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Contents

Speech that is offensive to God.....	1
Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England	4
The Four Marks.....	13
Heresy in Rome	16
Schism and Heresy.....	19
Franciscan Saints	22
Our Best Friend	26

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

Speech that is offensive to God.

The Second Commandment is: Thou shall not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain. There are many forms of speech that are incorporated within the condemnation of this commandment against the profanation of the holy name of God. Men profane the name of God specifically: 1. By irreverently pronouncing It; 2. By deriding religion; 3. By blasphemy; 4. By sinful swearing, and by cursing; and 5. By breaking vows.

This commandment is very seldom considered in its various ramifications, and people have become very careless in keeping it. The abuse of the first aspect of this commandment, to refrain from irreverently pronouncing the holy name of God, has become so commonplace that it seldom causes any surprise or shock when it is done. Society has condoned the abuse of the holy names of "God," "Jesus," "Christ," or "Jesus Christ" together. The holy names of our Savior and God flow frequently from the mouths of men in: surprise, anger, frustration and jest. We must also consider that the names of: the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Cross, the Holy Sacraments, etc.,

as well as the words of the Holy Scripture, are never to be abused in jest or by way of derision. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain." (Exod. 20, 7) We must watch carefully against the temptation to deride the True Religion. We must not scoff at religion or the rites and ceremonies of the Church. By doing this one becomes also guilty of blasphemy. "Knowing this first, that in the last days there shall come deceitful scoffers, walking after their own lusts. . . you, therefore, brethren, knowing these things before, take heed, lest being led aside by the error of the unwise, you fall from your own steadfastness." (2 Peter 3: 3, 17)

Blasphemy is specifically contemptuous and abusive language uttered against God, the Saints, or holy things. This sin is so great that, in the Old Law those who were found guilty of it were put to death. "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die; all the multitude shall stone him. (Levit. 24: 16) (Also consider, 4 Kings 19, where Sennacherib, King of the Assyrians was punished for blaspheming the Lord.) One can

also commit the sin of blasphemy in thoughts by voluntarily thinking contemptuously of God or of the Saints.

Swearing or taking an oath, is the calling of the Omniscient God to witness that we speak the truth, or that we will keep our promise. We can swear by: Heaven, the Holy Cross, the Gospel, the Mother of God, or by holy mother the Church, etc. "Whosoever shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by Him that dwelleth in it; and he that sweareth by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon." (Matthew 23: 21, 22) We sin by swearing when we swear falsely or in doubt as well as when we swear or induce others to swear without necessity. This means we may not assert with an oath that something is true, though we know that it is untrue, or do not know whether it is true or not; or to promise with an oath to do something which we do not intend to perform. We also sin in swearing when we swear to do what is evil or to omit what is good; and when we do not keep our oath, although we can keep it. "Thou shalt swear in truth, and in judgment, and in justice." (Jer. 4: 2)

Perjury, especially in a court of justice, is one of the greatest

crimes; because he, who commits it, mocks God's Omniscience, Sanctity, and Justice; and it destroys the last means of preserving truth and faith among men. It amounts to solemnly renouncing God and calls down His vengeance upon the perjurer. "And the Lord said to me: This flying volume which thou seest is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the earth; for every one that sweareth shall be judged by it. I will bring it forth saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall come to the house of him that sweareth falsely by My Name, and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof." (Zach 5: 3,4 and compare Ezech. 17) As it is a sin to make an oath to do something evil; so it would be another sin to keep it. Example: Herod (Mark 6: 23-28)

Cursing, means to wish any evil to ourselves or to our neighbor, or to any of God's creatures, whereby the name of God is frequently dishonored. Cursing is something very hateful, which betrays a rude, angry temper. From the mouth of a Christian or child of God nothing but 'blessing' ought to come forth (1 Peter 3: 9). Cursing is at the same time an oath, when we call upon

God to punish us if we speak an untruth.

A vow is a voluntary promise made to God to do something that is agreeable to Him, although there be no obligation to do it. It is a real promise by which we deliberately bind ourselves, and not a mere desire or resolution. It is made to God because it is to God alone we make vows. And it is a promise that is agreeable to God, therefore it cannot be anything trifling, sinful, or injurious to others, nor anything that good in itself, but by which something better is prevented or higher duties neglected. The Church teaches us that vows please God and are voluntary offerings made to Him. Thus God kindly accepted the vows of the Patriarch Jacob, and of the pious Anna, the mother of Samuel, and granted their petitions. “And Jacob made a vow saying: If God shall be with me, and I shall return prosperously to my father’s house, of all things that Thou shalt give to me, I will offer tithes to Thee” (Gen. 27: 20-22), “Anna made a vow, saying: O Lord of Hosts, if Thou wilt be mindful of me, and wilt give to Thy servant a man-child, I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life.” (I Kings 1:11)

It is a sacred duty to keep our vows, unless it is impossible to do so. People should, therefore, be very cautious about making vows, and should, in general ask advice of their Confessor, or some other prudent Priest. “If thou vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it. It is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform the things promised.” (Eccles. 5: 3,4)

We must not only refrain from dishonoring the name of God, but we must honor and revere It. We must gratefully praise It, devoutly call upon It, steadily confess It, and exert ourselves to promote Its honor.

Everyone should carefully avoid the shameful habit of cursing and swearing. “A man that sweareth much shall be filled with iniquity, and a scourge shall not depart from his house.” (Ecclus. 23: 12) On the contrary often invoke with devotion the names of Jesus and Mary, especially in temptations against purity. Lastly, we remind our readers that there are many words that are vulgar or crude, and completely unbecoming a child of God. Though they may not be technically classified as cursing, swearing, etc., they are something that we should strive to avoid.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution In England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

CHAPTER VIII

CATHERINE OF ARAGON, FRANCISCAN TERTIARY

(Continued)

About this time, the unfortunate queen learned to her dismay that Fr. John Forest, her former confessor and spiritual adviser, had been imprisoned in Newgate, and that he would soon be led to execution. Despite the danger of having her letter intercepted and thus bringing new sufferings on herself, as well as on her aged father and friend, she nevertheless wrote to him, knowing how much a word of cheer from her would gladden his last hours.¹

My Honoured Father — You who have had so long experience in directing others in doubtful matters, can have no difficulty in directing yourself, for not only will your religion, but your learning also convince you, that

¹ This letter and Bl. John Forest's reply are taken from Stone: *Faithful Unto Death*, pp. 54 seq. The author translates them from Fr. Thomas Bourchier: *Hist. Eccl. de Martyrio FF. Ord. Min.*, remarking that this edition of the friar's valuable history contains the only perfectly correct version of the letters. The Parisian edition of 1586 brings (pp. 53 seq.) a slightly different version of them. Parkinson and Du Boys transcribe the letters from Sander.

you ought to be prepared, if it be necessary, to suffer death for the name of Christ, and under such circumstances not to shrink from so doing. Go onwards, then, and be of good courage, for if in these torments you endure a small amount of pain, you are well assured that you will receive an eternal reward. To relinquish such a reward as this for the dread of the suffering, might well be accounted the act of a confirmed madman.

But alas for me, your daughter! one born to you in the wounds of Christ, whom for a season you leave here in her solitude; leave, I repeat, in the depth of her distress and affliction. And this I may venture to say because I am losing him whom alone I followed in the things of God, because I knew him to be deeply instructed in human and divine knowledge. And of a truth, if I may freely express to you what I wish, I would rather go before you through a thousand torments than follow after you. And even were it possible to obtain what one most earnestly desires, who is there, I ask, who would be content to live upon nothing but hope?

Casting aside therefore my own individual wishes, I would prefer

that the whole of these matters should remain in the hands of Him who gave us Himself for our example. This He did when He said, "Thy will be done," thereby giving up His own will, rather than gratify His own inclinations. You will go before me, yes, you will precede me, but your prayers will obtain for me, that I should follow you along the same pathway, advancing, as I trust, with an ever braver and steadier footstep. Onwards, then; be assured that albeit the pangs that you suffer be grievous, yet I share them along with you. Without doubt, they shall earn for you a crown which never withers, a crown prepared for those who endure for the name of Christ, provided that with unflinching and unwavering courage you suffer the agonies which are awaiting you. Remember your ancient and noble family, and this thought will assuredly animate you to bear with a brave spirit the death which awaits you for the name of Christ. You who are illustrious by the title of your family, will not basely defile its nobility by yielding to the impious demands of the King. I do not forget that you esteem the dignity of your Order in so far, and no farther, as it is correspondent with virtue. Surrender, then, and with all joy, that body of yours to its Creator; that body which for so long a period has led a holy life under the garb of the poor Institute of St. Francis.

And yet, when I, your obedient daughter, remember how great will be the sorrow which I shall endure for your sake, I know not what to say. This arises chiefly from the thought that you are leaving me without comfort of any kind. My abode in this world, and my anticipations, can be nothing else than misery; a real death in a living life. Nevertheless, I trust in the Lord, to whom I have said, "Thou art my lot in the land of the living," that land in which I hope to meet you shortly, when the storms of this world shall have ended, and I shall have passed into the peaceful life of the blessed.

Farewell, my honoured Father, and always remember me in your prayers while on earth, and I trust they will be my chiefest consolation when you shall have obtained an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Your daughter Catherine, with a heart full of sorrow.

As is evident from the tone of the letter, the queen thought that the blessed martyr had only a short time to live.² Her fears were confirmed on the receipt of the following beautiful letter from the saintly friar.

My most serene Lady Queen and my very dear daughter in the heart of Christ Jesus.

² The martyrdom of Bl. John Forest, as we shall see, did not take place till May 22, 1538.

I have received your letters from Thomas, your young servant, and having read them, I experienced an incredible joy by reason of your great steadfastness in the truth which I perceive in you — I mean your faith in the Holy Church your Mother. Standing firm in this, you will assuredly obtain salvation. Nor have you any reason to be doubtful on my account, as if I could submit to disgrace my grey hairs by any such fickleness. In the meantime, I earnestly entreat you to be unwearied in your prayers to God for me (for whose spouse the Church we are suffering so many and so severe torments), that He would receive me into His glory, for which I have striven so frequently as a member of the Order of St. Francis, namely for forty-four years, and am now in the sixty-fourth year of my age. At such a period of life as this a man easily perceives that people can do without him; consequently I am most earnest in my prayer that I may be dissolved to be with Christ.

In the mean season, do you be careful to shun that pestilential teaching of the heretics so thoroughly that; even if an angel were to come down from heaven bringing with him a doctrine different from that which I brought you, on no account ought you to give any credence to his message, but to reject it. Should he advance any revelation which dissents from that which I taught you long ago, give no ear to it, for it does

not come from God. Take these few words as if in place of the consolation which you may expect chiefly from our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I chiefly recommend you, as also to my father St. Francis and St. Catherine, to whom I most earnestly entreat you to pray for me, when you shall hear that I am in the midst of my sufferings. And now I bid you farewell. I have sent my rosary to you, for only three days of my life remain to me.

From a letter which Elizabeth Lady Hammond, one of the queen's faithful gentlewomen addressed to Bl. John Forest we learn how Henry ever anxious to detect some flaw in the queen's conduct had Kimbolton castle closely searched for secret letters and for persons previously expelled from her service; and further, how the king's agents by their threatening attitude terrified the queen and her ladies.³ Thus the dreary year 1535 dragged on, bringing Catherine ever nearer to death's door. "The fury of her enemies," writes Guerin, "increased in proportion as her sufferings grew more intense. She was almost constantly sick in bed."⁴

It was probably in the fall of 1535 that Cranmer visited her and in the king's name commanded her to sign the act recognizing Henry's spiritual supremacy over

3 Stone: *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 58; Strickland, p. 564; Du Boys, p. 508.

4 Guérin, Vol. I, p. 142.

the Church in England. At this, the queen became indignant; but being unable longer to bear up under her hardships, she fainted.⁵ Hatred and revenge possessed Henry's rebellious mind, when he was told of Catherine's refusal to take the oath of supremacy. On November 6 and 21, Chapuys informed the emperor of the danger that threatened the queen and her daughter. He claimed to have it on reliable authority that the king "would no longer remain in the trouble, fear, and suspense he had so long endured, on account of the queen and princess. . . . and that he meant to have them despatched at the next parliament. . . . These are things," he continues, "too monstrous to be believed; but considering what has passed, and goes on daily — the long continuance of these menaces — and, moreover, that the C. . . . (Anne), who long ago conspired the death of the said ladies, and thinks of nothing but getting rid of them, is the person who governs everything, and whom the king is unable to contradict, the matter is very dangerous."⁶ What the faithful ambassador feared never came to pass. The sudden demise of Catherine before the opening of parliament prevented Henry from taking these last terrible measures against his faithful and saintly queen.

About this time, an incident

5 Ibidem, Vol. I, p. 143.

6 Stone: *Mary the First, Queen of England*, p. 90.

occurred which shows how even to the very end the queen enjoyed the love and favor of the lower classes. A workman of Grantham near Kimbolton, while working in his field, accidentally unearthed a huge brass pot that contained besides some silver chains and ancient rolls of parchment, a large helmet of pure gold set with precious stones. Thinking of the queen in her poverty, he brought the treasures to the castle, with the request that they be given to her. But Catherine was already at death's door.⁷

In the latter part of December, Catherine realized that her end was near. When Chapuys, whom she had summoned for a last interview, arrived at the castle, he found her in a pitiable condition. Seeing at a glance that it was now only a question of a few days till death would come to her relief, he decided to stay with her to the end.⁸ On New Year's day, Lady Willoughby who thirty years before had attended Catherine as maid of honor, by sheer strategy gained access to her.⁹ We are told that frequently in a state of delirium the dying queen imagining her daughter near would stretch forth her arms and exclaim, "Mary, my child!"¹⁰ Humbly she begged the king for a last interview with the princess

7 Du Boys, p. 504, on the authority of Harpsfield.

8 Stone, *Mary . . . of England*, p. 92.

9 Strickland, p. 567.

10 Guérin, p. 143.

for whose sake she had borne her heavy cross these many years. But even now the cruel despot remained cold and obdurate. At last, only a few days before her death, Catherine called one of her maids to her bedside and dictated the following pathetic letter to her unworthy consort:¹¹

My Lord and dear Husband:—

I commend me unto you. The hour of my death draweth fast on, and, my case being such, the tender love I owe you fortieth me, with a few words, to put you in remembrance of the health and safeguard of your soul, which you ought to prefer before all worldly matters and before the care and tendering of your own body, for the which you have cast me into many miseries and yourself into many cares. For my part I do pardon you all; yet, I do wish and devoutly pray God that He will also pardon you.

For the rest I commend unto you Mary, our daughter, beseeching you to be a good father unto her, as I heretofore desired. I entreat you also, on behalf of my maids, to give them marriage-portions, which is not much, they being but three. For all my other servants I solicit a year's pay more than their due, lest they should be unprovided for.

Lastly do I vow that mine eyes desire you above all things.

It is said that Henry wept when

¹¹ Strickland, pp. 564 seq.

he read this touching avowal of his rejected queen's undying love and loyalty.¹² But alas! his better self was wholly enfettered by one whose only hope of complete triumph lay in the death of the noble queen.

During the visit of Chapuys and Lady Willoughby, Catherine rallied somewhat. There was still hope for a temporary recovery, so that on January 5, the ambassador deemed it safe and advisable to leave Kimbolton. He promised, however, to return at the first intimation of danger. On January 9, he asked Cromwell for an audience with the king. How shocked he was when in reply he received the sad news that forty-eight hours after his departure from Kimbolton Catherine had suddenly passed away. Sir Edmund Bedingfield announced her demise in these words: "January 7th, about ten o'clock the lady-dowager was *aneled* with the holy ointment, Master Chamberlayne and I being called to the same, and before two in the afternoon she departed to God."¹³

"The suddenness of her end, and the circumstances immediately following it, caused so much suspicion, that at the time there was hardly any one who did not firmly believe that she had been poisoned."¹⁴ According to the

¹² Sander, p. 85.

¹³ Strickland, p. 588, on the authority of the State Papers.

¹⁴ Stone: *Mary. . . of England*, p. 92. Whether the king was in any way

ambassador's subsequent letter to the emperor, Catherine died two hours after midday, and eight hours later an autopsy was held in the greatest secrecy. Neither the bishop of Llandaff, confessor of the queen, nor her physician were allowed to be present. Immediately after, one of the three men who at the king's command had performed the examination confided the results to the queen's confessor, "but in great secrecy, as a thing which would cost his life. . . . On my man," continues the ambassador, "asking the physician if she had died of poison, he replied that the thing was too evident, by what has been said to the bishop, her confessor, and if that had not been disclosed, the thing was sufficiently clear from the report and circumstances of the illness."

In the same letter of Chapuys we are informed how the king and his court party rejoiced when the news arrived that Catherine was dead. The next day, on Sunday, Henry "was clad all over in yellow, from top to toe." After dinner, he proceeded to the hall

implicated in this heinous crime is not known. As we have seen, he certainly longed for Catherine's end, and he probably would have had her condemned to death and executed by the next parliament. As to Anne Boleyn's share in the murder of the queen, Gasquet, in his *Henry VIII*; and *the English Monasteries* (Vol. I, p. 285), declares on the authority of Friedmann that the crime was perpetrated "if not at the instigation, at least with the connivance of Anne Boleyn."

where the ladies were dancing and acted "like one transported with joy." Having sent for the infant Elizabeth, he took her in his arms and presented her to his fawning courtiers. No less exultant was Anne Boleyn. "Now," she exclaimed, "I am indeed a queen!" Hastening to her parents, she bade them be glad with her, for now her triumph was complete. On the day of the queen's funeral, Anne out of contempt for Catherine appeared in yellow and made her ladies do the same, although the king had commanded black to be worn on that day.¹⁵ Mary was heartbroken when she heard of her mother's sudden demise. "Of the princess, my cousin," the emperor wrote, "I hear only that she is inconsolable at the loss she has sustained, especially when she thinks of her father's past behaviour towards her, and the little favour she can expect for the future."¹⁶

The last will of Catherine bears eloquent testimony to the eminent virtues that marked her sad but glorious career.¹⁷ The first provision she made was that her

15 Strickland, p. 878. Could the wretched woman have only foreseen what was in store for her. Henry's aversion to her gradually became more pronounced. On May 9, four months after the death of Queen Catherine, he had her tried and condemned to death for high treason, and that by the very parliament that would probably have passed the *same* sentence on the rightful queen.

16 Stone: *Mary . . . of England*, p. 98.

17 Strickland, p. 569, quotes the will from Strype's Memorials.

body “be buried in a convent of Observant friars.”¹⁸ In life the royal Tertiary had ever cherished the highest regard for the sons of St. Francis, and hoping perhaps that in time they would be allowed to return to their convents, the saintly queen could find no more suitable resting place after death than in the midst of those who like her had suffered for justice sake. But alas! her dying wish was entirely disregarded. Writing to Lady Bedingfield¹⁹ on arranging for the funeral of his “dearest sister lady Catherine,” the *king* ordered that, on January 26, the corpse should be escorted by the principal gentry of Kimbolton to Peterborough, about four miles north, and interred in the abbey church. At the subsequent suppression and spoilation of the religious houses in the kingdom, Henry made some show of regard for the queen he had wronged, and spared the beautiful abbey church, where as late as 1847, the old verger still pointed out to travelers the little brass plate that marked the last resting place of the glorious Tertiary Queen Catherine

18 Stone: *Faithful Unto Death*, p. 62, quotes a letter of Chapuys to the emperor, dated January 21, 1536. In this letter, the ambassador writes: “The Lady Catherine, in her memorandum of last wishes, desired to be buried in a convent of Observant friars. Cromwell replied that as to the burial it could not be done as she had desired, for there remained no convent of the Observants in England.”

19 Strickland, p. 571, quotes the letter.

of Aragon.²⁰

Concerning Kimbolton Castle, Timbs informs us that “the room in which she (Catherine) died remains. The chest, in which she kept her clothes and jewels, her own cipher on the lid, still lies at the foot of the grand staircase.”²¹ From a letter of Horace Walpole, dated June 22, 1772, we learn that at Ampthill “nothing remains of the castle, nor any marks of residence but a small garden.” At his suggestion, a cross was erected to Catherine’s memory, on which he had engraved the following verses :

In days of old, here Ampthill’s
towers were seen,

The mournful refuge of an
injured queen.²²

Every student of this period of English history is acquainted with Shakespeare’s drama, *King Henry the Eighth*. The poet’s sympathetic treatment of Queen Catherine of Aragon mirrors the sentiments of the English nation in the beginning of the seventeenth century. To show how correct historically is Shakespeare’s delineation of her character we take the liberty, even at the risk of wearying the reader, to quote at some length from H. N. Hudson’s commentary on the play. His remarks will serve at the same time as a summary of the queen’s many beautiful traits.

20 Ibidem, p. 573.

21 Timbs, p. 497.

22 Strickland, p. 574.

“She maintains the same simple, austere, and solid sweetness of mind and manners through all the changes of fortune. Yet she, too, rises by her humiliation, and is made perfect by suffering, if not in herself, at least to us: for it gives her full sway over those deeper sympathies which are necessary to a just appreciation of the profound and venerable beauty of her character. She is mild, meek, and discreet; and the harmonious blending of these qualities with her high Castillian pride gives her a very peculiar charm. Therewithal she is plain in mind and person; has neither great nor brilliant parts; and of this she is fully aware, for she knows herself thoroughly: but she is nevertheless truly great, — and this is the one truth about her which she does not know, — from the symmetry and composure wherein all the elements of her being stand and move together: so that she presents a remarkable instance of greatness in the whole, with the absence of it in the parts. How clear and exact her judgment and discrimination! Yet we scarce know whence it comes, or how.

From the first broaching of the divorce, she knows the thing is all a foregone conclusion with the king; she is also in full possession of the secret why it is so: she feels her utter helplessness, being, as she is, in a land of strangers, with a capricious tyrant for the party against her, so that no man will dare to befriend her cause with

honest heartiness: that no trial there to be had can be anything but a mockery of justice, for the sole purpose will be to find arguments in support of what is predetermined, and to set a face of truth on a body of falsehood; she has no way therefore but to take care of her own cause; her only help lies in being true to herself; and indeed the modest, gentle, dignified wisdom with which she schools herself to meet the crisis is worth a thousand-fold more than all the defenses that any learning and ingenuity and eloquence could frame in her behalf.

“Her power over our better feelings is in no small degree owing to the impression we take, that she sees through her husband perfectly, yet never in the least betrays to him, and hardly owns to herself, what mean and hateful qualities she knows or feels to be in him. It is not possible to overstate her simple artlessness of mind; while nevertheless her simplicity is of such a texture as to be an overmatch for all the unscrupulous wiles by which she is beset. Her betrayers, with all their mazy craft, can neither keep from her the secret of their thoughts nor turn her knowledge of it into any blemish of her innocence; nor is she less brave to face their purpose than penetrating to discover it. And when her resolution is fixed, that “nothing but death shall e’er divorce her dignities,” it is not, and we feel it is not, that she holds the accidents

of her position for one iota more than they are worth; but that these are to her the necessary symbols of her honor as a wife, and the inseparable garments of her delicacy as a woman; and as such they have so grown in with her life, that she can not survive the parting with them; to say nothing of how they are bound up with her sentiments of duty, of ancestral reverence, and of self-respect. Moreover many hard, hard trials have made her conscious of her sterling virtue: she has borne too much, and borne it too well, to be ignorant of what she is and how much better things she has deserved; she knows, as she alone can know, that patience has had its perfect work with her: and this knowledge of her solid and true worth, so sorely tried, so fully proved, enhances to her sense the insult and wrong that are put upon her, making them eat like rust into her soul. . .

“Catherine in her seclusion, and discrowned of all but her honor and her sorrow, is one of the

author’s noblest and sweetest deliverances. She there leads a life of homely simplicity. Always beautiful on the throne, in her humiliation she is more beautiful still. She carries to the place no grudge or resentment or bitterness towards any; nothing but faith, hope, and charity; a touching example of womanly virtue and gentleness; hourly in heaven for her enemies; her heart garrisoned with ‘the peace that passeth all understanding.’ Candid and plain to herself, she loves and honours plainness and candour in others; and it seems a positive relief to her to hear the best-spoken that can be of the fallen great men who did more than all the rest to work her fall. Her calling the messenger ‘saucy fellow,’ who breaks in so abruptly upon her, discloses just enough of human weakness to make us feel that she is not quite an angel yet; and in her death scene we have the divinest notes of a ‘soul by resignation sanctified.’”²³

23 Hudson: *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Character*, Vol II, pp. 196 seq.



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The Four Marks

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part 2

The third mark of the Roman Catholic Church is Catholic or universal.

The explanation of this mark should be understood in this manner: the Catholic Faith is meant for people of all races, cultures and ethnic backgrounds. No one is to be excluded from the Church regardless of whom they are or where they are from.

This makes perfect sense and is in direct conformity with the command of Our Lord when He said to go teach all nations. One can easily conclude that Christ did not exclude anyone in that statement. He did not say teach everyone except the Chinese. Nor did He say to convert all except the Australians or the Russians. It was at that time and still is His express desire that all people of the earth be converted to the One True Faith.

Our Lord's perfection of knowing all things could foresee that not everyone would accept the Holy Gospels. This is simply why He told the Apostles it

would be necessary to "shake the dust from your sandals" and move on to the next town. It was clear then, and is clear now, that not all who hear the Gospel will make use of their free will in such a manner so as to bring about their eternal salvation.

It took many years but the Gospel reached the most remote places on the earth. Along the way, many who had not previously heard these same Gospels were converted. St. Thomas converted souls in India. St. Francis Xavier went to India and Japan. St. Peter Baptist, a Franciscan, went to Japan and along with twenty-six others, died as martyrs in 1597. Many other missionaries of different religious communities left their homelands and went to distant lands. The Gospels were preached in China, Alaska, the Pacific Islands, the jungles of Africa and the most remote places of South America.

Early in the history of the United States, Catholic missionaries traveled into the regions occupied by the American Indians. Some tribes were friendly, while others were quite savage and violent. St.

Isaac Jogues and his companions were martyred by the Mohawk Indians in upstate New York, in 1646. An unknown number of Franciscan missionaries were martyred in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in 16th and 17th centuries.

Bibles, missals for lay use, and various other catechetical books have been translated into many languages for the express purpose of facilitating the conversion of souls. Historically speaking, the Catholic Press and the Office of the Propagation of the Faith have been instrumental in defending and promoting the True Faith in our native lands and the foreign missions.

Unlike other sects and false religions, the Roman Catholic Church has demonstrated its purpose and successes in all lands, both domestic and foreign. In doing so, proof is there for all to see that it is the one religion that has been given to us by Our Lord which is meant for all men, in all places and times. It truly is universal.

The fourth mark is apostolic. This mark provides the historical and doctrinal connection to the apostles.

Many Protestant sects claim their connection to the Apostles but they are all mistaken. Those ties were severed with Martin Luther and Henry VIII. Concerning the Anglican Orders, it was confirmed by the Church with the papal encyclical *Apostolicae Curae* (Pope Leo XIII) in 1896 that Anglican Orders are invalid.

It is only the Roman Catholic Church which has a legitimate claim to Apostolic Succession. This is proven by providing the lineage of a living Catholic bishop, such as Bp. Giles Butler, OFM, or Bp. Luis Madrigal and tracing their episcopal predecessors back to the Apostles.

It must be admitted this task is not easy. Finding the proper documents of each preceding bishop is not always humanly possible because of human events and natural acts (fires, floods and intentional destruction by the Church's enemies during wars or revolutions) are just a few reasons which make such an effort quite difficult.

It becomes much easier to understand the lineage when one looks at the bishops as a whole. The paths (historical lineage)

of many bishops cross each other because one bishop may consecrate more than one bishop during his lifetime. As a result the “successions” are interconnected with multiple bishops. As one goes back in time this actually assures to a greater degree the proper lineage.

The large number of bishops throughout the world (historically speaking) is good when considering apostolic succession. Although it would be a paper nightmare to lay out the history, it does make it increasingly difficult for the doubters to disprove the proper succession, and, therefore, the fourth mark of the Church.

Heretical bishops break any line of succession although the line is recognized by the Church among the Eastern Orthodox. For the purposes of this article this means the present-day Modernists have broken the succession. They, of course, will not agree with this statement but history and the practice of the Church proves it. The hierarchy in the future will be left to officially decide these matters.

It should be noted that the Modernists have publicly (in

writing) recognized the priestly and episcopal orders of the Franciscan Friars. I’m sure they would rather not, but the legitimacy of the orders of Archbishop Ngo Dinc Thuc cannot be denied.

The mark of apostolicity has helped in a way that few would know or understand as to who is a legitimate successor of the Apostles and who is not. At this present time there are numerous persons who consider themselves legitimate bishops and popes. Yes, there are antipopes beyond Rome presently in the Church today, and there are more who believe they have valid episcopal orders.

With such disorder and confusion, many souls are unwittingly misled. Only God knows if or when this will all be corrected. For our part, let us educate ourselves according to the teachings of Holy Mother Church on her four marks and remain within her bosom to the end of our earthly lives.



Heresy in Rome

Bishop Giles OFM

We frequently are questioned regarding unity with Rome. Recently we received an email, suggesting that we should not separate from Rome but work and pray as St. Catherine of Siena did. So it seems appropriate to bring some of these ideas to the forefront once again.

We must first begin by distinguishing between “schism” and “heresy.” It is often said that schism and heresy are two sides of the same coin, and this is often the case, but there is a real and practical distinction to be made. Schism is the breaking of the unity of the Church. Heresy is a denial of doctrine. Both cut one off from the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. The Heretic, by refusing to accept the teachings of the Church, likewise rejects the authority of the Church to teach, and becomes guilty of schism. The person in schism, refuses obedience to the authority of the Church and thus denies the doctrine of infallibility, and becomes guilty of heresy.

When we are dealing with simple schism, we can, with a degree of hopefulness pray and work

for unity, before there enters the complete loss of faith brought on by heresy. The schismatic may just have to overcome the vice of pride, and humble himself to the true authority in the Church; he does not have to completely change his beliefs. The simple heretic, however, has a false belief that must be overcome. It is not just a matter of the heretic humbling himself and accepting unity with the true Church. The heretic has rejected the teachings of the True Church, so he must be first brought to conversion and then back to unity.

In the time of St. Catherine, we read of what has become known as “The Great Western Schism” where there was more than one claimant to the papacy. St. Catherine worked and prayed for the restoration of unity and defended the papacy. The Church has canonized Saints from the different sides of this schism. The people at that time were often deceived (even the saints) as to who the true pope was, but they maintained the faith on the various sides. If one of the schismatic sides had espoused heresy then the

heretical side could no longer produce any saints. The heretic, as we have seen, with his false doctrines, commits one of the gravest sins of idolatry. His false doctrines have led him to a false worship.

We often look back upon this history with great interest, but our day is not the same. We do have many claimants to the papacy, but from our perspective none of them are legitimate. They are not only in schism, but they are heretics. We do not desire unity with any heretic, no matter how appealing his claim to the papacy may be. Every heretic is outside the Church and has no authority in the Church – even if the whole world honors him with the title of pope.

We have not left the Church nor have we broken with the papacy. While the Modernists infiltrated Rome and presented themselves as Catholics and led the masses into heresy, we have not moved, but remained steadfast in the True Faith. These Modernist heretics have been denounced. We have not broken away from them, because we never were in union with them. We do not seek or even desire union with the Modernist heretics that have

usurped control of Rome and the Vatican.

The only union that can ever exist will be if the Modernist heretics will renounce their heresy and be brought back into the Church by us or by another true Catholic bishop. As the true Catholic bishops are relatively few and unrecognized by the world, we do not see this as likely to happen. (At least humanly speaking.)

It seems we cannot repeat it often enough, that the Novus Ordo is NOT the Catholic Church. The “popes” and “bishops” of this sect are not Catholic popes or bishops. The “religious” orders of this sect are not the Catholic religious orders. All the members and followers this new church are heretics and not Catholic.

Our prayers and work then, are not for unity with the Modernist heretics, but for the conversion of the Modernist heretic. We are likewise convinced that God, and St. Catherine, as well as all the saints in Heaven would agree.

The Modernists that occupy the Vatican at this time obviously love to promote the idea of “unity” with all religions. Recall the different times when every

false religion was welcomed to come and “pray for peace.” They desecrated the places that were once made holy by St. Francis of Assisi in his true efforts for man’s peace with God. The Modernists pray and seek for man’s peace with: the world, idolatry, heresy, evil, and sin.

We realize that many commonly desire to obtain “peace at any price” or “unity at any price.” This, however is foolishness. Peace through oppression is not really peace. Security at the cost of liberty is not true security. Unity at the cost of orthodoxy is not unity.

With the anti-pope “Francis” (Bergoglio) and all those who are in union with him in the heretical Modernist Novus Ordo Church; there can be NO compromise or unity. There is no compromise or unity between truth and falsehood; good and evil; Jesus and Lucifer. With

God and with His Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, there is and can be absolutely no unity with heresy.

In the time of St. Catherine and the Western Schism we see that people were seeking the truth, they wanted to know who the true pope was. Our world today, is mostly indifferent. In those days it was not a matter of heresy as much as it was one of schism. Today, however, it is a matter of heresy and not so much a matter of schism. Today, the various heretics and pagans seem to be very much in union in liberal Modernism. All the evil of the world and hell has conspired against the true Church and in this they have unity.

While we would love to have unity with many more souls, we desire never to obtain this “unity” through the sacrifice of truth and the Faith.

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Schism and Heresy

Taken from: *My Catholic Faith* by Louis LaRavoire Morrow

What is schism; and what is heresy? — Schism is the act of refusing to submit to the authority of the Pope; heresy is the formal and deliberate denial or doubt of any revealed truth of the Catholic Faith.

Apostasy is the total rejection of his Faith by a baptized Catholic. With heresy and schism, and supported by persecution, it has caused divisions in the True Church, and the rise of other churches.

1. *Christ* predicted divisions in the Church, and the rise of other churches. From the time of the Apostles new denominations have sprung up, and have divided and subdivided, to form other denominations. With other churches that are non-Christian, the Christian denominations have opposed the Apostolic Church.

“For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (Matt. 24:24)

2. The *difference* between a heretical and a schismatical church is this: while both may believe in the same doctrines, the schismatical church has valid orders and sacraments, but the heretical church has not.

What were the most important
NOVEMBER 2014

schisms and heresies that have tried to destroy the Church? — Of the numerous schisms and heresies, the following may be mentioned:

1. Arius was a priest of Alexandria who taught that Jesus Christ was not God. The *heresy of Arius* spread rapidly, and was supported, by the Roman emperors. He was condemned by the First General Council of the Church, at Nicea, in the year 325; the Council declared the divinity of Christ.

In a few centuries the Arian sect was divided and swept away by other errors. Today we know Arius only by name; he has passed on, but the Church he fought still lives, upholding Christ’s divinity.

Another heretic of the early days was Macedonins, who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. His theories were condemned by the Council of Constantinople in the year 381.

In the fifth century Pelagius denied original sin, and declared grace not necessary for salvation. The doctrines were condemned by the synods of Milevi and Carthage, and the decision ratified by the Pope.

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, in the fifth century taught the doctrine that Jesus Christ was two persons: a man and God the Son; only the man Jesus was born

of Mary and died on the cross. As a consequence, the Nestorians rejected the title “Mother of God” for the Blessed Virgin. The Third Council in Ephesus, 431, condemned the heresies.

As a form of extreme reaction from Nestorianism, the Monophysites held that Jesus Christ had only one nature, his divinity totally engulfing his humanity. Dioscoros, Patriarch of Alexandria, was the chief propagator of the heresy, which was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

In an effort to call back the Monophysites to the Church, the heresy of Monothelitism arose. The chief doctrine was that Christ had a single will; the heresy was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 681.

In the year 727, the Greek emperor Leo forbade all veneration to images on the ground that such veneration was idolatry. The heresy spread, and mobs entered churches to break images, to burn and destroy priceless works of art. Great harm was done to the people and their faith, before this heresy, called Iconoclasm (image-breaking), died out. The Council of Nicea in 787 defined the true doctrine of the Church.

2. The *greatest* schism suffered by the Christian Church was that of the East, resulting in the establishment of the Orthodox Eastern Church. The Eastern emperors, desiring more

power in the Church, tried to make the patriarchs of Constantinople independent of Rome. Finally, Photius, with the support of the emperor, held a council of Eastern bishops in the year 867, and broke from Rome.

The cause of the schism was not doctrinal, but rather political and material, — jealousy between the East and the West. It has resulted in the separation from Rome of 145 million people with valid priesthood and sacraments. In the United States there are a number of schismatical churches, among them the Greek Orthodox, and the Russian Church.

(a) After minor schisms and misunderstandings between East and West there was a final break by Cerularius, patriarch of Constantinople continuing today.

Today the Orthodox Eastern Church remains in schism, but does not spread. It is a withered branch, having cut itself off from the parent tree.

(b) The Orthodox Eastern Church denies the Catholic dogma that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. It also teaches that the souls of the just will not attain complete happiness till the end of the world, when they will be joined to their bodies; and that the souls of the wicked will not suffer complete torture in hell until that last day. These are

heresies against the doctrines of the Church.

Thus it can be seen that today the Orthodox Eastern Church is not merely schismatical, but truly heretical; for it holds primary doctrines in a different light. But it has valid orders.

In the 12th century *Albigensianism* arose in southern France. It upheld dualism: two opposing creative principles, the good creating the spiritual world, and the evil creating the material world.

The Albigenses went to excesses, recommending suicide, forbidding marriage, asserting that Our Lord did not have a human body, denying the resurrection of the body. The heresy was condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215.

4. As an offshoot of Albigensianism, *Waldensianism* spread throughout Spain, Lombardy, Bohemia, and neighboring countries. The heresy continued until the outbreak of Protestantism, when it merged with this.

The Waldenses denied the existence of Purgatory, combatted indulgences, asserted that laymen could preach and absolve, oaths were unlawful, sinful priests had no valid power of ministry, etc.

But out of evil God has often drawn good. Each schism and heresy has led to profound study in the Church, study of scholars to discover the correct interpretation of doctrine under dispute. In this way light came from darkness. As wise St. Augustine said: "Those who err in doctrine only serve to show forth more clearly the soundness of those who believe aright."

5. In the fourteenth century, *Wycliff* in England taught that the Bible was the 'sole rule of faith, that there was no freedom of the will, that Confession was useless, that the Pope had no primacy.

Adopting the theories of *Wycliff*, *Huss* in Bohemia spread the errors. Political considerations complicated the heresy; fighting broke out, lasting years.

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Franciscan Saints

NOVEMBER 20

THE SERVANT OF GOD PAUL PIUS PERAZZO

Confessor, Third Order

Today's sketch deals not with a hermit, nor a monk, nor a little plaster saint, but with an everyday train despatcher, proof again that no station in life is a hindrance to holiness. Moreover, the subject does not take us back a few hundred years. He belongs to more recent times, having died in 1911, and he is already far along the way to be declared blessed.

Turin, the city that has gained fame for the saintly priests it produced — Don Bosco, Cottolengo, and Cafasso — is also associated with the name of Paul Pius Perazzo. He was born on July 5, 1846, at Nizza, Monferrato, of exceptional parents, who reared their boy to be one of God's little soldiers. He took everything with a most astounding realization of God's providence. One day, as a little boy, he was fanning the coals in the open fireplace, and stumbled right into the coals. His clothes caught fire and he

got some very bad burns. But he never uttered a whimper, nor shed a tear. Only, ruefully regarding his crippled thumb, he said: "Mamma, I guess I shall never be able to write again; that thumb will never behave any more."

He once lost first place in class, and the professor felt called upon to sympathize with him. "Never mind, Paul, you'll beat him again next time." "Oh, professor," said Paul with genuine astonishment in his tone, "I have never thought of studying to beat others. Only for the fun of it, and because that is what I am here for."

But he went in for study in a way that began taking toll of his health. So his priestly uncle, who supervised his studies, advised that he be put to work before it was too late. And that is how Paul got to be a railroader.

He found it difficult to give up formal application to study, but continued privately to keep

informed in certain branches that would be serviceable to him in railroad work. He worked for five years without a salary, sometimes for ten, twelve, or more hours a day. He got to be a small-town freight clerk then, and in 1867 he was promoted to Turin itself.

Meanwhile a nice young lady fell in love with the dignified and yet charming young railroad clerk. Her mother consulted Mother Perazzo. Since it was really a desirable match, for the girl was a good girl and well-to-do, Paul's mother put the case before him. "Just as you say, mother," was the reply. But his mother had no intention of deciding the matter for him: "It is for you to say, not for me," she told him. "Very well then, mother," he replied in his own charming way, "if I am to make the choice, shall we say the affair is off once and for all?" And that is how it happened that Paul lived and died a bachelor.

But he took another bride, and that was the Church, in whose teachings he became more and more interested,

the better to meet the anti-Catholic and anti-religious attacks that were so bitter at that time, especially among men of his class. He joined the Third Order of St. Francis on St. Joseph's day in 1875, and became a real apostle for the truth by word and example. That gained for him the respect of his associates, but it also prepared the way for the hardest trial an ambitious young man can meet. Young Perazzo was making good when the crudest sort of discrimination was begun against him on account of his religious convictions and his refusal to drop the practice of his religion.

It showed itself first in little annoyances. His pay was not advanced while others about him, that owed everything to him, rose constantly. In 1886, after twenty-five years of service, he was indeed made assistant freight agent at Porta Nuova in Turin, and two years later chief agent. But then, unheard of responsibilities had also been added to the work and every excuse was found to rob him of his holidays.

When the time came that he

was eligible for promotion, he was totally ignored and younger men got the positions over his head. He remained freight agent at Porta Nuova for twenty years without a promotion or an increase in salary. An influential friend made an appeal in his behalf, only to be waived aside with the contemptuous remark that “the government had no money for prayer-patterers like Perazzo or to pass on to priests and monks.”

In 1911 he would have completed fifty years of service and been eligible for a pension, but, instead, they found reason to dismiss him with two days’ notice in the year 1908. He died November 22, 1911, in the year that he should have been pensioned, and went where services like his are appreciated.

ADVERSITIES ARE STEPPING-STONES TO SANCTITY

1. When we reflect how heroically Paul Perazzo bore the annoyances and injustices that were meted out to him in his work, we do not wonder that his process for beatification was taken up almost the moment he

closed his eyes in death. God had tried His servant and had found him faithful. “Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation” (Ecclus. 2:5). And St. James says: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life.” — Can you expect to be crowned if you are not willing to be subjected to trial?

2. The trials that beset our servant of God extended over nearly half a century. A less saintly man would have given up the fight long before. He would either have quietly given up the Faith or at least have ceased to love and practice it; or he would have grown embittered with everything and everybody and taken it out in spite. Not so our good Paul. He stuck to his work, was faithful to his religious practices, and sociable with his fellow workers. He used these trials as stepping-stones to sanctity, and though the road was long and weary at times, he was rewarded in the end by meeting the God of sanctity, who welcomed him to the land of eternal rest. — If in

our trials and sufferings we imitate the conduct of Paul Perazzo, we, too, shall attain to sanctity that will be our passport to heavenly bliss.

3. The extent of our love of God is manifested by the manner in which we bear the trials He sends us. "Brave as death itself is love," as the holy martyrs have proved. Yet, those who have shed their blood for the Faith are not the only martyrs. Fidelity to duty is a slow martyrdom requiring sacrifice and sufferings that are equal to bodily martyrdom and sometimes demanding greater fortitude because of the length of time they afflict us. Here again we can look up to our servant of God as a shining example of this twentieth century of ours. Love of God alone could have induced him to hold fast to the Faith when

he saw himself discriminated against because of his religious convictions and confronted with trials that would indeed be a test for the stoutest character. But he persevered, and as St. Matthew tells us (24:13), "He who shall persevere to the end, shall be saved." — Profit by the successive trials of life to gain the strength and courage of Paul Perazzo, and they will become stepping-stones from earth to heaven.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(Secret, Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost)

Look with mercy, we beseech Thee, O Lord, upon our homage, that the Gift we offer may be accepted by Thee and be the support of our frailty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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TRANSLATED BY BERNARD A. HAUSMANN, S.J.

FROM THE GERMAN BY CHRISTIAN PESCH, S.J.

CHAPTER XVII

Sympathy With the Sorrows of the Heart of Jesus

*“Could you not watch one
hour with Me?” (Mt. 26:40.)*

1. Devotion to the mental sufferings of Christ is a devotion peculiarly adapted to the spirit of our age. Our age in contrast with past ages emphasizes the personal element rather than external facts. We find that in philosophy psychology is predominant, in literature questions of character development are treated by preference, in religion the inner life is emphasized. If we admit that this tendency is justified, we have at once a recommendation for the devotion to the Sacred Heart; for it is mainly a devotion of an internal nature; it attempts to comprehend the sentiments of Jesus; it deals with the most excellent personality which ever graced our earth; it strives to understand the mental anguish of our Saviour and to sympathize with it.

At the dawn of the Christian era, the great obstacle to the spread of Christianity was the passion and death of its Founder, the crucified Christ, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness (cf. I Cor. 1:23). This stumbling block could not be removed by demanding sympathy with the Crucified. On the contrary, neither Jews nor Gentiles would have anything to do with a God worthy of compassion; they wanted a mighty, omnipotent God whom nothing could resist. So the problem of the Church was to show how the passion and death of Christ was a glorious victory over all adverse powers, a victory over sin and over the ruler of the empire of sin. Read the words and letters of the apostles. They never speak of Christ as deserving of sympathy. They speak often enough of His passion and death, but always as a means which brought about the glorification of God and of Christ (cf. Acts 2:22 ff.). The crucified Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (cf. I Cor. 1:24). He will reign “until He

hath put all His enemies under His feet” (Cor. 15:25). The only sympathy that is demanded of us is that we suffer with Christ, that is, carry our cross after Him so that we may also be glorified with Him (cf. Rom. 8:17). The cross, an emblem of shame, was transformed by Christ into a glorious emblem of victory. This fact had repeatedly to be emphasized for Jews and Gentiles alike.

Even in the writings of the Fathers of the Church this conception of the sufferings of Christ is so predominant that we scarcely find a reference to compassion with the sufferings of Christ. This is sufficiently evident from the selections from the Fathers found in the breviary for holy week. Pope Leo the Great begins his homily on Palm Sunday by recalling that the anniversary of the passion of our Lord is a day of great joy for the whole world and that among all the works of God none has so much appeal as subject for meditation as the sufferings of our Redeemer, who, clothed with the weakness of man, conquered the devil. On Holy Thursday we read from St. Augustine, who says: “Consider the glory of the cross. This cross, once an object of the ridicule of

our enemies, now crowns the brows of kings. Its success has proved its power. The world has been conquered not with iron, but with wood.” The lessons on Good Friday and Holy Saturday are of the same tenor, paeans of victory.

Only after the necessity of emphasizing for Jews and Gentiles the victorious power of the cross no longer made itself felt, did meditation on the passion of Christ as an object of our sympathy become more general. In the twelfth century we find in St. Bernard sympathetic utterances about the passion of Christ which must be counted among the tenderest blossoms of mysticism. St. Francis of Assisi was so devout to the bitter passion that God deigned to imprint in his body the holy stigmata. Blessed Angela of Foligno, St. Bridget of Sweden, and many other saints have feelingly described the passion of our Lord. St. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises* tells us that in the meditations on the passion of Christ we must set ourselves to work with much energy, and force ourselves to grieve, to be sad, and to lament at the sight of what our Lord suffers in His humanity, and ask God to feel sorrow with Christ, the Man of Sorrows, sensible affliction with the afflicted Christ, tears and

inward pain for the great pain which Christ suffered for us. Countless books of meditation and of devotion follow this suggestion of the saint in regard to the sacred passion. The devotion to the Sacred Heart, therefore, fully satisfies the present trend of thought, and by its revelation God has accommodated Himself to the needs of our age.

2. *The Bible teaches us the attitude of mind Christ entertained in regard to His sufferings.* The mental sufferings of our Saviour are nowhere so clearly manifested as in the agony in the garden. The evangelists tell us that Jesus began to grow sorrowful, and to be sad, and to be heavy (cf. Mt. 26:37, 38; Mk. 14:33). The extent of this mental anguish is expressed in the words: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." And little wonder! Before the eyes of His imagination He saw clearly, in all their detail, the terrible sufferings which were to begin that very night and were to end only in the afternoon of the following day in the terrifying death on the cross. His whole nature must have recoiled from such suffering. His life was the most valuable of all lives, His body a marvel of the handiwork of the Holy Ghost, a most delicate and sensitive instrument of the soul,

and therefore highly susceptible to pain. And this valuable life, these delicate and perfect members, our Saviour was to surrender to His enemies to maltreat and rend, until, covered with wounds from the soles of His feet to the crown of His head, His torn limbs stretched on the cross and pierced with nails, He breathed His last, surrounded by His foes. All this our Saviour foresaw in His agony in the garden, and the vision filled His soul with sadness and horror.

Repugnance seized Him; He was to sacrifice such perfect treasures to destruction to satisfy for the sins of the whole world, as the prophet Isaias had foretold: "But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins ... and by His bruises we are healed" (Isa. 53:5) and He Himself had said that His blood would be shed unto remission of sins (cf. Mt. 26:28). Christ, therefore, saw how all sin was put on His shoulders (cf. Isa. 53:6), because He had assumed the responsibility for the payment of this enormous debt (Mk. 10:45). Think of the loathing His pure soul had for all sin, since He clearly saw its essential malice. And now the most disgraceful and vulgar crimes which had been committed since the beginning of time or would still be committed before the end of the world

overwhelmed His soul as though He alone were responsible for them all. What indescribable disgust and loathing His soul must have experienced, greater by far than that which would be experienced by a man fastidiously clean who is suddenly thrown into a sewer full of the vilest filth and corruption.

Besides, our Saviour recognized that many, very many, would reward this proof of His immense love with coldness and indifference, even with hatred and contempt, and that, despite all His efforts, they would still rush into eternal ruin. Only if we could fully grasp the greatness of His self-sacrificing love, would we be able to understand the anguish which such ingratitude caused Him.

We can well imagine that there can be pain, and that possibly there has been pain, which, considered merely as physical pain, was greater than the pain which our Saviour endured. But mental anguish comparable to His no man has ever suffered, nor can ever suffer, because no man has such knowledge of what sin really is as He, because no man can love as He loved and hence can feel ingratitude so keenly and bitterly. The sweat of blood endured in the Garden of Olives, the agony of death which cast

Him prostrate on the ground (cf. Lk. 22:43, 44) testify to this more eloquently than words.

Such was the agony of soul which Christ endured in the garden and of which He told St. Margaret Mary Alacoque: "My mental anguish there caused Me keener sufferings than all the rest of My passion, because I saw Myself entirely deserted by heaven and earth and overwhelmed with all the sins of mankind. There I stood before the sanctity of God who crushed Me in His anger without consideration for My innocence . . . as though He had forgotten that He was My Father in order to sacrifice Me to His just anger. No creature can comprehend the greatness of the sufferings which I there endured."

Another fact was revealed by our Lord to St. Margaret Mary; "He let me know," she writes, "that all these pains and all this contempt was present to Him from the first moment of His incarnation and that from that time forward the cross was, so to say, planted in His heart and that to prove His love for us He accepted everything, all the humiliations, the poverty, the pains which His sacred humanity had to endure during the whole period of His terrestrial life, as well

as all the injuries to which His love would expose Him on our altars in the Most Blessed Sacrament.”

We find a confirmation of this revelation in Holy Writ, for St. Paul writes that Christ, at His entrance into this world, offered Himself a sacrifice to His heavenly Father to supplant all the earlier sacrifices (cf. Heb. 10:5 ff.). During His public life on earth Christ repeatedly reminded His apostles of the sufferings which awaited Him in Jerusalem (cf. Mk. 8:31; 9:30; 10:33, 34; Mt. 26:2). He calls His sufferings a baptism and says: “I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how distressed I am until it be accomplished” (Lk. 12:50). On one occasion, when some Gentiles wished to speak to Him, He mentioned the fact that He would be glorified also by the Gentiles, but only after His death on the cross; and at this reminder of the future, His soul was troubled to its depths and He prayed: “Father, save Me from this hour.” But He added at once, as though correcting Himself: “No, this is why I came to this hour,” namely, to glorify the Father by My death; “Father glorify Thy name” (Jn. 12:23 ff.).

The physical sufferings of Christ from the Garden of

Olives to Calvary lasted only about eighteen hours. Yet the whole life of Christ was hard and difficult; and what is more, his mental sufferings, the anguish of His soul because of His pre-vision of all that men would do to Him, were never for a moment out of his consciousness and made His whole life a veritable way of the cross.

3. *We must not forget the anguish of soul of our Saviour nor recall it coldly and with indifference;* but we must meditate sympathetically on whatever He has done for love of us to promote our salvation, and gratefully return love for love. The man who really believes that the Son of God came from heaven for love of us and suffered such indescribable anguish in His humanity must, if he possesses a truly human heart, burn with love of Him, sympathize tenderly with His sufferings, especially those of His soul, and try to make reparation for all the ingratitude of men. We Catholics believe in the incarnation of the Son of God; we believe that He has redeemed us by His passion and death; we believe that He requests a return of love, sympathy, reparation; and we may take it for granted that we do wish to

comply with this request of our best Friend. But how?

Love demands a return of love; unless we return His love, Jesus cannot love us with the love of friendship. Although He loves all men, He, nevertheless, distinguishes between those who belong to Him as His own and those who do not. In His prayer He commends His friends to His heavenly Father in a special manner; for He adds: "Not for the world do I pray, but for those whom Thou hast given Me" (Jn. 17:9). He calls them His friends because He has revealed Himself to them without reservation (cf. Jn. 15:15). Our devotion to Jesus must correspond to His complete and perfect devotion to us. Our life must be His. Everything, really everything that we think, wish, desire, do, must be consecrated to Him. Such is the exhortation of the Apostle (cf. Col. 3:17). The whole value of our life is measured by our union with our Saviour; without Him our life is valueless (Jn. 15:5, 6). Let us, then, consecrate ourselves, our acts, and our sufferings to our Saviour so that for the future we shall live only for His love and glory.

The love of Jesus for us is a self-sacrificing love which has imposed

on Him the greatest sufferings of body and soul. If we are truly friends of His, we shall not forget His sufferings, but remember them sympathetically. We shall not content ourselves with contemplating merely His external sufferings, but shall make the much greater anguish His soul endured for our sake a special object of veneration. Our Saviour asked St. Margaret Mary to taste with Him to the last drop the agony in the garden one hour each week during the night from Thursday to Friday, and to make this meditation prostrate on the ground in order to sweeten to some extent the bitter sorrow of His loneliness. Our Saviour does not demand this of us; yet we can, nevertheless, see in this request how pleasing to Him devotion to His anguish of soul is. For a heart burning with love of Him, that is sufficient; it will certainly render Him this service of love.

The third object of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, expressly declared to be such by our Saviour, is reparation for all the injuries to which He is exposed at the hands of so many in the sacrament of His love and which grieve Him so bitterly. He asks for humble and reverent reparation. Surely, a reasonable request!

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