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The SERAPH stands opposed to any and all heresy, particularly as manifested in today's heresy of Modernism. It holds to the principle that good will without truth is a sham and that truth without good will is a shame.

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In essentia - Unitas. In dubio - Libertas.
In omnibus - Caritas.

Marian Devotion

The month of May offers us the opportunity to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her help is needed (perhaps) more now than ever before. The situation in the Church with the countless schisms and heresies desperately is in need of her assistance. The family likewise, is under continuous assault and truly requires the protective maternal hand of the Mother of God.

Consequently, there are many self-made promoters of Marian devotions. We find many who promote the Rosary as the key to save: this world, or the Church, or the family. We find others who superstitiously promote the wearing of the Carmelite Brown Scapular as a “guarantee” of personal salvation. Heretics and schismatics alike seek justification for their errors in the promotion of devotion to Mary. Alleged devotion to Mary is supposed to make everyone look the other way when it comes to their doctrinal errors.

On the one side, we see the Protestant hatred of devotion to Mary that sometimes goes so far as even open hatred for Mary. They deny the many honors and

titles that Holy Mother Church gives to Her. They accuse the Church of making a goddess of Mary. Every Catholic knows this is not true, and promotes Mary as the highest of the Saints (Queen of all the Angels and Saints), the greatest creation of God, but definitely not God.

On the other side, we see so many heretics and schismatics alleging Catholic love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin. They often become what the Protestants accuse Catholics of being: idolatrous worshipers of Mary. They seek salvation and help from Mary to the exclusion of God, the Church and sacraments.

True devotion to Mary leads one to Jesus Christ and to His True Church. There is no salvation away from Jesus Christ, or outside of the True Church. From this it logically follows that we, likewise, need the Mother of Christ and of the Church. Those who reject Jesus are lost, those who reject His Church are lost; similarly, those who reject His Mother are lost.

Those, like the Protestants, who think they need neither Mary or

the True Church will one day realize their terrible mistake – hopefully before their eyes open up in eternity.

Those who would seek to bypass the True Church and enter Heaven through Mary, deceive themselves. They are not true children of Mary despite whatever claims they may make, or how many glossy publications they print. Mary works with Jesus and the Church for the honor and Glory of God and the salvation of souls. Promoting Fatima or any other apparition is no guarantee of being pleasing to Mary or God. If we desire to please Mary and God we must make use of the means that God has given us in the Church.

The Marian apparitions are not dogmatic and therefore, a Catholic is not required to believe them as certain truths. (A Catholic would be foolish to dismiss them as the Church has declared them worthy of credence.) What is required is that we believe every dogmatic teaching of the Church and that we are always humble and docile to the teachings and practices of the Church. The Church encourages Marian devotions and so true Catholics seek to practice them and draw closer to

Christ and His Church through Mary.

The Protestants completely dishonor Mary and insult God and His Church. The Novus Ordo often promotes either a half-hearted devotion to Mary or a “Charismatic” heady worship of Her. Either of these extremes ends in disaster and is very displeasing to God and His Mother as well as the True Church. Many Traditionalists end up in the same situation as the Modernist Novus Ordo because they refuse to honor, respect, and obey the True Church in Her True bishops.

We observe very frequently a kind of “ecumenism” among the Modernist Novus Ordo and the various Traditionalist sects when it comes to devotion to Mary. This is one of the many shocking proofs that these Traditionalists are in the same situation as the Novus Ordo. They may condemn the false ecumenism of the “Vatican II” Novus Ordo in uniting and praying with heretics and schismatics, but they commit the same crime when they “pray” the Rosary with their heretic friends. Or they convince their heretic friends to wear the Carmelite Brown Scapular, and assure them, superstitiously, that

as long as they die wearing this cloth they will not go to Hell.

This indifference to the laws of the Church is definitely not pleasing to God or to His Blessed Mother. Uniting in prayer with heretics can only lead one away from the Church. It is for the heretic to renounce his heresy and then unite to the Catholic in prayer – not for the Catholic to turn to the heretic; or even meet the heretic half-way. There can be no compromise of the truth. It is an all or nothing with God, His Church and His Mother.

This month of Mary let us honor her as her true children with true devotion. We are her children only when we are true children of God and of the True Catholic Church. Let us repent of our sins; do penance; receive the sacraments worthily; and turn to her in prayer, begging her intercession that we might be made worthy in the eyes of her Son. This is essentially what she has asked for in every one of her apparitions, and we should be ashamed that it was necessary for her to appear to us to tell us what we should already know and should already be doing.

The true devotions to Mary include: the Angelus, the

rosary, litanies, novenas, and other devotions, as well as participation in societies that promote her honor. Wearing a scapular is not enough, we must practice and participate in the duties and obligations associated with the scapular. It is this practice not the cloth that merits Mary's protection over us. The cloth is a reminder to live a good life; it does not take the place of living a good life. In a similar manner carrying a rosary will not help us; we must use it in prayer. It is lifting our hearts in prayer that helps us not the beads in our purse or pocket. The beads help to remind us to pray, they are not the prayer. While it is good to pray together, we must make sure we are not uniting with heretics whose prayers are rejected by Mary. It is better to pray alone than to unite and say "amen" with heresies.



Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

CHAPTER VII.

BLESSED THOMAS MORE, FRANCISCAN TERTIARY

Early youth — At Oxford — Professional studies — With the Carthusians — More's public and private life — The impending storm — He resigns the chancellorship — Poverty and distress at Chelsea — Efforts of Anne Boleyn and Cromwell to ruin the ex-chancellor — Measures of the king against him — More rejects the Acts of Succession and Supremacy — In the Tower — His loyalty put to severe tests — Brought to trial — Found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death — His last days in prison — Beheaded on Tower Hill.

Owing to the unexpected dispersion of the Franciscans and the seizure of their friaries in 1534, the extent, activity, and influence of the Third Order of St. Francis in medieval England will ever remain an unwritten chapter in the history of the English Franciscans. From the singular popularity of the friars, however, and from their characteristic zeal for the welfare of the people, we may safely assume that during the three centuries preceding the Protestant Revolution, the Third Order was widely known and fostered. That

this continued down to the very eve of the religious upheaval, is sufficiently clear from the fact that, besides Queen Catherine of Aragon, also Blessed Thomas More and his second wife, Alice Middleton, were Franciscan Tertiaries. It is for this reason, too, that the noble queen of Henry VIII and his sainted chancellor have found a place in these pages.¹

Blessed Thomas More was born

1 Authorities for the statement that Blessed Thomas More was a Franciscan Tertiary are chiefly: Livarius Oliger, *Third Order of St. Francis In The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, p. 642; Heimbucher, *Die Orden und Congregation der Katholischen Kirche*, Vol. II, p. 492; Holzapfel, *Geschichte des Franziskanerordens*, p. 670; *Catalogus Hagiographicus Seraphim & Familiae in Acta Minorum* (an. xxviii, p. 203 seq.), an official list of all the Saints, Blessed, and Venerable of the three Orders of St. Francis. It was published with ecclesiastical approbation in 1909, on the occasion of the seventh centenary of the founding of the Franciscan Order. On page 216, Blessed Thomas More is commemorated expressly as a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, a fact which we think settles the question. Despite these evidences, Father Cuthbert writes in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, p. 645, "Blessed Thomas More is frequently spoken of as a tertiary of St. Francis, but there seems to be no historical evidence to support this statement." It is not known when he joined the Third Order; perhaps it was at the time when he was thinking of joining the first Order of St. Francis.

February 7, 1478, in Milk Street, Cheapside, London. His pious and accomplished father, Sir John More, Knight, served as barrister and later as judge in the Court of the King's Bench. His mother, Agnes Graunger, died a few years after the birth of Thomas. St. Antony's School in Threadneedle Street, under the direction of Nicholas Holt, was deemed the best of its kind in London. Here Thomas received his elementary training. Unusually endowed in heart and mind, he made rapid progress at school, and at the age of thirteen he was graduated with high honors. Thinking the boy too young for university life, his prudent father placed him as page in the service of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor of England. This saintly and learned prelate soon detected the superior talents of the quickwitted and winsome lad. To the nobles, who frequently came to dine with him, the chancellor was wont to remark, "This child here waiting at the table, whosoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvelous man."² At the same time, the sanctity and learning of the Cardinal made a lasting impression on the sensitive heart of Thomas; and it was in the service of this distinguished prelate, no doubt, that the future

² William Roper, *Life of Sir Thomas More, Ent.*, p. 5. The author of this work was the son-in-law of the Blessed martyr, having married the latter's favorite daughter Margaret. From her he learned many details for his *Life*, which is, therefore, of special interest and value to the historian.

martyr first imbibed those lofty ideals of personal holiness and that unflinching zeal for truth and justice which made him so fearless an opponent of schism and heresy.

In 1492, the Cardinal prevailed on Sir John More to let the boy pursue a higher course of studies at Oxford. The Renaissance had already found its way to the university, and Thomas conceived a strong predilection for the ancient classics. "For the short time of his abode," Harpsfield relates, "being not fully two years, and for his age, he wonderfully profited in the Latin and Greek tongues; where if he had settled and fixed himself, and run his full race in the study of the liberal sciences and divinity, I trow he would have been the singular and only spectacle of this our time of learning."³ Not only was his college life "free from all excesses of play and riot," but then already he began those practices of prayer and mortification that marked his later career. "His father . . . wished that he should learn from his earliest years to be frugal and sober, and to love nothing but his studies and literature. For this reason he gave him the bare necessaries, and would not allow him a farthing to spend freely. This he carried out so strictly that he had not money to mend his

³ See Bridgett, Rev. T. B., *Life and Writings of Blessed Thomas More*, p. 9. Nicholas Harpsfield wrote in the time of Queen Mary, William Roper supplying him with material.

worn-out shoes, without asking it from his father. More used often to relate this conduct of his father, and greatly extolled it. 'It was thus' (he would say) 'that I indulged in no vice or pleasure, and spent my time in no vain or hurtful amusements; I did not know what luxury meant, and never learnt to use money badly; in a word. I loved and thought of nothing but my studies.'⁴

After spending about two years at Canterbury College, Oxford, Thomas answered his father's summons and repaired to London in order to prepare himself for the bar. Although the study of law was not to his liking, he applied himself very conscientiously and made such rapid progress that after an unusually short period of study, he was appointed for three successive years lecturer on law at Furnival's Inn. His spare time, however, he devoted to his beloved classics and to the Latin and Greek Fathers of the Church. We may add here that, although he ever after proved an ardent advocate of the classic revival so widely fostered in his day, he never sacrificed to pagan ideals his religious convictions, but remained to the end of his life a man of strict morals and a dutiful child of the Catholic Church. About this time he was called upon to deliver a series

4 Stapleton, quoted by Bridgett, p. 10. Stapleton's *Tres Thomæ* contains "by far the best Life of More; it was published in 1588."

of historical lectures on St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, in the church of St. Lawrence. Many learned men attended the lectures, so that the learning and eloquence of the youthful jurist soon became the topic of public comment.

Meanwhile the time arrived for Thomas to choose a state of life. "When he was about eighteen or twenty years old," his son-in-law tells us, "finding his body, by reason of his age, most rebellious, he sought diligently to tame his unbridled concupiscence by wonderful works of mortification. He used oftentimes to wear a sharp shirt next his skin, which he never left off wholly, — no, not even when he was Lord Chancellor of England . . . He used also much fasting and watching, lying often either upon the bare ground or upon some bench, or laying some log under his head, allotting himself but four or five hours in a night at the most for his sleep. . . . He lived for four years amongst the Carthusians, dwelling near the Charterhouse, frequenting daily their spiritual exercises, but without any vow. He had an earnest desire also to be a Franciscan friar, that he might serve God in a state of perfection."⁵ Erasmus, his intimate friend and confidant, likewise

5 Cresacre More, quoted by Bridgett, p. 31. See also Baumstark : *Thomas Morus* p. 22 ; Parkinson : *Antiquities of the English Franciscans*, P. 211 ; Du Boys : *Catherine D'Aragon*, p. 401 ; G. Roger Hudleston : *Sir Thomas More in The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV , p. 690 ; Camm : *Lives of the English Martyrs*, Vol. I, p. 129.

informs us that Thomas “applied his whole mind to exercises of piety, looking to and pondering on the priesthood in vigils, fasts, and prayers, and similar austerities.”⁶ At last, however, on the advice of his father confessor, he abandoned the idea of embracing the religious state and turned his attention to public affairs.

In 1501, More was called to the bar, and three years later, he was elected a member of parliament. About this time, an event occurred that foreshadowed the future champion of truth and justice. King Henry VII had a bill introduced demanding of the people the enormous sum of 113,000 pounds sterling as a dowry for Princess Margaret who was betrothed to James IV of Scotland. Regarding the appropriation as unjust and unreasonable, the youthful parliamentarian publicly opposed it and effected that the house voted the much smaller sum of 30,000 pounds. Unable to mule the “beardless boy,” who as yet possessed no independent state, the enraged king vented his anger on the elder More, whom, by devising “a causeless quarrel,” he fined 100 pounds sterling and cast into the Tower till the sum was paid. Thomas grieved to see his father suffer on his account. But he was convinced of having done his duty, insomuch that, when Bishop Fox advised him to offer an apology to the king, he refused to do so, and he would probably have gone over sea had not the

king died soon after.⁷

The accession of Henry VIII in 1509, augured well for the future welfare of the kingdom. He was already acquainted with Thomas More, having met him about ten years before in company with Erasmus of Rotterdam and received a poem from him. Since then, Henry had heard much of the promising barrister, and he cherished a high esteem for his virtue and learning. Accordingly, he summoned him to court and assured him of his royal favor and friendship. In 1510, More was appointed Under Sheriff of London. As Master of Requests he was almost constantly at court, and the youthful king, not only consulted him on political matters, but especially delighted in conversing with him on scientific questions. “Because he was of a pleasant disposition, it pleased the king and queen, after the council had supped, at the time of their supper, for their pleasure commonly to call for him to be merry with them.”⁸

In spite of all these royal blandishments, More preserved his independent character. In 1517, he had to defend the Pope’s cause against the English realm regarding the forfeiture of a papal ship. He argued so well that the star chamber decided in favor of the Pope. Henry gladly returned the ship, and, far from being displeased with More, sought

6 Bridgett, p. 23.

7 Roper, p. 8.

8 Ibidem, p. 11.

only to win his valuable service for himself. As royal speaker, More had frequently to make the Latin address; thus at the famous meeting of Henry VIII with Francis I of France in the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and again two years later, at the solemn entry of Emperor Charles V and Henry VIII in London.

Though More enjoyed the esteem and confidence of Cardinal Wolsey and in turn had great respect for the Cardinal's eminent qualities, it happened that on one occasion he found it his duty publicly to oppose him. Wolsey was peeved and exclaimed, "Are you not ashamed, Mr. More, being the last in place and dignity to dissent from so many noble and prudent men? You show yourself a foolish councillor." More calmly replied, "Thanks be to God that his royal Highness has but one fool in his Council."⁹ On another occasion, the Cardinal, displeased with More's policy, said, "Would to God you had been at Rome, Master More, when I made you Speaker." "Your grace not offended," replied More, "so would I too, my Lord."¹⁰

In 1518, he was appointed Privy Councillor and Sub-treasurer of the Exchequer. Three years later, the king created him a knight. About this time, the heretical teaching of Martin Luther was causing much comment in England. More was foremost in denouncing the

heresiarch and assisted the king in writing his famous *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*. In 1525, he became chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Repeatedly, since his elevation to the throne, Henry VIII employed him on important foreign embassies. Finally, in 1529, he reached the height of his political distinction. During his absence at Cambray as English ambassador, Cardinal Wolsey had fallen into royal displeasure. Thomas More had just returned to England, when the king summoned him to court and handed him the official seal of the Lord Chancellor of the realm.

Throughout his public career, both as statesman and as writer, More's attitude toward the Church and her institutions was one of ready obedience and unswerving loyalty. Indeed, he lamented the grave abuses in the Church and joined his life-long friend Erasmus of Rotterdam in the general cry for reform; never, however, did he approve, much less share, his friend's cynical and rebellious spirit. Biased historians have sought to deduct More's religious views from his celebrated *Utopia*. That this satire is anything but an efflux of Luther's heretical teaching, is evident already from the fact that it was written in Latin before the German "reformer" raised the standard of revolt against the Church. The author "certainly had no wish," Bridgett remarks, "that it should be read by the people of England in the days of Henry

⁹ Camm, p. 142.

¹⁰ Roper, p. 20.

VIII.”¹¹ Furthermore, we know how readily the learned and well-minded statesman would have burned the book had he foreseen that the enemies of the Church he loved and revered would employ it as a cudgel against her. In 1523, he wrote a spirited reply to Luther and constantly urged his friend Erasmus to exert his learning and influence in the same direction.

It has been stated that Thomas More refrained from entering a religious order, because the corruption then supposed to prevail in the monasteries and friaries of England, filled him with disgust. In reply to this charge, Hutton, a Protestant historian writes: “It is absurd to assert that More was disgusted with monastic corruption — that he ‘loathed monks as a disgrace to the Church.’ He was throughout his life a warm friend of the religious orders, and a devoted admirer of the monastic ideal. He condemned the vices of individuals; he said, as his great-grandson says, ‘that at that time religious men in England had somewhat degenerated from their ancient strictness and fervour of spirit;’ but there is not the slightest sign that his decision to decline the monastic life was due in the smallest degree to a distrust of the system or a distaste for the theology of the Church.”¹² How highly Thomas More esteemed the religious orders became clear in 1529 when he took Fish

to task and by his *Supplication of Souls in Purgatory* sought to offset the evil influence of the latter’s *Supplication of Beggars*, a scurrilous and slanderous diatribe on the life and habits of religious. We know, too, how, in 1533, he published his celebrated *Apology* in which he refuted the accusations made by Saint-Germain against the clergy in general and the religious in particular.¹³

The domestic and private life of Blessed Thomas More has never failed to win the applause and admiration of his biographers. In 1505, he married Jane Colt, the eldest daughter of a country gentleman of Essex. But the happy union was not to last long. In 1511, his wife died leaving him with four small children, Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily, and John. From an epitaph which he wrote twenty years later, we learn how fondly he cherished her memory. He had to provide for his children, however, and for this reason married Alice Middleton, a widow. Like himself she also was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and proved a kind mother and a dutiful, discreet housewife.¹⁴

¹³ See Dodd: *Church History of England*, Vol. I, p. 304; Gasquet *The Eve of the Reformation*, chap. v.

¹⁴ Bridgett (*pp.* 110 seq.) defends the character of Alice Middleton against such as declare that by her sharp tongue and shrewish temper she proved a termagant and greatly embittered the domestic life of More. “We have now seen,” he concludes (*p.* 120), “all the evil that can be alleged against this lady, and it certainly does not justify our classing Blessed More amongst

¹¹ Bridgett, p. 101.

¹² See Bremond, *Sir Thomas More*, tr. by Harold Child, p. 17.

After living twelve years in Crosby Place, the More family moved to their new home at Chelsea, a village on the outskirts of London. Their spacious residence so famous in history stood in a beautiful garden that bordered on the Thames. Here More would resort when free from State duties to find peace and comfort in the company of his loved ones. He took special interest and delight in the education of his children, for whom he engaged able and reliable tutors. Even when not at home, he superintended their studies. Once he wrote to Margaret, his favorite daughter :

I beg you, Margaret, tell me about the progress you are making in your studies. For, I assure you that, rather than allow my children to be idle and slothful, I would make a sacrifice of wealth, and bid adieu to other cares and business, to attend to my children and family, amongst whom none is more dear to me than yourself, my beloved daughter.

In a letter to William Gunnell their tutor he says that his children are "to put virtue in the first place, learning in the second; and in their studies to esteem most whatever may teach them piety towards God, charity to all, and modesty and Christian humility in

the ill-matched great men. To say that when his time of suffering came she did not rise to the height of his soul, is merely to class her with nearly all her contemporaries, including almost every abbess, abbot and bishop in the country."

themselves."¹⁵

Erasmus, a frequent visitor at the Chelsea home, says that it was a school of Christianity, where piety and virtue were in full bloom. Daily the household would gather for evening devotion. All had to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days, and on the vigils of feasts, like Christmas and Easter, they had to be present at the midnight chanting of the office. At table, one of the girls read a passage from Holy Scripture concluded as is done in convents with: *Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis*. Then a commentary from one of the Holy Fathers would be read or, if some learned man happened to be there, a discussion was held on the text, till finally More himself would change the topic by some well chosen jest or story.

Conformably with the Rule of the Third Order, More was greatly devoted to the poor and sick. "He used himself to go through the back lanes, and inquire into the state of poor families; and he would relieve their distress, not by scattering a few small coins as is the general custom, but when he ascertained a real need, by two, three or four gold pieces. When his official position and duties prevented this personal attention, he would send some of his family to dispense his alms, especially to the sick and the aged. . . . He very often invited to his table his poorer neighbors, receiving them (not condescendingly) but

15 See Bridgett, pp. 135, 129.

familiarly and joyously; he rarely invited the rich, and scarcely ever the nobility. In his parish of Chelsea he hired a house, in which he gathered many infirm, poor and old people, and maintained them at his own expense. . . . He even went so far as to receive into his family and maintain a poor gentlewoman, a widow named Paula, who had expended all she had in an unsuccessful lawsuit. To widows and orphans, when he practiced at the bar, he even gave his services gratuitously.”¹⁶

We have seen how as student at Oxford he practiced. prayer and penance. That he continued these pious practices in later life, goes without saying. Next to his library, was a little chapel, where he spent many an hour in close communion with God. “He used to rise at two o’clock in the morning,” Stapleton informs us, “and until seven to give himself to study and devotion. Every day before any other business — his very early studies alone excepted — he used to hear Mass. This duty he so strictly observed, that when summoned once by the king at a time when he was assisting at Mass, and sent for a second and third time, he would not go until the whole Mass was ended; and to those who called him and urged him to go at once to the king and leave the Mass, he replied that he was paying his court to a greater and better Lord, and must first perform that duty. Henry was then pious and God-fearing, and did

not take in bad part this piety of More.

“He used daily to recite morning and evening prayers, to which he would add the seven penitential psalms and the litanies. He would often add to these the gradual psalms and the psalm *Beati Immaculati*. He also had a collection of private prayers, some in Latin, some in English, as may be seen in his English works. He had made up also, imitating in this St. Jerome and others, a small psalter consisting of selected psalms, which he often used. He would also make pilgrimages sometimes seven miles distant, on foot, which even common people scarcely do in England.”¹⁷ Before entering on a new office, or undertaking a difficult business, he received Holy Communion. On one occasion, the Duke of Norfolk found him in church among the singers, clothed in a surplice. When the nobleman objected that the *king* would be displeased with such an act, the chancellor replied, “Nay, your grace may not think that the king, your master and mine, will with me for serving of God his master, be offended, or thereby account his office dishonored.”¹⁸ On another occasion, the chancellor was at table with his family. When he removed his official gown, Anne Cresacre, his daughter-in-law, noticed the hair-shirt he was wearing and began to laugh. Later

¹⁶ Stapleton, quoted by Bridgett, p. 148.

¹⁷ Stapleton, quoted by Bridgett, p. 61 seq.

¹⁸ Roper, p. 51.

when Margaret told him of it, he felt very sorry, since he wished no one but her to know of it.¹⁹ After his martyrdom, in 1535, his confessor wrote of him, "This Thomas More was my ghostly child; in his confession (he used) to be so pure, so clean. . . . I never heard many such. . . . He was devout in his divine service, and. . . . wore a great hair (shirt) next his skin."²⁰

It was with a heavy heart that Sir Thomas More yielded to the will of his monarch and, on October 25, 1529, took the required oath of office. He realized that Henry was no longer the high-minded and God-fearing prince of former years, and that he had conferred the chancellorship on him, in order to gain his support in the divorce from his lawful queen. In the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, More saw clearly what his own lot would be, when once the king's "secret affair" should involve the divine rights of the Papacy. About a year before, while walking with William Roper along the Thames at Chelsea, he suddenly turned to his son-in-law and said, "Now would to our Lord, son Roper, upon condition that three things were well established in Christendom, I were put in a sack and here presently cast into the Thames."

"What great things be those, sir," inquired the other, "that should move you so to wish?"

"Wouldst thou know, son Roper, what they be?"

"Yea, marry, with a good will, sir, if it please you."

"In faith, son," replied More, "they be these; the first is, that whereas the most part of Christian princes be at mortal war, they were all at universal peace. The second, that where the Church of God is at this present sore afflicted with many errors and heresies, it were well settled in perfect uniformity of religion. The third, that where the matter of the king's marriage is now come in question, it were to the glory of God and quietness of all parties brought to a good conclusion."²¹ Evidently, he foresaw what a terrible calamity the last-mentioned affair would bring upon England.

On February 11, 1531, the conflict began. Parliament wholly subservient to the king approved a royal proclamation by which the clergy were to acknowledge Henry "protector and only supreme head of the church and clergy of England, so far as the law of Christ allows." Although this new title was not clearly adverse to papal supremacy, it was at least ill-omened and dangerous. "There is no one," Chapuys wrote a few days later, "that does not blame this usurpation, except those who have promoted it. The chancellor is so mortified at it that he is anxious above all things to

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 48.

²⁰ See Bremond, p. 75.

²¹ Roper, p. 25.

resign his office.”²² Pressed by the king to reconsider his resignation, More remained in office and again set himself to studying the question of papal supremacy. Finding he could not reconcile his conscience with the king’s demand, he pursued a policy of silence, refusing to have anything to do with the matter. Henry was satisfied, hoping in time to win over the chancellor.

Thus a year passed by, when on May 13, the king demanded that parliament suspend the payment of the Annates to the Pope and relax the English laws against heresy. Needless to say, More again used all his eloquence and influence to crush the bills. Though the king tried to conceal his anger, the chancellor felt that the crisis had come. He would need much time now for prayer and penance, and therefore he again, on May 16, requested the king to relieve him of his office. This time Henry accepted his resignation, thanking him publicly for his long and faithful service. Indeed, by his justice, integrity, prudence, and learning, the noble statesman had gained the esteem of entire Europe. On May 22, Chapuys wrote : “The chancellor has resigned, seeing that affairs were going on badly and likely to be worse, and that if he retained his office he would be obliged to act against his conscience, or incur the king’s displeasure, as he had already begun to do, for refusing to take

his part against the clergy. His excuse was that his salary was too small, and that he was not equal to the work. Everyone is concerned, for there never was a better man in the office.”²³ Though sincerely devoted to his king and country, Blessed Thomas More never lost sight of God and heaven. In fact, he was true to his king, because he was true to God, and only when Henry succumbed to his lower passions, did his noble and saintly chancellor oppose his lawless policy and fearlessly unfurl the standard of truth and justice. Shortly after his resignation, Sir Thomas Cromwell came to him at Chelsea with a message from the king. Having read the message, More said, “Master Cromwell, you are now entered into the service of a most noble, wise, and liberal prince; if you will follow my poor advice, you shall, in your counsel-giving to his grace, ever tell him what he ought to do, but never what he is able to do. So shall you show yourself a true faithful servant, and a right wise counsellor. For if a lion knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him.”²⁴ Cromwell’s subsequent career showed how utterly he ignored this wholesome advice.

To Be Continued...

23 Ibidem, p. 240.

24 Roper, p. 65.

22 Bridgett, p. 234.

Modernism and Socialism

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

The average person on the street probably would not be able to make the connection between these two philosophies. In all likelihood, they would think there isn't any connection. The fact is, these two 'isms' are but two branches from the same tree.

The best way to understand their connections is to look deeper into their meanings, however erroneous they may be. Holy Mother Church studied these philosophies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is clear from the Church's conclusions these errors must be avoided at all costs. These errors are the main causes of the destruction which has occurred in both the Church and State.

Some will ask why discuss two errors of which most readers are quite familiar? The simple answer is to demonstrate how we have now reached a climax in both worlds (Church and State) and the destruction which is occurring is the result of bad fruit posing as good fruit.

Pope St. Pius X, in his Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (On Modernism), went into great detail to describe the Modernist. It is my intention to provide the most pertinent quotes to the reader so as to give him a clear, and hopefully a better understanding of just how

this error has horribly infected the Church.

In describing the characteristics of the Modernist he says, "*Though they express astonishment themselves, no one can justly be surprised that We number such men among the enemies of the Church, if, leaving out of consideration the internal disposition of soul, of which God alone is the judge, he is acquainted with their tenets, their manner of speech, their conduct. Nor indeed would he be wrong in regarding them as the most pernicious of all the adversaries of the Church. For, as We have said, they put into operation their designs for her undoing, not from without but from within. Hence, the danger is present almost in the very veins and heart of the Church, whose injury is the more certain from the very fact that their knowledge of her is more intimate. Moreover, they lay the ax not to the branches and shoots, but to the very root, that is, to the Faith and its deepest fibers. And once having struck at this root of immortality, they proceed to diffuse poison through the whole tree, so that there is no part of Catholic truth which they leave untouched, none that they do not strive to corrupt. Further, none is more skillful, none more astute than they, in the employment of a*

thousand noxious devices; for they play the double part of rationalist and Catholic, and this so craftily that they easily lead the unwary into error; and as audacity is their chief characteristic, there is no conclusion of any kind from which they shrink or which they do not thrust forward with pertinacity and assurance. To this must be added the fact, which indeed is well calculated to deceive souls, that they lead a life of the greatest activity, of assiduous and ardent application to every branch of learning, and that they possess, as a rule, a reputation for irreproachable morality. Finally, there is the fact which is all but fatal to the hope of cure that their very doctrines have given such a bent to their minds, that they disdain all authority and brook no restraint; and relying upon a false conscience, they attempt to ascribe to a love of truth that which is in reality the result of pride and obstinacy.” (Emphasis ours)

Hindsight allows us to understand these words quite clearly, that is, if one is looking for the truth and is willing to condemn error wherever it might be regardless of ecclesiastical rank.

The Modernist clergy seem to believe they are actually Catholic while they gleefully, and perhaps unwittingly, work to destroy the Church. They preach heresy

and perform sacrilege, deny the Real Presence and the necessity of Baptism, turn a blind eye to abortion and birth control and promote homosexuality. Then they preach the gospel according to Marx and are left to wonder why society is failing. There are, of course, those who know exactly what they are doing.

The laity are little more than “sheeple,” being led around by the clergy as though all is well. Ignorance of the Faith and spiritual blindness seem to be the main causes of the Great Apostasy.

The poison of which Pope St. Pius X speaks has long ago permeated all levels of the “Church”; and to such an extent that the clergy and laity have no idea of the wrongs they daily commit. The only “wrong” they condemn are those of us who stand up for the truth, especially when it condemns them.

So many want to speak of the personal corruption within the Modernist Church, yet how many realize this corruption came about because of their theological heresies and an unwillingness to abide by the most basic moral principles. Sin, left unchecked, will continue to destroy and undermine in ways that were unimaginable a few years ago. Many have wondered how much worse the Modernists can get?

Look around at society and you will find the answer to that question.

For the “Catholic” that has accepted the “changes,” how many truly understand the “evolution” that is taking place from Catholicism to Modernism to Atheism? There may be few Catholics who desire this end, yet, as long as they remain within the confines of the New Order they become little more than “unthinking masses” who are led to a place that will bring about their perdition.

Let Pope St. Pius X once again explain this devilish plan and plot. *“It may be asked, in what way do the Modernists contrive to make the transition from Agnosticism, which is a state of pure nescience (i.e., a lack of knowledge or awareness, definition added by us), to scientific and historic Atheism, which is a doctrine of positive denial; and consequently, by what legitimate process of reasoning, they proceed from the fact of ignorance as to whether God has in fact intervened in the history of the human race or not, to explain this history, leaving God out altogether, as if He really had not intervened. Let him answer who can. Yet it is a fixed and established principle among them that both science and history must be atheistic: and within their boundaries there is*

room for nothing but phenomena; (emphasis ours) God and all that is divine are utterly excluded.”

For those who do not remember, the error of phenomena, or the religious experience, was openly promoted by anti-pope John Paul II. For him, the life of the Catholic was not about the teachings of the Church, but about his experiences. This is pure Modernism. How many Catholics understood any part of this error? Undoubtedly, very few had any clue whatsoever. The effect, as stated by Pope St. Pius X, is that which is spiritually deadly to all who allow this error to take hold within their soul – *“God and all that is divine is utterly excluded.”*

Catholics have been shocked for fifty years that priests would strip the churches of religious images. We always explained it simply as a loss of Faith. Now you know the reason for the loss of this most precious Faith, i.e., the error of phenomena which aims to exclude God from one’s life (atheism). Sacred images have little or no importance if they are purposely excluded from the senses.

This also explains the effect of the error of religious indifference. If, according to the Modernists and Protestants, all religions are equal, then there is no objective truth. The only objective truth in religion is God and the Roman

Catholic Faith.

One final quote from *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* which pertains to the theme of this article which is perhaps not only most revealing, but is quite noticeable is the Modernist's *modus operandi*.

*"... First of all they lay down the general principle that in a living religion everything is subject to change, and must in fact be changed. In this way they pass to what is practically their principal doctrine, namely, **evolution**. To the laws of evolution everything is subject - dogma, Church, worship, the Books we revere as sacred, even faith itself, and the penalty of disobedience is death. The enunciation of this principle will not be a matter of surprise to anyone who bears in mind what the Modernists have had to say about each of these subjects. Having laid down this law of evolution, the Modernists themselves teach us how it operates. And first, with regard to faith. The primitive form of faith, they tell us, was rudimentary and common to all men alike, for it had its origin in human nature and human life. Vital evolution brought with it progress, not by the accretion of new and purely adventitious forms from without, but by an increasing perfusion of the religious sense into the conscience. The progress was of two kinds: **negative**, by the elimination of all extraneous*

*elements, such, for example, as those derived from the family or nationality; and **positive**, by that intellectual and moral refining of man, by means of which the idea of the divine became fuller and clearer, while the **religious sense** became more acute. For the progress of faith the same causes are to be assigned as those which are adduced above to explain its origin. But to them must be added those extraordinary men whom we call prophets-of whom Christ was the greatest-both because in their lives and their words there was something mysterious which faith attributed to the Divinity, and because it fell to their lot to have new and original **experiences** fully in harmony with the religious needs of their time. The progress of dogma is due chiefly to the fact that obstacles to the faith have to be surmounted, enemies have to be vanquished and objections have to be refuted. Add to this a perpetual striving to penetrate ever more profoundly into those things which are contained in the mysteries of faith. Thus, putting aside other examples, it is found to have happened in the case of Christ: in Him that divine something which faith recognized in Him was slowly and gradually expanded in such a way that He was at last held to be God. The chief stimulus of the evolution of worship consists in the need of accommodation to the manners and customs of peoples,*

as well as the need of availing itself of the value which certain acts have acquired by usage. Finally, evolution in the Church itself is fed by the need of adapting itself to historical conditions and of harmonizing itself with existing forms of society. Such is their view with regard to each.”

The jest of this long quote centers around the core of Modernism. It is belief in the error of humanistic evolution. According to the Modernist, we evolve from the natural to the supernatural, eventually becoming gods. Most shocking is the evolution of Christ Himself, Who only after His own evolution came to realize His Divinity!

All of this, of course, according to the Modernist comes about through our religious senses and experiences (phenomena). Once again, the anti-pope John Paul II promoted these errors many times. Most Catholics had no idea what he was saying or promoting. This is how a heretic is able to say these things with little or no consequences. Simply put, such men rely on the ignorance of most people. For those who do understand, these same heretics know that if they say nothing and wait a while, the uproar will pass. There simply aren't enough souls who will continue this fight over many years.

Finally, the Modernist would have us believe the manner of worship was due to accommodation to the manners and customs of peoples, *not a clearer understanding of Church doctrine.* The Church itself adapted itself to historical conditions societal harmonization. To be clear, this is pure naturalism and ignores the importance of Tradition.

All supernatural inspiration is eliminated from the thought-process of the development of Divine Worship. The Modernist would have us believe that since these liturgical matters are only naturally evolving ideas, they can easily be changed according to man's whims. For the Modernist, doctrine and Tradition are not immutable, but constantly evolving. This explains why the Modernists are constantly making additional changes in their manner of "worship" along with redefining dogma and morality.

Some have asked how many more changes there can be in the New Order. In the span of fifty years, within their "New Mass" they have gone from Catholicism to Protestantism to Paganism with elements of atheism being used. The next step, and no one knows the length of time it will take to occur, is disguised Satanism.

To be Continued

Books

Bishop Giles OFM

Imagine that the greatest of men from all of history could speak to us. Not only this, but that they were eager to speak to us; and they sought out the best words to use to help us understand what is in their minds. We would be most grateful and pleased to hear them. What a wonderful treasure that would be for us.

This is precisely what books have done for us. We have millions of books – books written for the sole purpose of sharing, in the best way that the authors know how, what is on their minds. With all of these books and various authors in almost every language, the problem becomes which ones to read.

It is truly a shame that so few read, or read anything of serious consequence. Books have a kind of spiritual life that lives on long after the authors have departed. Many people do not read because it is boring to them. They have not learned to truly read. They have learned to read with the eyes, but far too often the mind is off somewhere else or is not paying attention. So they get nothing or very little for their efforts in reading.

They, therefore, often limit their reading to headlines of newspapers and magazines. This is a sad tragedy.

Books offer so much more than periodicals could ever hope to provide. Periodicals are good and have their uses, but they are seriously limited in their ability to develop ideas to their full potential.

It has been said that, “life is too short for inferior books.” With this in mind we must become very discriminatory in which books we choose to open our minds and hearts to. For this is the purpose of reading – opening our minds and hearts to the thoughts presented on the page. Too often, we see that our book shelves are filled more with fiction, fable, and novels. These types of books are often worse than useless. They are more often than not, actually dangerous to our souls.

These works present love in the most alluring and passionate ways possible. It is most often not real love, but lust that is placed before the minds of the readers. The erotic is presented as the truest or highest form of

love, when in reality it is one of the lowest forms of love. All other evils are often likewise glamorized for the reader. There is no doubt that these do their job very well – it can be proven by simply observing the countless books of this fashion that are available, and the number of them on the shelves in people's homes.

Books carry the spirit of their authors through time even long after the authors are gone. Besides the printed words, there is also the life they take on in the minds of the readers. The memory is a very fascinating faculty of the soul. It is said that all that enters our senses is recorded. We forget, not because the information is lost. The difficulty is most often a retrieval problem. The memories are there and often return seemingly out of the blue.

We must be very careful of what we allow to enter our senses. In reading salacious or bad books the images presented to our minds are recorded in our memories. The more the images appeal to us – especially those that appeal to our lower natures are most strongly recorded. If we take pleasure in the images and dwell upon them for any length

of time they are that much more deeply rooted in our memories. Even after they are later rejected and repented of, they still exist in our minds and come back to tempt us from time to time. The devils that have watched us read these books and take pleasure in them, use this against us by putting these images before us from time to time to tempt us or to distract us from our prayers.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. After we have exposed ourselves to these images and ideas, they remain with us always and in a sense become part of who we are. It is not in our power to remove them once they have entered. The best cure then, is prevention. We must be very careful of what we allow to enter our senses. Parents must be extremely cautious of what they allow their children to read. (What is said of books, likewise and perhaps even more so applies to other forms of entertainment: music, video, TV, movies, and other things.)

What happens with bad books is that, often the most enticing parts are read many times over. This repetition cements the images and ideas even more firmly. From this stage, we are led to increasingly worse books.

The stage for the downward spiral of our lives and souls has been set. This evil baggage that we carry in our memories keeps drawing more and more to itself, until there is no longer any room in our lives for God or anything of good and true value.

It is obvious that we must avoid these evil books. It not enough to just avoid the worst; what is not so often obvious is that we should choose the best.

What are the best books? Who are the best authors? In considering all the great men throughout history, there is especially one that we should be interested and eager to hear speaking to us. The greatest of all men is none other than the God-Man, Jesus Christ. He has come and spoken many words to us, and these words have been recorded and translated so that we may easily and readily hear them at all times. He is eager to speak to us and His words have been recorded by the men He has chosen to write them down. We can find His words in four separate books that bear the names of the men whom God used to record them: St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

How often have people wished that they were alive at the same time as Jesus so that they could see and hear Him. If we will only open up the Gospels we can see and hear Him. If we open up our hearts and minds to Him, He will enter into our memories. If we love and cherish these ideas and images from Him, we will return to them over and over again. Then, we will seek to add more and more to this in just the same manner that evil men add more and more evil to their hearts and minds.

We will not be satisfied with the mere words of Jesus, but we will want to learn more and more about Him. From here we will read the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and ever eager for more we will open the Old Testament to see the works of God and the preparation and prefiguring of Jesus. We will be drawn to the Fathers of the Church to see and hear more and more of this magnificent and awesome God and all that He has done for us; how much He loves us; how He watches over us; and protects us.

Once we plant these ideas and images in our memory, they will return to us from time to time; and far from being a torment to our souls as so many evil ideas

and images, these will bring comfort and solace to us.

Life is short, so what we can put in our memories is limited by the time we have left. We are also often encumbered by the distractions that we have previously placed in our memories. The key is to refrain from adding any more fuel to the fire of evil that we carry in our memories; and to start feeding the fires of love, truth and goodness in our hearts and minds with the word of God, and the noble as well as useful things we need for this life. Though the indifferent things are permissible and do no harm, they should be kept to a minimum, lest they interfere with the higher things that we need to focus on and remember.

Let us make sure that our home libraries are truly Catholic ones, which aid our spiritual as well as our material well-being. Predominately, we should have: a Catholic Bible, Prayer books, a Missal to follow the Mass, Catechisms, Lives of the Saints, Sermons of the Fathers and Saints, as well as other devotional and inspirational works. In just these few books, we will find a wealth of things to feed our hearts and minds many times over for the rest of our days. As our hearts are warmed by the flames of Charity through the sincere reading and study of these works, we will begin to perceive ever greater and deeper truths than we had ever seen before. Each time we re-read things, even if we have read them a hundred times before, we will perceive even more.

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Franciscan Saints

MAY 4

THE SERVANTS OF GOD PAULA AND GABRIELA MEZZAVACCHI

Virgins, Second Order

The mother of these saintly sisters had from her youth entertained the desire to consecrate her life to God in a convent. Constrained by the wishes of her father to give her hand in marriage to the noble John Baptist Mezzavacchi, a professor of law at the University of Bologna, she went to the church as a bride, cast herself on her knees before the altar and said: "O Lord, since I have not been found worthy to serve Thee in the convent, I now already consecrate to Thee all the children that Thou wilt present to me."

God almighty graciously accepted her sacrifice. She gave birth to two sons and two daughters. The first son entered the Benedictine Order and became an abbot. The second became a Franciscan, was provincial at Bologna, and died as guardian of Mount Sion convent in Jerusalem; his brother saw how the holy angels bore his soul to heaven. The two daughters, our saintly virgins, entered the convent of the Poor

Clares at Ferrara, in which St. Catharine of Bologna was the novice mistress.

When Catharine transferred to Bologna in order to establish a new convent, she took with her Paula, the older of the sisters, whom she appointed mistress of novices because of her outstanding virtue. In this capacity Paula directed the novices with zeal, prudence, and great charity. In a special way she devoted herself to her sick, tempted, and worried fellow sisters. To all she was a model of humility, meekness, and mortification. God adorned her with the gift of prophecy and revealed to her the secrets of hearts. She died in the odor of sanctity in 1492.

For a period of nine years after Paula's entrance into the convent, her sister Gabriela continued to be the object of love and tenderness in their paternal home. Yet, she felt interiorly impelled to follow the example of her sister. Generously she

overcame the difficulties in the way, left all, and at Ferrara asked for the poor garb of the daughters of St. Clare. Her progress in perfection corresponded to the heroic beginning she had made until, rich in merits, she slept blessedly in the Lord in the year 1493.

ON THE POWER OF A MOTHER'S PRAYER

1. Consider what the pious prayer of a mother can do for her children. Obviously it was the result of the sacrifice and prayers of the mother of our saintly virgins that her children became such faithful servants of God. The mother of St. Bernard, who consecrated her six sons and one daughter to God immediately after their birth and begged that they might remain faithful in His service, experienced a similar effect of prayer. Three of the children are honored as saints, all died most edifying deaths. If Christ our Lord says: "All things whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, that I will do" (John 14:13), must not then above all the prayer of a mother for her children's salvation be heard? Christ Himself before His departure directed this prayer to

His heavenly Father for all those who are His: "Sanctify them in truth" (John 17:17).

2. Consider that the prayer of a mother has great power even when children have already begun to tread life's byways. Augustine had delivered himself up to pride and sensuality till his thirty-second year: even St. Ambrose could think of no means to convert him. But when he saw the tears of St. Monica, the mother of Augustine, and heard her pleading prayers, he said: "The child of so many tears and prayers cannot be lost." Augustine served God for forty-four years in great sanctity. Andrew Corsini was also a wayward young man. When he beheld his mother kneeling before an image of the Mother of God and saw how she wept and pleaded, grace touched his heart; he burst into tears, was converted, and became a saint. Does God almighty not give the assurance (Is. 49:15) that He will be more merciful even than a mother to the son of her womb?

3. Consider that if it is to be effectual, the prayer of a mother for her children must be supported by faithful fulfillment of her duty. From their youth she

must rear her children for God and for what is good, must be on the alert to root evil germs out of their hearts, and guard them against the contagion of a bad world; above all she must always give them a good example. — Have you, Christian mother, been wanting in these points? Then you yourself have prepared the cross which you carry because of your children. But, bear it with patience, repent of your faults, do what you can to correct them even now, and beg St. Monica, whose feast the universal Church celebrates today, for her intercession. Then you may expect that God will

still grant your prayer and save your children for eternity.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(Feast of St. Monica)

O God, the comforter of the sorrowful and the salvation of those who put their trust in Thee, who, in bringing about the conversion of her son Augustine didst have merciful regard to the loving tears of Blessed Monica, grant through their united intercession that we may grieve over our sins and win grace and pardon from Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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Our Best Friend

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER XIII

Under the Protection of Our Friend

“You have come to Jesus, the mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel” (cf. Heb. 12:24).

1. Jesus is our daily sacrifice.

When Jesus gave the Sacrament of His Body and Blood to His Apostles at the last supper, He did not merely say: “This is My Body, this is My Blood,” but: “This is My Body which shall be sacrificed for you; this is My Blood which shall be shed for you unto the remission of sins” (cf. Mt. 26:28; Lk. 22:•9, 20). “To shed blood unto the remission of sins” means in Holy Writ to offer sacrifice,¹ and so the Church has always taught that Christ offered a real sacrifice at the last supper and commissioned His Apostles to offer this sacrifice until the end of time.

The Council of Trent briefly summarizes the teaching of

¹ Cf. Lev. 14:17; 17:11; Heb. 9:18-22.

Holy Scripture and Tradition as follows: At the last supper Christ wished to leave to His bride, the Church, a visible sacrifice in accordance with the requirements of human nature. Since He had called Himself the eternal High Priest after the order of Melchisedech, He offered to His heavenly Father His Body and Blood under the appearances of bread and wine, and commissioned His apostles and their successors in the sacerdotal office to do likewise. This is that clean oblation which God had predicted through Malachias (1:11) and which was to be offered to His name in every place among the nations. According to the teaching of the Catholic faith, then, these two truths are incontestable: In the Mass the Body and Blood of Christ is offered to God, and this offering is a real sacrifice.

It is illicit for a human friend to offer himself to God as a sacrifice for his friend. Only our Divine Friend, Jesus Christ, can do this: “For by one offering He

has perfected forever those who are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). But did He not offer this sacrifice on the cross and thus effect the salvation of the whole world? How, then, can we say that He offers Himself daily for us? The answer is that the holy sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross are not two entirely distinct sacrifices, but are most intimately related. By the sacrifice of the cross satisfaction had been rendered to God for the sins of the whole world, and merit accumulated to obtain all graces. But that this satisfaction and these graces might be applied to individual souls, Christ instituted various means of grace. One of these means is the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

In the sacrifice of the Mass the victim offered and the priest offering are the same as those of Calvary: in each instance Christ offers Himself to His heavenly Father, a victim for the salvation of men. Moreover, Christ does not render new satisfaction or merit new graces for us in the Mass; since for Him also death marked the end of the time of satisfaction and merit (cf. Jn. 9:4). Instead, He obtains for us the application of the fruits

of His bloody sacrifice (cf. Heb. 7:25). Hence, to a certain extent, the Mass is a renewal and continuation of the bloody sacrifice of Calvary, for in the Mass Christ offers Himself to His heavenly Father for us and applies to us the saving graces which He merited on the cross. This is the reason why the sacrifice of Calvary is symbolically represented in the Mass; the bloody sacrifice of Calvary becomes the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass. On the cross the blood was drained from the body of Christ and this caused His death; in the Mass the blood of Christ is not separated from His body, for Christ can no longer die, but this separation is signified by a perceptible sign. The priest, in the name of Christ, pronounces the words: “This is My Body” over the bread alone; and “This is My Blood” over the wine alone. In virtue of these words of consecration, the bread is directly only the Body of Christ, and the consecrated wine only the Blood of Christ. In this fashion the separation of Body and Blood is signified by the sacramental signs, and the memory of the real separation of Body and Blood on Calvary renewed. Such is the teaching

of the Catholic Church on the sacrifice of the Mass and its relation to the sacrifice of Calvary.²

Now let us examine how the sacrifice of the Mass is a special proof of the friendship of Jesus Christ for us.

2. *In the holy sacrifice of the Mass Jesus Christ exercises in a very special manner His office of mediator between God and man.* We owe God, as His creatures, internal and external reverence. God is our supreme Lord and Master, our first Beginning and last End. We must acknowledge our dependence on Him, we must adore Him as the supreme Majesty, and we must thank Him as our greatest Benefactor. The great crime of the infidel world is, according to the Apostle, that “although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, or give thanks” (Rom. 1:21). Christ explained the obligation of glorifying God to the Samaritan woman in these words: “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeks such to worship Him. God is a spirit; and they who worship

Him, must worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:23, 24).

But what is all our reverence in comparison with the infinite dignity of God? And what is all our giving of thanks in comparison with the countless blessings which we have received from God and are continually receiving from Him? Can we at least testify that we honor and thank God to the best of our abilities? Or must we not rather admit that we do much less than we might do, and with greater fervor? Our divine Friend knows our weakness and insufficiency; He acts as our mediator and offers to His heavenly Father in the holy sacrifice of the Mass a sacrifice of thanksgiving and adoration of infinite value.³ If we unite ourselves with Christ in the holy sacrifice of The Mass, we need not lose heart, since we can worthily adore and thank God through our Friend and Saviour. To love and reverence God is the noblest act of which men or angels are capable. Under what great obligations we are, then, to our Saviour! With what enthusiasm we ought to attach ourselves to His Person, since He has made it possible for us to exercise our noblest activity with

2 Council of Trent, Sess. 22, C. I, 2.

3 Council of Trent, Sess. 22, can. 3.

a perfection which of ourselves we could never attain. When we, united with Christ, adore the Father by that supreme act of adoration, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, we are true adorers in spirit and in truth such as the Father seeketh.

Our second relation to almighty God may be summed up in the one word — dependence. We depend on God each moment of our life for our being and activity. God can end our life whenever He pleases, as we read in the Psalm (103:29): All creatures wait on Thee; “if Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled: Thou shalt take away their breath, and they shall fail, and shall return to their dust.” Whether the times are good or bad, whether fruitful years supply us lavishly with food or unfruitful ones bring want and misery, whether good health or infirmity is our lot, all this depends on God. He blesses our undertakings with success or allows them to fail, bestows earthly riches or takes them away (cf. Eccus. 11:14). But in the supernatural order, we need God’s help even more. Without the assistance of His grace we cannot merit for eternal life, but, on the contrary, shall inevitably

fall victims to our enemies.

To obtain these gifts of God, we must pray as Christ taught us to pray in the Our Father. Without prayer we shall wait in vain for gifts from on high. And yet, O God, must we not admit that our prayers are very wretched; that they play but a secondary role in our lives; that all too often, when our lips are occupied with prayers our thoughts are busied elsewhere, and that the desire to gain temporal advantages or to avoid temporal evils prompts us to pray more frequently than desire after heavenly treasures? Here again the love of our Saviour comes to our assistance. If we unite ourselves with Him in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, He offers His merits to His heavenly Father for us. He knows best which temporal and spiritual blessings will be most conducive for our salvation, and obtains them for us by His all-powerful intercession. The Mass is a sacrifice of supplication and the best means to commend our concerns to God and to obtain help from Him through Jesus Christ our Lord. Through the Mass we have “confidence to enter the holies in virtue of the blood of Christ” (Heb. 10:19).

There is a third relationship which binds us to God, one which is by no means pleasant. We are sinners and deserve punishment for our sins from the divine Justice. For this reason, the Psalmist prays: "And enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified" (Ps. 142:2). If God were to judge men according to the demands of strict justice, our race would long since have perished. Think of how many abominations and infamies, how many secret and public sins insolently challenge God each day, even in only one large city. Then multiply this by the countless number of other cities all over the earth. If God should reveal all these sins to us according to their number, heinousness, and enmity toward Him, we would pale with horror and cry out: "My God, how can You tolerate this? Why does not the fire of Your wrath come down from heaven and wipe out this accursed race?"

But we know the reason why. Each day Jesus appears before His Father and restrains the arm of His justice as Moses did of old when God had determined to destroy the Israelites because of their sins (cf. Ps. 105:23).

With the rising sun a series of Masses daily begins a westward course round the inhabited globe, from farthest north to farthest south, and in them the Mediator of the New Law offers His Blood on thousands of altars as a satisfaction for the sins of the world. We know from faith that the sacrifice of the Mass is truly an expiatory sacrifice unto the remission of sin and the punishment due to sin. Of course, hardened sinners will no more escape their punishment than did the Israelites of old when God said to Moses: "Lead this people whither I have told thee. I will not destroy it but in the day of revenge will visit this sin also of theirs" (cf. Exod. 32:34). In the New Testament, God visits then with various punishments for the sins they have committed and to keep them from committing others. St. Peter, the apostle, warns the just not to be surprised at the trials of life which tend to purify them and to promote their salvation. But if the judgments of God do not spare the children of the house, how terrible will be the end of the godless? A horror without end (cf. I Pet. 4:17 ff.).

In what does the expiatory mediation of Christ in the holy sacrifice consist? God is angry

with men because of their sins, and in holy indignation deprives them of those rich graces which would bring about their conversion. But our divine Saviour in the holy sacrifice of the Mass appeases God's wrath, so that God, "appeased by this sacrifice, bestows grace and the gift of penance, and through it remits enormous sins."⁴ In what *sad* condition we should be if God, because of our sins, deprived us of those abundant graces without which we cannot work out our salvation! How much more terrible would the punishments of God with which He visits this world not be if the blood of the Lamb did not plead for mercy on so many altars!

3. *How shall we reward that love of our divine Saviour which so ceaselessly intercedes with God for us on our altars?* The answer to this question is obvious. We ought to assist at Mass daily with devotion; or if that is not possible, as often as we can. And if we cannot be present physically, let us unite ourselves in spirit with our divine Saviour, assist spiritually at the sacrifice which He offers for us, honor God through Him, pray for heavenly gifts through

Him, place ourselves under the protection of our best Friend, who is, at the same time, the beloved Son of the heavenly Father.

The more intimately we unite ourselves to our Saviour in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the more abundantly shall we participate in the fruits of this sacrifice infinitely pleasing to God. The priest acts as an official representative in every Mass, even a low Mass, and offers the sacrifice in the name of the Church for all the faithful and, as the prayers used at Mass indicate, also for those without the true fold, that they may be converted.

But in addition to this general fruit, the holy sacrifice of the Mass is the source of special graces for individual Christians; first of all, for those for whom it is especially offered and, secondly, for all those who assist at it devoutly. Since the priest who offers the sacrifice is the official representative of Jesus Christ, he may determine to whom the special fruits shall be applied. This is explicitly taught by the Church.⁵ It was true of the sacrifices of the Old Testament

4 Council of Trent, Sess. 22, C. 2.

5 Council of Trent.

and is true as well of that of the New (cf. Heb. 5:1 ff.). The Church obliges all bishops and all pastors to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass on certain days for the souls intrusted to their care.⁶ She obliges the faithful to assist at Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation.⁷ All who becomingly assist at the holy sacrifice offer it with the priest and participate, therefore, in a special manner in its fruits. The holy sacrifice is at one and the same time the sacrifice of Christ, of the Church, and of the faithful who are present.⁸

By assisting at the holy sacrifice, then, we offer God through Christ veneration of infinite value; we atone for our sins and satisfy for the punishment due them, because Christ offers the satisfactory merit of His deeds for us; we participate in the merits of Christ with which He obtains many graces from His Father for us; we place ourselves under the protection of our divine Friend

whose Blood pleads for mercy for us. Of course, not all temporal pain is thus eliminated; for every man must carry his cross; however, the vindictive anger of God is averted, and suffering, from being a mere punishment, becomes a means of salvation so that all things work together unto good (cf. Rom. 8:28). We are secure under the protection of our divine Friend, which is accorded us in the holy sacrifice; within the heart of our Friend, we are safe from the snares of our enemies, from all danger to our souls, from the blows of the divine anger. O Jesus, grant that we may realize more perfectly what treasures You offer us daily through friendship in the holy sacrifice, and help us to appropriate these treasures more fully in accordance with the intentions of Your divine Heart.



6 *Codex Juris Canonici*, can. 359, 466.

7 *Codex Juris Canonici*, can. 359, 466.

8 That the assisting faithful offer the sacrifice with the priest, is often emphasized in the prayers which the priest uses at Mass. Thus: "Orate, fratres, ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat." "Omnium circumstantium pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis," etc.

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