the affair and received orders for the friar's arrest. Accordingly, when some time after, Fr. Antony was again preaching in the church of St. Lawrence, the spy accompanied by royal officers entered the sacred edifice. The preacher saw them and knew what they had come for. Having finished the sermon, he fearlessly descended from the pulpit at the foot of which the king's men were waiting for him. Gladly he suffered them to bind his hands behind his back and to lead him off to Newgate. He rejoiced in the anticipation of a martyr crown, when the prison gates closed and he found himself among thieves, murderers, assassins, and other criminals. His cell was the darkest and filthiest in Newgate, "in which the memory of man,

no one had been condemned to lie, so that the prisoners themselves were astonished at so much cruelty." Here, amid the gibes and curses of his fellow prisoners, the valiant champion prayed to God for strength and perseverance in the impending struggle.⁹

Summoned before the royal commissioners, Fr. Antony maintained with unflinching boldness that the king's assumed supremacy was contrary to the ordination of Christ who, as the Scriptures taught, had built his Church solely on the Rock of Peter. He declared himself ready to suffer even the most cruel death rather than deny that faith which for centuries past had been the glory and pride of England, and which was still a treasure he cherished above all earthly things. Finally, when his tormentors saw that threats and promises availed nothing, they ordered the rack to be brought in. The friar's face was radiant with joy when the executioners led him to the instrument of torture. Rudely they thrust him beneath the wooden framework and fastened his wrists and ankles to the rollers on both ends. These were then drawn in opposite directions, till the

⁹ See Stone, *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 77, on the authority of Barezza Barezzi.

body of the helpless friar hung suspended in the rack. Then the frightful torture began. After every refusal to admit the king's supremacy, the rollers were drawn with ever increasing force, so that finally every bone in his body was wrenched from its socket.

During this inhuman torture, the martyr fixed his gaze heavenward and prayed. A deadly pallor came over his countenance, convulsive twitchings about the eyes and lips told of his intense sufferings; there was danger that he would die on the rack. For this reason, at the command of the judge to desist for the present, he was released from the bed of pain and dragged back into the dreadful dungeon in Newgate. Lying helpless on a heap of rotten straw, the valiant friar was left to breathe his last in utter gloom and solitude. In consequence of the cruel racking, he was unable to stir hand or foot. It was, moreover, the month of July and owing to the unbearable summer heat a burning fever soon set in. Since he could not even bring his hand to his mouth, he suffered exceedingly from thirst and hunger, and he would have died of starvation, had not a pious woman purchased leave to visit the prison and give the friar

food and drink through the iron prison bars.

During the twenty-five days which Fr. Antony spent in this pitiful condition, repeated attempts were made to wrest from him a denial of papal supremacy. But in vain; the faithful friar remained true to the end. Though his sufferings were great, his loyalty was greater. Though, his body lay helpless, faint with sufferings, his noble soul exulted in the freedom of the children of God and gloried in the assurance of an eternal reward awaiting him. Finally, the jailor of Newgate received orders from the king to dispatch the friar secretly. Accordingly, on July 19, 1537, one of the king's men entered the cell of Fr. Antony, and tearing the cord from the feeble body, strangled him. Later in the day, when the turnkey made his usual call, he saw the friar lying with his face on the wet stone pavement of the cell. Thinking him asleep, he tried to rouse him with a rude kick; seeing that the form did not stir, he went closer — the friar was dead. The news of Fr. Antony's death spread like wildfire through the city. And when it was noised abroad that God was testifying to the

holiness of the martyr, large crowds thronged Newgate to see the miracle. With mingled emotions of joy and dread, they gazed on the dazzling light that suffused the gloomy prison and formed a halo about the lifeless body. Many who had remained untouched when Fr. Antony preached in the churches of London, were now at the sight of this miracle filled with compunction for their past weakness and they resolved then and there to cling to the old faith at any cost.

Hardly had Fr. Antony passed to his eternal reward when another Franciscan succumbed to the cruel treatment of his jailers in Newgate. Venerable Thomas Cort was of a noble and deeply religious family. Esteemed by his brethren as a true follower of St. Francis, he was known also for his profound learning and great eloquence. From the very beginning of the religious conflict in England, Fr. Thomas had been among the foremost and boldest in defending the cause of justice and truth. It seems that he was of the number of those friars who on the intervention of Wriothesley had obtained leave to quit the country. Although there are

no records to show when he returned to his native land, it is certain that in the spring of 1537, he was in London publicly defending papal supremacy at the risk of liberty and life. In order to wipe out the hateful stain of excommunication and to give his action in the eyes of the people the semblance of orthodoxy, the shrewd king had appealed to a General Council.¹⁰ The Franciscans, however, were not slow to detect the futility of such an appeal. In a sermon held in the church of St. Lawrence about this time, Fr. Thomas boldly demonstrated to his hearers that both from a theological and from a historical standpoint, the Bishop of Rome was the supreme head of the universal Church of Christ, and therefore also of the Church in England; that King Henry, by proclaiming himself head of the English Church, had arrogated to himself a title and power to which he could have no right whatever; and that, accordingly, he was to be regarded as a heretic and schismatic, as long as he continued in his opposition to the Vicar of Christ. Spies of Cromwell were present at the sermon; and, when Fr. Thomas descended from the pulpit, they

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 78.

arrested him in the king's name and threw him into one of the foulest dungeons of Newgate.

Despite the horrors and hardships of prison life, Fr. Thomas remained true to his convictions. He felt that his end was not far off, and he glorified God in the loathsome dungeon, which he hoped soon to leave for the mansions of eternal bliss. At the time of his imprisonment, he was in poor health, and the close confinement in the damp and filthy cell soon brought the ailing friar to death's door. After being in prison a few days, he took sick, and on July 27, 1537, just a week after the execution of Fr. Antony Brookby, his soul passed to heaven.

A miracle similar to the one that attended the death of his fellow friar, gave testimony also to his heroic sanctity. Fear seized the bystanders when they beheld the grim dungeon bathed in celestial light. It was the second time within a week that this singular spectacle was seen in Newgate. King Henry heard of it, and, strange to say, his better nature for a moment reasserted itself. His guilty conscience left him no peace. He feared, no doubt, that these wonderful happenings were but a final warning from

Him whose sacred laws he had so wantonly trampled underfoot, and who had power to hurl his black soul into the frightful abyss of pain and perdition. In this paroxysm of fear, the king gave orders that the corpse of the deceased Fr. Thomas should be decently buried. Accordingly, the martyr was laid to rest in the cemetery of the Holy Sepulcher near the large door of the church. In later years, Margaret Herbert, the wife of a glove-maker of Ghent, set a stone on the grave of Fr. Thomas ; it bore the inscription :

Hac to qui transis Christi devote viator

*In precibus, quaeso, sis memor ipse mei.*¹¹

The third Franciscan who died for the faith, in the year 1537, is Venerable Thomas Belchiam. Though only twenty-eight years of age, he was known as a bold and outspoken champion of papal supremacy. Like Fr. Thomas Cort, he publicly accused the king of heresy. To prove his assertion and to confirm his fellow friars in their allegiance to the Holy See, he published a book that began with the words, "They that are clothed in soft

¹¹ *Christ loving traveler passing this wall, Remember, I beg thee, for my soul to pray.*

garments, are in the houses of kings.”¹² In this work, inspired by youthful zeal and enthusiasm, he showed that by setting aside the authority of Rome and proclaiming himself spiritual head of the Church in England, the king stood in open rebellion against the Vicar of Christ on earth, and that, therefore, he ceased to belong to the fold that Christ had committed to the care of St. Peter and his successors. Thereupon, he scourged the lax morals of the royal court, calling it a haunt of sin and vice and declaring that “he that will be godly must depart the court.” Finally, he upbraided the clergy of England for their cringing cowardice in those woeful days when the rights of the Church and the prerogatives of the Papacy were at stake. He criticized especially the higher clergy of whom so many were sacrificing their God and their conscience on the altar of pride

¹² The book was entitled *Liber Ad Fratres* (A Book to the Brethren). See Dodd, *Church History of England*, Vol. I, p. 234. “One copy of the book was left by the author to the Observants of Greenwich. It passed through the hands of the eminent Franciscan Father Thomas Bouchier, who intended to publish it, and Father Angelus Mason says it was always in the minds of the friars to print the book; but here we lose sight of it entirely, and it doubtless perished, under the destroying sway of the reformers.” Stone, *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 80.

and ambition, who regardless of their duties as shepherds of Christ’s flock, were stooping to the whims of a ruthless and rebellious king.

Needless to say, the appearance of this book added fuel to the fury of those against whom it was directed. The youthful defender of truth and morality was seized and thrown into prison. Here he was subjected to every kind of torture. But the resolute friar bore all with heroic courage and constancy. At last, when it became clear that he would never admit the king’s usurped supremacy, he was brought back to prison. Now began for him a period of untold suffering. It was his terrible lot to die, not by the halter and the knife, but of disease and starvation.

How long Fr. Thomas languished in the gloom and filth of his prison cell, is not known. Historians say that he was deprived of all necessities of life, so that gradually his sturdy frame was reduced to a mere skeleton. Finally, on August 3, 1537, death came to his relief. The martyr passed to his reward, repeating the words of the Royal Prophet: “In thee, O, Lord, have I trusted, let me never be confounded.” At the moment when he breathed his last, an earthquake shook the

prison. The jailors were terrified, and when the *king* heard of it, he trembled and gave orders that Fr. Thomas receive a decent burial. On searching the cell, the prison officials found a copy of the book he had written. It was brought to the king, who on reading it is said to have shed tears and lamented his utter misery. But this seeming repentance was only a passing fit of remorse and uneasiness, such as frequently came over him and embittered his last years. He soon silenced the voice of conscience and had the book thrown into the fire.

Thomas Belchiam suffered and died in defense of the Catholic dogma of papal supremacy. Arturus's *Martyrology* and Hueber's *Menologium* commemorate them on the day on which they passed to their eternal reward. Their names also head the list of those 261 English martyrs whose cause of beatification was opened on December 9, 1886, when Pope Leo XIII approved the decision of the Sacred Congregation, providing that a Commission be appointed to introduce the cause.¹³

It is evident that FF. Antony Brookby, Thomas Cort, and

¹³ See *Acta Minorum*, Vol. VI (1887), p. 49.



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The Holy Eucharist

Bishop Giles OFM

The season of Lent and Easter bring to our mind the great gift of all the Sacraments that Christ has instituted and given to us for our aid, comfort, and ultimately, for our salvation. Principally, however, our thoughts are directed to the Holy Eucharist.

With the coming of the Novus Ordo, all the sacraments have gone through drastic changes, and this especially applies to the Holy Eucharist. We recall being told by Modernists that Holy Communion is simply being together and united in the Church. It is the union of the people in the Church. And this is symbolized in the Holy Eucharist. The Mass became for them a commemoration of the Last Supper. Etc. No one seemed to remember the definitions and decrees that the Church so painstakingly put forth for our understanding and salvation.

The unchanging and universal truths of the Church are from God. They are not the teachings of men. Our faith teaches us that the Church is guided by the Holy Ghost. It is God who teaches when the Church teaches. God's teachings do not change,

because God does not change.

The Mass is not a meal. As a matter of fact, in the Scriptures we read that the Christians were told that they have homes to eat in. They should not bring their meals to Mass. (I Cor XI 22) There is a clear distinction between the Last Supper (meal) and the institution of the Mass (Sacrifice).

The Church has defined the Mass as the "unbloody sacrifice of Calvary." It is one and the same sacrifice of Jesus upon the Cross on Calvary. The Mass is separated from Calvary by time and place, but in a mysterious way it is one and the same Sacrifice. On Calvary it was bloody; upon our altars it is unbloody. As men throughout time cannot all be present at Calvary, God has given us the Mass so that we may participate even from the greatest distances of time and place.

Upon our altars, Jesus working through the priest, offers Himself to His Father in reparation for our sins. Jesus, just as upon Calvary, is the offering Priest and the Sacrifice. This is not just symbolical, but is real and true.

Jesus makes Himself physically present (Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity) living under the appearances of Bread and Wine. It is not the priest who is offering the Sacrifice, but rather Jesus Who is offering the Sacrifice through the priest. The priest is the instrument or tool in the Hands of God.

According to St. Thomas the Sacrament has a threefold meaning:

“(i) In regard to the past, It is commemorative of the Lord’s Passion, which was a true Sacrifice, and because of this the Sacrament is called a Sacrifice.

(ii) In regard to a fact of our own time, that is, to the unity of the Church and that through this Sacrament mankind should be gathered together. Because of this the sacrament is called Communion. St. John Damascene says the Sacrament is called Communion because by means of It we communicate with Christ, and this because we hereby share in His Body and in His Divinity, and because by It we are communicated to and united with one another.

(iii) In regard to the future, the sacrament foreshadows that enjoyment of God which shall

be ours in our fatherland. On this account the Sacrament is called Viaticum, since it provides us with the means of journeying to that fatherland. And on this account, too, the sacrament is also called Eucharist, that is to say, the *good grace* either because *the grace of God is life eternal*, or because it really contains Christ Who is the fullness of grace. In Greek the Sacrament is also called Metalipsis, that is, Assumption, for through the Sacrament we assume the Divinity of the Son of God.” (De Humanitate Christi.)

We see some semblance of these truths in the Novus Ordo’s reinterpretation of this Sacrament, but the similarities are like the similarities between the Protestants and the Church. The Protestants claim to believe and follow Christ and they use the Bible and the very Words of God, but they take only what suits them and reject everything else. The Protestants have created a new god according to their own likeness and image, rather than conform themselves to the True God. The Protestants reject the True Presence in the Holy Eucharist. This manner of acting the Modernist Novus Ordo has imitated.

The Novus Ordo while proclaiming to be Catholic, has rejected the Catholic teaching on many points. Often, they profess to believe that which they deny. With their mouths they profess to believe that Jesus is truly present in the Holy Eucharist, but their actions say the opposite. We have witnessed or heard others who have witnessed: the moving of the tabernacle from the altar to a side table (The Eucharist is no longer the center or reason for the Church. The Church is no longer the House of God.); the placing of a table in the sanctuary and eventually the removal of the altar altogether (The changing from the Sacrifice to a meal.); the practice of standing to receive rather than kneeling (It is no longer God whom they receive but just a piece of bread or a symbol.); the practice of receiving the host in the hand (No longer are consecrated hands necessary, because they no longer believe it is truly God that they are receiving.); the discarding of unconsumed “consecrated” hosts in the trash; the distribution of hosts to a massive crowd by throwing them in the air (World Youth Day -- many were left on the ground to be swept up afterwards during

the cleanup.). The Novus Ordo Churches are no longer the Temples of God that command quiet, reserve, respect and awe because God is alive and present in the Holy Eucharist. These Modernist Churches are houses of assembly for men, that are filled with greetings, talking, chatting, and parties, as men honor each other rather than God.

In the Novus Ordo the “priest” faces the people for a meal, because it is impolite to eat with one’s back towards others. In the Catholic Church the priest and the people all face God because He is the main and central reason for everyone present at The Sacrifice.

All of these things and more point to, not just isolated abuses, but rather a universal change in practice and belief. For this reason we do not hesitate to say that the Modernist Novus Ordo is not Catholic. They have a new and different belief and practice than the Catholic Church. There has not been any rebukes or punishments or any corrections offered for any of this by those in authority in the Novus Ordo. On the contrary they continue in the same vein day after day, year after year.

True Catholics reject these Protestant – Novus Ordo – Modernist practices and beliefs. A true Catholic holds to the belief that has been consistent since the time of Christ and their actions in practice and worship manifest this belief. Christ is not present because we believe. We believe because Christ is present.

The promise of Christ to remain with us until the end of time is physically and really made possible by His True Presence in the Holy Eucharist. This is a profound truth that can only be truly appreciated from within the Church. We believe not because we understand, nor because we have seen miracles, nor even because the saints have believed. We believe because God has said it is so. And God's words are infallible. It is God who taught and continues to teach us this through the True Catholic Church. Those who attempt to reinterpret the Words of God through the Catholic Church are not Catholic, nor are they faithful to Jesus.

This Holy Season let us follow Christ in His Passion and Death. Let us reflect upon His profound and awesome Words as He prepared His Apostles. Let us answer with St. Peter when Jesus

questioned if he too would turn away from Him and deny His Presence in the Holy Eucharist: "Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6, 69). There is no other place to turn if we turn away from The Church. Those who do not gather with Jesus in the Church are scattered in darkness. (Matt. 12,30; Luke 11, 23) They no longer can see the truth because they have chosen darkness rather than Light.

If we too, will die to ourselves with Jesus, (repenting and confessing our sins in the sacrament of Penance) we will receive Him in the Holy Eucharist (becoming one with Him); and then we will rise with Him glorious on the Last Day just as He rose glorious on Easter Morning.



Franciscan Saints

APRIL 23

BLESSED GILES OF ASSISI

Confessor, First Order

Two companions from Assisi had already joined St. Francis, when Giles, a well-to-do young man of the town, heard about it. He repaired to the poor hermitage hard by Assisi which the three occupied, and, prostrate upon his knees, he begged St. Francis to accept him in his company. Francis presented him to the other two, saying: "See here a good brother whom almighty God has sent us." This was on April 23, 1209. On the same day, both went to Assisi, where Giles begged in God's name for a bit of cloth to make a habit. Giles divided his entire fortune among the poor. He was plain and simple in mind, of a mild temperament, but also full of power and energy when it served to accomplish anything good.

Recognizing humility as the necessary foundation for perfection, Giles sought humiliation and contempt, but fled from honors. Once when he was passing through the March of Ancona with the holy Founder and at some places special honor was shown to them, he said: "O

my Father, I fear we shall lose the true honor if we are honored by men."

Giles entertained a great desire to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Places, and since Francis knew that he did much good everywhere with his holy example, he gladly granted his desire. The pious man betook himself first of all to the grave of the holy Apostle James at Compostella in Spain, then to Jerusalem to the Holy Places of the Passion of Christ. He also visited the sanctuary of the holy Archangel Michael on Mt. Gargano in Italy, and no less the town of Bari, there to honor St. Nicholas.

His whole appearance preached poverty, humility, and piety. He also utilized every opportunity to encourage penance and love of God. He endeavored to earn his livelihood mainly through manual work; whatever he obtained over and above his immediate needs, he at once gave to the poor; if he lacked necessities, he begged them for

God's sake. Once a poor woman who was dressed in the barest necessities asked Brother Giles for an alms. As he had nothing to offer her, he compassionately took off his capuche and gave it to her.

In the year 1219, at the great chapter of five thousand brothers, St. Francis commissioned Giles to go to Africa with several companions, to preach the gospel to the Mohammedans. But they did not achieve their purpose. As soon as they landed in Africa, the Christians there, who feared a general persecution, led them by force to another ship which brought them back to Italy.

At this time Brother Giles was sent to the quiet convent of Perugia, which remained his abode until his death. He lived practically only for God. Even at his work, thoughts of the last judgment, of eternity, and of the glory of heaven constantly occupied his mind. Once when two distinguished gentlemen asked him to pray for them, he said: "Oh, you do not need my prayers." "Why not?" they asked. Giles answered: "You live among all the comforts of the world and still believe that you will get to heaven; but I, a

poor human being, spend my days in labor and penance, and yet I fear I shall be damned." When he reflected on the joys of heaven, he was beside himself with longing. Often when the children in the street called out to him the mere word "Paradise," he was rapt in ecstasy.

Pope Gregory IX had heard of the contemplative gift of Brother Giles, and being just then in the neighborhood of Perugia, he sent for him. When the pope began to speak to Giles about divine and heavenly matters, Giles at once went into an ecstasy. When he came to again, he humbly begged the Holy Father's forgiveness -- it was his weakness, he said, that he was immediately beside himself. The pope required that he give him some good advice for the administration of his burdensome duties. Quite confounded, Giles excused himself, saying that he could not advise the head of the Church. But when the pope commanded him in obedience, he said: "Holy Father, you must have two eyes in your soul. The right eye must be kept on heavenly things; the left one, on the things of this earth, which you must regulate."

St. Bonaventure considered himself fortunate to have lived at

the time when he could still see and speak with Brother Giles. When he came to Perugia as provincial of the order, Giles said to him one day: "My Father, God has accorded you great kindness, since you are so learned and can, therefore, serve God so perfectly; but we unlearned ones, how shall we correspond to the goodness of God and arrive at heaven?" The learned general of the order answered him: "My brother, in order to get to heaven, it suffices that one love God, and a poor unlearned woman can love God as well as, maybe even better than, a great theologian." Thereupon Giles ran out into the garden that led to the street, and filled with joy, cried aloud: "Come, ye simple and unlearned men, and ye poor women! You can love God as well as, and perhaps even more than, Brother Bonaventure and the greatest theologians."

A religious of great learning, who, however, was much troubled with doubts concerning the virginity of Mary, came to Brother Giles for advice. The holy brother cried out, as he struck the earth with a stick: "Yes, yes! She was a virgin before the birth of Jesus," and immediately a beautiful lily sprouted forth. Giles struck anew and said: "She

was a virgin during the birth," and again a lily sprouted forth. Then he beat a third time upon the earth, saying the words: "She was a virgin after the birth," and the third lily sprouted forth.

Finally, pure as a lily the soul of Brother Giles went to the vision of things divine, which he had so often contemplated. He died on April 23, 1262, on the anniversary of his entrance into the order, to which he had belonged during fifty-three years. His grave in the Franciscan church at Perugia is highly venerated. Pope Pius VI sanctioned the veneration accorded him from time immemorial.

CONCERNING THE GOOD INTENTION

1. What the divinely enlightened brother said to the pope and observed so faithfully himself, we, too, must observe. The right eye of our soul must be directed upon things of heaven, while the left eye looks at the things of this earth which we have to deal with, that is, amid all our occupations the higher regard of our soul should be directed towards God, so that we may do everything according to His good pleasure and with a good intention. Yes, the Apostle

warns us always to bear about in our hearts the best, the most perfect intention, which desires nothing but the honor of God: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). If we do everything as God wants it, and because it pleases God, we thereby promote His honor. Have you always been thus intent at your work?

2. Consider how precious in the sight of God our dealings become through our good intention. In order to make our good intention most perfectly, we should unite it with that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The first thing in the morning it is well to make the intention which Pope Leo XIII prescribed for the members of the Apostleship of Prayer, offering up all our works, prayers, and sufferings of the day, and everything else we do, for the purpose with which the Son of God, Jesus Christ, offers Himself to the heavenly Father in all the holy Masses of the day. What value our works must thereby acquire in the sight of God! United with the sacrifice of His Divine Son, they appeared as a part of the holy Sacrifice itself, and as He once assured St. Gertrude, God hardly knows how to reward such gifts

sufficiently. Should that not inspire us never to forget this good intention and to renew it often during the day?

3. Consider how a good and pure intention in our actions preserves us in tranquility of heart and interior peace. What is it, in fact, that makes so many people restless and tortures them at their work but the thought of what people will say about them, or what success they will have in the eyes of the world. “If God were always the only object of our desires we should not easily be disturbed,” says Thomas a Kempis (1: 14). Let people think of us what they may, and let us not be fearful about the results which so often are not in our control. Doing what is assigned to us, and directing our whole intention towards God, we shall always preserve interior peace.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, who didst deign to raise Thy blessed confessor Giles to the height of extraordinary contemplation, grant through his intercession that in our actions we may always direct our intention to Thee, and through it arrive at the peace which surpasses all understanding. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Restoring Our Catholic Culture

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

(Continued from last month)

not be allowed.

The Catholic school systems would teach sound doctrine with no compromise for Modernism or other errors. Anyone caught teaching heresy would be dealt with accordingly. Religious communities would once again teach in these schools, being the role models they ought to be, as well as eliminating unreasonable tuitions. Students would attend Holy Mass each day and be encouraged to receive the Sacraments often. Teaching the Faith and supernatural virtue would be the most important priority; all schools would also have the highest academic standards. No Catholic student would be denied entry due to inability to pay the tuition or poor grades.

The schools would be closed on all Holydays, have a Christmas vacation (NOT a Winter or “holiday” break), and Holy and Easter Week. Catholic schools would not be allowed to receive ANY government money or tied to any so-called “Title” programs. Simply put, it would be the Church and its faithful that would fund all Roman Catholic education. The mistakes of the past have demonstrated that opening the door to outside funding leads to dangerous compromises that would

Scholastic philosophy and sound Catholic doctrine would return to their rightful places in the seminaries. Heresy and errors would be publicly condemned so as to expose those who may attempt to undermine the Faith and the hierarchy. All obstinate heretics would be excommunicated if it is concluded that they have no intention of recanting their errors.

The Novus Ordo Missae and all Modernists errors, including Vatican II would be formally condemned by the Roman Catholic Pontiff who was elected by a College of Cardinals who was found to be loyal princes of the Catholic Church.

All clergy in the Roman Rite would say only the Latin Tridentine Mass and would administer the Sacraments as they were prescribed by the Council of Trent and the popes through Pope Pius XII.

As it was stated earlier in this article, religious processions would replace the Masonic parade. The Blessed Sacrament would be greatly honored in these processions on the great feasts of the Church. Clergy and religious in habit or cassock, Sisters likewise, the Third Orders,

Cordbearers and similar groups would be encouraged to take part in these public and solemn acts of public adoration. The feast of Christ the King would hold a special place for such public worship.

All priests and religious would once again wear their habits as prescribed by their respective founders. The effect of this change would bring about an astonishing conversion among so many in society. Any government attempting to outlaw the wearing of the habit in public would be exposed and condemned.

The Catholic clergy would use all means of media today to preach the Gospel and the Deposit of Faith. The television, radio and internet would be the main sources of propagating the Faith to the four corners of the world.

Holy Mass would be streamed in numerous locations throughout the twenty-four time zones of the world, fulfilling the words of Holy Scripture; *“For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation: for My Name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.”* (Malachi: 1;11) It would be a sign and source of true Catholic unity, hopefully resulting in millions of conversions each year.

In a Catholic Society, all indecent vulgar contemporary music would not be allowed on the airwaves. In contrast, the listening public would hear Gregorian Chant and classical music so as to lift their minds and hearts to God.

The film and theater industries would produce good, wholesome and uplifting productions, or nothing at all. The filth and decadence witnessed today simply would not be allowed. Pornography would be forbidden in all forms (still and motion pictures, magazines, books, etc.) A very tight control would exist so as not to undermine the morals of all concerned, especially the youth. A council of trusted Catholic clergymen would review all productions and provide their approval or condemnation.

Societal errors such as the Jewish Question, communism, socialism, the New World Order or globalism would be properly explained and publicly condemned.

Patriotism would be encouraged, but put into the Catholic perspective. The love of the Faith and the Church should come first and then only in as much as the respective country is willing to abide by the moral teachings of the Church. Only then would the Catholic be encouraged to profess a loyalty toward their nation. Blind nationalism, as is so common in the United States today, would be loudly condemned by

the hierarchy. This is nothing more than the mob mentality run amock.

The family would hold a special place in Catholic society and culture. The Catholic State would carry out many acts which would foster the family, especially large Christian families. Poor families would be assisted temporarily by the Church, not the State.

The press in a Catholic Society / Culture would be quite different from that which we witness today. Their goal would be to report the objective truth, not leaning one way or the other toward a political party or lobby. Catholic bashing would not exist, and if attempted the bishops would be duty-bound to expose this treachery.

The reader by now may be wondering why this writer would write an article such as this. Some of these Culture goals have occurred in the past, but what is the probability any will happen in the future? Some have probably thought this is nothing more than a big dream of Fr. Joseph's. Others may have considered this article as nothing more than wishful thinking.

The answer is that many of these "desires" may never happen (the True Mass being said the world over or having a favorable Catholic Press). Some of them are attainable with prayer and penance (eliminate abortion, expose homosexuality,

etc.).

More importantly, this article describes just how far society and the Modern Church have gone from the high ideals of Catholic Culture. It is a description of those things which should be avoided, and those things for which we as Catholics should strive. It is not simply a matter of fallen nature in action, but a planned desire to eliminate all signs, symbols and sounds of Catholicism in the Church and Society.

If we are unable to establish a Catholic Culture in society, we should at least work toward this goal within our families and churches. From The Church, we may be able to influence small numbers of people in our cities and towns.

Catholic Culture in its complete form would be the establishment in all aspects of life of the Kingship of Christ on this earth. The re-establishment of a true Catholic Culture must begin with persons of the highest ideals and great moral courage. Catholic parents to a great degree carry this responsibility as they raise their children.

Allow Christ's Kingship to reign in your heart, so He may reign in your life!

Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER XII

At the Heart of Our Friend

“As . . . I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me” (Jn. 6:58).

1. It is characteristic of friendship that friends desire the company of each other. A separation which precludes all communication would, in the long run, seriously imperil friendship. Out of sight, out of mind. A companionship which consisted solely in the memories of days gone by, would hardly suffice to keep alive the flame of friendship.

Jesus knows thoroughly the characteristics and needs of our nature. For this reason He would have remained gladly in our midst to console His friends with His presence and to attract those who still keep aloof. He tells His apostles: “I know that sorrow hath filled your hearts because of My departure” (cf. Jn. 16:6). But to the incredulous Jews He prophesied: “When I am gone, you shall seek Me and shall not find Me, but die in your sins” (cf. Jn. 8:21).

He knew that for the Church His absence would be a time of painful yearning after her bridegroom. While the bridegroom was present, all rejoiced. “But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day” (Mk. 2:20).

Why, then, did our Saviour not remain visibly present in His Church? In addition to other reasons, it was His love for us which persuaded Him to ascend to heaven. A friend may undertake a journey to gain some advantage for his friend and so prove his love by a temporary absence. Such was the mind of our Saviour at His ascension as is evidenced by the words which He addressed to His apostles: “But I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I depart” (Jn. 16:7). But why expedient? In the first place, faith becomes more meritorious if we believe in Christ without seeing Him. “Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed” (Jn. 20:29). In the second place, our Saviour wished by His ascension to reopen for us heaven which had been closed by God’s just decree

until the Redeemer should have taken possession of His throne (cf. Heb. 9:8-12). Jesus entered heaven as our forerunner (cf. Heb. 6:20) to prepare a place for us and at death to take us to Himself that we might be where He is (cf. Jn. 14:3). As the first fruits of the work of redemption He conducted to heaven all the saints of the Old Testament, from Adam down to John the Baptist, St. Joseph, and the deceased just who had seen the Saviour; hence, we read: "Ascending on high He led away captives; He gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8). In the third place, our Saviour wished by His ascension to direct our gaze toward heaven. "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2).

After all, of what value would it have been to most men had our Saviour remained in Palestine or in some other one place? Not all could make a pilgrimage to meet Him; and even if they could, because of the millions who would wish to see Him, the individual would obtain but a passing glimpse. Our Saviour's love here proved itself inventive. As it urged Him to ascend into heaven for our advantage, it also compelled Him to find a means yet to remain in our midst, a means which would make intimate and constant companionship with

Him possible for every believing soul, and yet would not counteract the advantages connected with His ascension.

We acknowledge and believe that, in the words of the Council of Trent, "in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the Body and Blood together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, consequently the whole Christ is truly, really, substantially contained." This is, we admit, an incomprehensible mystery. But, dear Jesus, we can understand that Thy love can conceive and execute things we cannot understand. Thou hast said: "This is My body, this is My blood," and full of faith, we fall down and say with that great client of the Most Blessed Sacrament, St. Thomas Aquinas,

"Hidden God, devoutly I adore Thee,
Truly present underneath these veils:

I believe, for God the Son hath said it —
Word of Truth that ever shall endure."

O Jesus, increase in us the devotion to this greatest and sweetest mystery of Thy love!

2. *The presence of our divine Saviour in the Most Blessed Sacrament is a gift worthy of our divine Friend.* Here He is as near to us as the ardor of His love demands, and yet so far away that our life of faith is not impaired. It is so quiet

about the tabernacle, and yet choirs of angels surround it to adore their God hidden beneath the veils of the sacramental species. Everything about it is apparently lifeless, and yet nowhere on earth is life so intense as where Life Itself dwells in our midst. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens here which can impress our senses, and yet streams of grace issue forth from the Sacrament of the Lamb which fructify the fields of the Church so that they continually bring forth new flowers and fruits.

We all believe this, but frequently our faith in the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is not a fire which warms our hearts, but a cold truth which leaves us as unmoved as any other scientific proposition. Let us recall again and again that a church in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved is not an empty building, even though no man is within; it is not a museum stocked with pictures, statues, and other objects of art; it is really and truly the dwelling of the King of heaven and earth, who continually holds court there for our sake, to enrich us with the treasures of His divine heart if we will only come to receive them.

In the sacrament of His love, our Saviour thinks of us day and night; His heart yearns for our

presence, not that He requires us for His happiness, but because His love wishes to enrich us with His gifts. Day after day His dwelling is open to all; all without exception are welcome and may state their wishes. How highly we would praise the philanthropy of a wealthy and influential man who should be ready to receive all who first announced their coming, who should affably listen to each one, console and help him, and should send no one away without giving him a handful of gold. Our Saviour in the tabernacle is such a wealthy and influential man. No one of upright heart comes to Him without obtaining assistance and leaving His presence enriched with treasures of grace. Yet unfortunately since so many Christians value a hundred pieces of gold more than they value a hundred spiritual gifts, our Saviour with His gifts is deserted in His tabernacle while in the street before the house where perchance a hundred pieces of gold should be distributed to all corners, the crowd would never thin. We do not realize what a treasure we have in our Saviour hidden under the sacramental veils. But we shall understand it better if we deal oftener and more intimately with Him.

Our divine Friend is certainly not extravagant in His desire for

external marks of reverence. He does not demand that we neglect all other business and come to Him day after day to render court service. He does not interfere at all in our work. On the contrary, if we work in the right way, He will consider all we do as done for Him and will reward us accordingly. But He is not so indifferent toward His friends as not to find it highly agreeable if they consecrate some stray moments to Him and visit Him. He expects, as a matter of fact, that we do not conduct our lives as though He were not present in the Blessed Sacrament. He complained bitterly to St. Margaret Mary of the coldness of so many Christians toward the sacrament of His love.

To satisfy our obligations as Christians, we must appear in church on Sundays and feast days of obligation. Thousands come to the solemn services held in our churches on the occasion of feasts of special solemnity without being compelled to do so by any precept of the Church. This is praiseworthy. These are, so to speak, the court festivities of our divine King, a public profession of loyalty to His flag. But participation at these solemn celebrations can hardly be classified as visits of friendship. A friendly visit is a private visit or at least one made with a select few. We

pay such a visit to our Saviour if we go to greet Him when the church is deserted. Our divine Friend is very much pleased with such visits and is wont to grant readily whatever we ask of Him and to add many other graces which we do not even think of asking.

Reading the lives of the saints, we find that our Saviour took special delight in bestowing on them on the occasion of these special visits His choicest proofs of affection. St. Alphonsus Liguori, a Doctor of the Church, gives a number of such examples in the introduction of his book, *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*, and adds that the saints cultivate this devotion so assiduously because we have no more beautiful jewel, no richer treasure, no more loving friend than Jesus in the thrice blessed Mystery of the Altar. Most of the revelations of the devotion to the Sacred Heart made to St. Margaret Mary were made during such private visits to the Blessed Sacrament. She is one of the Eucharistic saints.

Why not make an attempt ourselves to see whether this devotion will produce in us as well such excellent fruits of salvation? It would indeed be extraordinary if resting on the breast of our divine Friend in the Tabernacle did not exercise a salutary influence on our lives. Many a poor peasant

woman and many a weary day laborer have long ago learned that treasures of grace may be had from our Saviour in His tabernacle home. Shall we, who perhaps pride ourselves on greater knowledge and practical understanding of our Christian faith, permit these good souls to put us to shame; shall we, at the Judgment, stand before our King with empty hands, while they appear loaded with merit? And if circumstances prevent us from visiting our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament, we can send Him a hearty greeting from a distance, and commission our guardian angel and all the other angels to make up to Him by their love and reverence for the love and reverence which we would, but at the moment cannot, give.

3. *Our Saviour desires a most intimate union with us in Holy Communion.* One of the greatest obstacles to fervent devotion toward the most holy Sacrament of the Altar is the fact that the Blessed Sacrament does not appeal to our senses. What is it externally but a frail, white host, which is hidden in a dark tabernacle? When Christ lay in the manger at Bethlehem, a little babe for love of us, He seemed to have almost reached the limit of self-annihilation. He could still die the shameful death of the cross, but here, surely, He had plumbed

the depth beyond which even He could not go. And yet the love of our heavenly Friend did not stop there. In the crib and on the cross He still appeared in form a man, a frail child in the one instance, a cruelly disfigured full-grown man in the other; but in the Blessed Sacrament He has hidden even His humanity, and appears as a little white wafer. Faith alone, on the authority of the changeless word of God, teaches us that our Saviour is there present with His divinity and humanity.

“Not to sight, or taste, or touch be credit, Hearing only do we trust secure.”

If Christ had not humbled Himself so profoundly for love of us, He would not have attained the main object of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, namely, intimate union with us. “The man Christ Jesus” is not a friend like other friends. After He had loved His own faithfully during His mortal life, He transcended all the bounds of love as the hour of His departure from this life drew near and, calling upon His omnipotence, hid Himself under the appearance of food and said to His disciples: “Eat, drink, this is My body and blood; do this in commemoration of Me until I come” (cf. 1 Cor. i 1:23 ff.). When we receive Holy Communion, we eat the living body

of the Lord, His flesh and blood. Would this have been possible if the love of our Saviour had not invented this marvel through which He abides in our midst, a living man, yet under such a form that we may take Him as nourishment for our souls? On the occasion when He made the first promise of this wonderful mystery, not only were many of the Jews scandalized and said: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" but even many of His disciples said: "This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?" (Jn. 6:53, 61). We know now how Jesus can give us His flesh to eat, and we also know that this saying is not hard, but contains the sweetest and most attractive mystery of our faith. The wonderful promise has now been verified: "He who eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and as I live because of the Father; so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (Jn. 6:57, 58).

After Holy Communion the heart of Jesus. is physically near to our heart and effects most wonderful, sacramental transformations. The stream of life, which proceeds from the Father to the Son and to the heart of the Son, overflows into our heart and flows back from it, a fire of love to the heart of our Saviour and to the source of all love, the

Divinity. This ebb and flow of the stream of life is the highest effect of friendship with Jesus which can be attained in this life. "He who eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has everlasting life: and I will raise him up on the last day" (Jn. 6:55). No other sacrament is like this, a sacrament of love and friendship. This bread is not transformed into him who eats it, but transforms him into Itself by the power of love, and by the same power It makes of many but one body. Through Holy Communion the faithful become one with Christ; in virtue of this Sacramental Bread all become, as St. Paul says, "one bread, one body" (I Cor. 10:16, 17).

Since Holy Communion is by excellence the Sacrament of Love, we need not wonder that He, while revealing the devotion of love, the devotion to the Sacred Heart, emphasized Holy Communion as a means to prove our love for Him and to make reparation for all the coldness and indifference of men. O divine Saviour, grant us the grace to rest frequently on Thy Sacred Heart in Holy Communion and to drink deeply from this fountain of love.

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