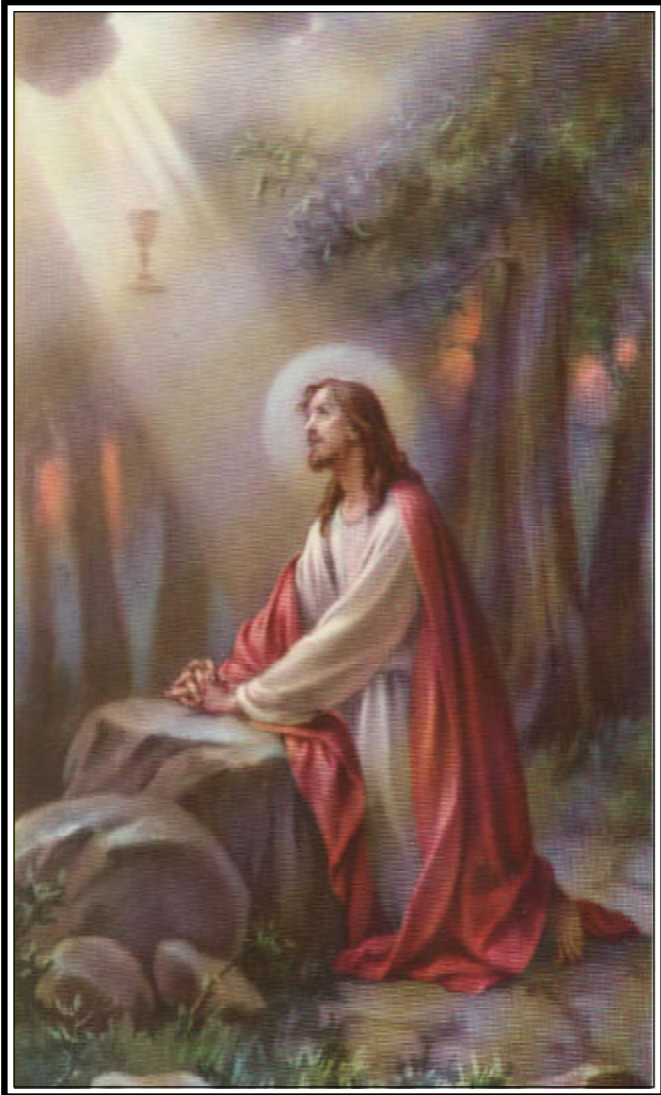


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EDITORIAL

True Devotion to Mary

When people said they could not sleep, I would always suggest that they say the Rosary. It has yet to fail to bring on a sound sleep. Now this may sound disrespectful to the Blessed Mother who instructed the children of Fatima to say the Rosary daily. There is a reason why falling asleep while saying the Rosary is a sure thing.

The simplest reason is Satan. Yes, Satan. We do not realize this because we have been led to believe for the most part that Satan – the Devil – does not exist. Well, let me assure you from direct experience with that spiritual “guy” that he is very, very real.

The last thing the Devil would want you to do is PRAY. See for yourself if this is not true. Start praying; and before you know it, your mind and imagination are wandering everywhere. Did you think this is because you are a scatter-brain? Not at all. You know that you are intelligent and can focus your attention on many material things and even some spiritual ones. The latter, however, not for very long.

Notice how long perceived real or imagined wounds to our pride and vanity keep us occupied for quite a while. See how we seethe with the evil spirit of revenge. We have no difficulty in keeping such things before our mind’s eye and we imagine a lot of things about the terrible person who hurt our “feelings” (Actually, our illusions!) and if there is anything lacking in our slanderous detractions, there is a “spirit” ready to help us conjure up lusciously loathsome insinuations to mask the truth.

But just try to stir up a similar positive sentiment and thought even to the point of desiring to invoke the Blessed Mother and what happens? We fall asleep! That’s what happens.

What happened to our good resolutions to honor the Blessed Virgin, Mary? They fell asleep with our beads waiting for that next Hail Mary that never comes...

There are two little booklets by St. Louis de Monfort dealing with the Rosary: “TRUE DEVOTION TO

MARY” and “THE SECRET OF THE ROSARY”.

I would suggest to everyone who wishes to seriously serve the Blessed Mother to obtain a copy of these two booklets and use them frequently as a kind of manual for saying the Rosary fruitfully.

Particularly useful at this writing is the chapter on “Fighting Distractions” in order to avoid discouragement because we do not realize the true cause of them: Satan! Of course, we also play a part in these distractions by the mere fact that we allow them in so readily. “Fighting distractions” is the proper term: It IS a FIGHT. It is a fight primarily against the Devil.

One day, a good woman asked why it was that she had so many distractions when she tried to pray. I answered: “My dear lady, did you think the Devil wants you to pray? He does everything possible to keep you from praying because he does not want you to be close to God.”

Turn your distractions into a prayer: Tell the Devil you will offer them up for the salvation of sinners. And, watch him run!



**THE MAKING OF A GOOD WILL OR TRUST:
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CONTINUE TO BLESS OTHERS BY
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The Bishop Speaks

Bishop Louis Vezelis OFM

THE REMNANT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AGAINST THE DEMONIC DISORIENTATION OF TRADITIONALISTS McKenna the “Theologian”

Although we have not seen all the “idiosyncrasies” of McKenna the priest, such as locking the church doors so that late-comers might not come in once Mass begins (One wonders what a Fire Marshal might have to say to that – a public building having the people inside locked in), it is enough to “flesh out” a character.

One has yet to figure out WHO this man really is because he goes by several names, such as “Fr. Fidelis McKenna, O.P.,” “Fr. Robert McKenna, O.P.” and then for good measure (one assumes) “Fr. Robert Fidelis McKenna, O.P.”

Those who have bravely persevered thus far in following the heretical and schismatic mind-set of this individual, should be encouraged to continue because this “public figure” – upon whom greatness was “forced” – despite seemingly repeated, pious efforts to avoid the “heavy burden” others would place upon him. This

“heavy burden” was finally “accepted” for the “virtuous” reason that he did not wish to get involved in the disagreements between the bishops. His only too obvious efforts to get himself consecrated as we have seen in the previous articles in The Seraph, have finally borne fruit in the figure of the French Dominican whose “ivory tower reveries” have spawned such an absurd theory concerning popes that one can only conclude to an overheated imagination.

As we shall see when treating more in depth and detail of this man’s “theology,” we will discover the mania that possessed him to exchange loyalty to the sound doctrine and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church to succumb to the demonic trap of vainglory.

If the consequences of all his folly were only limited to himself, one would be inclined to overlook them. They are not confined to him alone, because he has spawned so many false bishops and priests who in turn will spawn others like themselves.

Casting all prudence to the winds, McKenna has completely ignored the injunction of St. Paul: **“Do not**

lay hands hastily upon anyone, and do not be a partner in other men's sins.” (1 Tim. c.5, 22).

How many sins of detraction would be avoided and the Devil routed if those who think themselves to be spiritual would only thoughtfully read the Epistles of St. Paul. In particular, the First Epistle to St. Timothy is so clear and instructive; so filled with supernatural wisdom for daily guidance. He continues in this demon-inspired activity, paying no heed to the sound doctrine and discipline of the bishop whom the Holy Ghost has given to the Remnant Church.

If there is anyone to be pitied in all this nonsense, it is the many misguided souls who for whatever human reason devoid of supernatural grace continue to follow this man to their eternal destruction.

But, then, pity and compassion must not blind us to the terrible reality: These people have freely chosen to damn their own souls. This should be taken as a solemn warning and those who will despise this warning should know that they do so at their own eternal peril. There will be no ridiculous appeal to Canon 209 on judgment day. All illusions and delusions will be exposed for the willful lie that they are.

In the military, a simple test of an individual's real value is to ask him the plain question: "If you were in combat, would you want this man by your side?"

The answer to that question is quite obvious and definitely realistic.

Would you want some vacillating, cowardly creature armed with a deadly weapon next to you while you are defending yourself from an equally armed adversary?

I think we all know the right answer to that one, don't we?

Before entering upon the answer to the question whether or not McKenna is a valid bishop, a prefatory note is needed here.

Shortly after my own consecration, which I can honestly admit came as a surprise, subsequent events made it necessary for me to make a public announcement through The Seraph, that ***I would not recognize anyone as a valid Roman Catholic bishop consecrated after August 24, 1982 in whose election I had no positive deliberation.***

I wish to reiterate and emphasize this very important intention of a bishop

having the authority to make such decisions for the good of the Church.

Nor, should any sane person have a problem with such a practical application of episcopal authority being used to protect those who claim the title “Catholic” from unscrupulous usurpers who would by definition and application of this statement, namely, “usurpers” have stolen episcopal consecration.

It would be redundant to keep returning to McKenna’s frequent contradictory assertions that he does not repudiate the jurisdiction of the bishops while in fact he does by his actions. It’s much like the robber beating his victim and shouting “Help! Help!” at the same time. Onlookers think it is the robber who is the victim.

One is at a loss to follow his line of thinking – if “thinking” is the correct word. His reasoning processes seem to be based on a strange Dominican (?) policy, or, “axiom”. Before presenting the reader with this “axiom,” I would like to know its exact, verifiable origin.

The “axiom” is this: “Never deny, seldom affirm, and always distinguish”. McKenna claims this is an axiom followed by Thomistic philosophers. Does he mean to imply

that this axiom comes from St. Thomas Aquinas? It would seem that he does, because he refers to these “Thomistic philosophers” as “students and disciples of the Common Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas”.

Franciscan philosophers and theologians have all been students of St. Thomas Aquinas. They have agreed with all the correct conclusions flowing from St. Thomas’ meditations on St. Augustine and others.

But, Franciscan philosophers and theologians do not limit themselves to St. Thomas who himself did not set limits upon his works. That’s because St. Thomas was a brilliant mind, but his sanctity forbade him from making himself a “Common Doctor”. Saints hate superfluity especially when directed at them.

As an “axiom” these ideas are like a flat tire...flat only on the bottom. Let’s see: “Never deny.”

If you “never deny” then you must always affirm. The wise man avoids using absolute terms when dealing with people, especially. If you use this phrase in any situation, you have already shot yourself in the foot. We see this abuse of thinking or accusing

when we say “You are always doing that!” “You never obey!”

It would mean that one must not deny heresy or any other kind of error because the “axiom” forbids you to deny: “NEVER DENY”. If a person never denies, it means that he always affirms, unless he refrains from any comment. In that case, he has nothing to say. And, if he says something, all that is said must be understood as affirmed.

The next part of this “axiom” states: “seldom affirm”. But, this becomes irrelevant and contradictory because the first part has already established the mental attitude of the mind.

For, he who sometimes affirms is now contradicting the first part of the “axiom” that would have the mind “never to deny”. “Never to deny” necessarily implies affirmation.

Consequently, the second part of this Dominican axiom is meaningless because the mind affirms everything. If it affirms everything, the mind is never denying anything. If you must not deny heresy, you must necessarily affirm it. You cannot ignore it.

However, I seriously doubt that respectable Dominicans – or, any honest thinker would subscribe to such an axiom.

A simple example will clarify this. In the metaphysical branch of philosophy called “Ontology,” we begin the study of “being”. The first reality facing one’s inquiry is this basic truth: “A thing either is, or, it is not.” There is no middle term no matter what kind of “distinction” is attempted. If one wishes to speak of a “distinction,” then it would be that a thing that IS must be distinguished from a thing that IS NOT. The truth of this observation has validity when correctly applied.

If one “never denies,” there is no way of proceeding to any kind of objective distinction. In fact, there would be no need for any “distinctions” because every distinction implies positive and negative elements. Whenever a distinction is made, something is affirmed and something is denied about the subject of the distinction. But, the axiom says “never deny”. Has not the axiom been violated by making distinctions?

In a letter to one of the faithful asking about fruitful Sacraments and the need for him to be under the bishop in whose territory he functions as a priest, the following excerpts from that letter dated November 7, 1984 clearly sets forth McKenna’s total ambiguity and absurdity.

Bear in mind that at the meeting of several clergymen together with three Bishops: Musey, Zamora and Carmona in Dallas, TX in 1982 just before Pentecost Sunday, it was McKenna himself who was the first to take the floor and protest before a very large gathering of laypeople that prior to coming to this meeting in Dallas, he was having doubts, but now he has no doubt and proclaims that “We are in a state of Sede Vacante!” Soon to follow him was the Hungarian, Vida Elmer.

Without wishing to belabor the constant wishy-washy, back and forth “position” of McKenna between Pentecost of 1982 and his letter of November 7, 1984 where he makes the amazing declaration that the bishops consecrated by Archbishop Ngo have no jurisdiction (authority). Observe his reason:

“Now the fact of the matter is, as you certainly know, that the bishops in question did not receive their appointment from a Pope (whether or not there happens to be one). Therefore their own jurisdiction or Apostolic Succession is not altogether certain—despite much evidence in their favor.”

You will notice that McKenna publicly stated with such “authority” even to the point of ignoring the position of those of us present at the meeting who were the ones uncertain of the whole Sede Vacante position and the agreement of all present not to insist on that point: “We are in a state of Sede Vacante!”

If we were in a “state of Sede Vacante” back in Dallas, TX in 1982, what happened in 1984 that he dogmatically holds (most modestly, of course) that the new bishops (Musey, Carmona, Zamora and now Vezelis) do not have any kind of authority nor can their Apostolic Succession be “altogether certain”? He promotes these ideas far and wide as if it were some kind of teaching of the Church. Certainly, it appeals to anarchists like McKenna; but it is a far cry from orthodox Catholicism.

One is authorized (although without authority according to McKenna) to ask of McKenna: “If these bishops do not have what the Holy Ghost has given them on the day of their consecration, then WHO continues the unbroken line of Apostolic Succession?”

According to Pope Pius XII, heretics, schismatics and excommunicates are not members of

the Roman Catholic Church. Whom would he resurrect from among the deceased pre-Vatican II bishops who has not capitulated, directly or indirectly, to the heresies and errors promoted by the “Popes of Vatican II”?

Also, if McKenna, has made so much of his “doubting the jurisdiction of these bishops” which he claims not to “repudiate,” but does so in the same breath for the simple reason, as he states, that “they have not received a papal mandate How can anyone be consecrated then? How would he expect them to receive a papal mandate (authorization) from someone who is not a Pope? Indeed, how can even HE be consecrated if, as he protests, a papal mandate is necessary? He has already stated on more than one occasion that the See of Peter is vacant. Might it be a deliberate demonic spirit of disobedience that blinds the intellect and forces a person to resort to the most absurd efforts to hide the real truth: Namely, one’s frustration at not having been consecrated? Then, as we will see, all obstacles vanish like the pimples on a face with the application of vanishing cream.

Most people readily forget that there are generally two reasons why people do things: One, the socially acceptable reason that is cheap

window dressing, and the real reason which is hidden and lurks behind the shameful mask of silence.

Incidentally, McKenna pretended to “congratulate” me for taking the side of the bishops (Musey, Carmona and Zamora). The decision had nothing to do with any specific argumentation of Bishop Musey with whom I spent an entire day listening to all the arguments proving that these men (John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I and John Paul II) were not valid Popes. The truth is that I was very troubled in spirit upon leaving Dallas, TX. I knew that there must be a sign from God to dispel all reasonable doubt. I did not know what that sign might be. I was so perplexed with this question that I had forgotten that it was the Vigil of Pentecost (1982). I sat in the airplane wondering how this problem might be solved. For, solved it had to be – one way or another.

And, as I said to Bishop Musey: “The evidence must be such that no reasonable person can deny whatever it might be.”

Then it happened: I was watching the late night news on TV. The time coincided with the time in England. There, in full view of millions of people, Karol Wojtyla, aka “Pope John Paul II” was embracing a

layman attired in the episcopal robes of an Archbishop and saying: “We are sister Churches; we are all seeking the truth.” That was it! How could a true Pope recognize what the Popes since Pope Leo XIII up until Pope Pius XII inclusive have always declared: Anglican Orders are invalid because of default of **form** and **intention**.

Yet, this alleged “Vicar of Jesus Christ” is telling this layman dressed as an Archbishop that the Church of England – the leaders of which butchered priests and laypeople for refusing to deny their faith in the Roman Catholic Church – is somehow a “sister Church”.

If McKenna changed his mind (Again!?) then he must rightfully obey his “Pope” without giving scandal to the world by flaunting his disobedience.

An appeal to some kind of sophistic absurdity by twisting terminology does not change the objective reality: Either the man occupying the Chair of Peter (The office of Pope) is a valid and legitimate Pope, or, he is not. It’s just that simple. We can forget all the sophistic squirming and throw aside the veil of vanity and say with simplistic honesty: “Like the emperor and his new clothes, McKenna is stark naked!”

Those who sincerely recognize these men since the death of Pope Pius XII to be valid Popes are **bound in conscience** not only to obey them but must also obey the bishops in union with these Popes. Therefore, either Joseph Ratzinger is a true Pope or he is an imposter. Either the bishops united with them are valid bishops and orthodox, or they are not. If they are, then it follows logically that they, too, must be obeyed.

We will deal in time with the absurdity propounded by Bishop. Guerard des Lauriers, OP (RIP) of a “material pope” but not a “formal pope.” For now, I can assure you that when des Lauriers explained this theory to me, I was forced to do all within my power to keep from laughing in his face.

Perhaps age and the tooth of time had gnawed at his brain so that he forgot the ontology that even St. Thomas subscribed to, or, his lack of courage to face reality forced him to invent (imagineer) some fine-sounding fallacy that numbed his right reason to protect him from what every good Catholic would shudder to do: Be forced to recognize a heretic sitting on the throne of Peter.

When it comes to bishops as successors of the Apostles as the

foundation of the Church (Apostolicity is one of the marks of the true Church), almost every Catholic has been conditioned to equate the Roman Catholic Church with a Pope. Where the Pope is, that's where the Church is. But, like everything in our existence, there are few absolutes – if any. Besides, history has shown that there have been many “anti-popes” – false popes. Yet, the Church survived because even among heretical bishops, there were always at least a few doctrinally correct and true bishops.

As one Doctor of the Church expressed it: “Ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia” - Where the bishop is, that is where the Church is.

Again, I repeat: Observe McKenna's own avowal for allegedly refusing episcopal consecration, and by the same act implicitly denying the authority and Apostolic Succession so essential to the true Church:

“The reason I myself refused to accept the bishopric was that I saw I would not have absolute certainty of Apostolic Succession.” He was apparently invited by some one to be consecrated. By whom I have no real idea. Nevertheless, it must be noted that he refused the invitation.

Now kindly consider what had taken place in Baton Rouge, LA prior to all his “doubts”.

At a meeting in Baton Rouge, LA, he frantically sought to have himself consecrated immediately. He did not seem to have a crisis of conscience then, nor did he have a problem with the Chair of Peter being vacant. I cannot for the life of me comprehend how he would expect two bishops and an archbishop to proceed to a bizarre “consecration” without the papal mandate he now requires. What might have precipitated this sudden change of mind?

To a person addressing these questions to McKenna who wanted to find out his true mind regarding the bishops and the fruitfulness of the Sacraments, he gives the answer as follows: **“By choosing to believe Bishop Vezelis rather than first ask me my view of the question, you have put yourself in an unnecessary crisis of conscience, and deprived yourself of true and fruitful Sacraments here.”**

Here we find a priest arrogating to himself a position that is not his. It is the bishop who judges and interprets.

McKenna and all the rest of those “independent” clergymen have had

ample opportunity to submit themselves to one or the other bishop, depending upon their geographical location. They failed to do so despite the fact that they know they must be under a bishop in order to exercise their priestly orders validly and/or fruitfully.

The serpent cannot hide forever behind the veil of saccharine sanctimonious submission to authority.

A man whose own community had to keep him away from people by having him do “research” now seeks to teach a bishop whose priestly experience spans a lifetime of obedience to legitimate authority in preaching parish missions, conducting Religious retreats in both English and Korean, acting as military chaplain for our American troops, professor of psychology and logic, remedial English and mathematics for both the University of Maryland and the University of Hawaii, in the U.S. Army Education system, pastor of a large parish in Korea, teacher of spirituality to Friars and extraordinary confessor to the community, and confessor to the local bishop. I do not think it boasting to suggest that I have had a very rounded amount of experience as a priest. I may not have been shipwrecked and adrift on the sea,

but I know what it feels like to be in peril from false brethren.

Besides all these things, I have never abandoned my studies in philosophy and theology. I have dealt extensively in those questions that concern questions of marriage.

I cannot imagine anything so monstrous as to deceive people in matters of the utmost spiritual importance. That the Masses and Sacraments administered by McKenna are sacrilegious and empty of any kind of sacramental grace is a part of Catholic theology on the Sacraments dating well before even St. Augustine who is the first to deal with this question most thoroughly and authoritatively.

Here is what St. Augustine says on this subject that condemns McKenna;s errors. This rather lengthy citation from St. Augustine is extremely important in our day because the very things he wrote and preached against have surfaced once again.

He writes:

“An answer must now be given to those who make no promise of escape from eternal fire either to the Devil and his angels or even to all men, but who pretend that at least those who have been

cleansed in the baptism of Christ and have partaken of His Body and Blood will be saved from eternal suffering however wickedly they have lived, or into whatever heresy or impiety they may have fallen. The answer to such wishful thinkers is given in the words of St. Paul: 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, carousings and suchlike. And concerning these I warn you, as I have warned you, that they who do such things will not attain the kingdom of God' (Gal. 5, 19-21). Now this is the declaration of an Apostle; yet it is false if the classes of sinners mentioned are ever to possess the kingdom of God by being freed from the flames after some indefinitely long term of suffering. But the apostolic declaration is not false; therefore, such sinners will not attain the kingdom of heaven. And if they are never to possess the kingdom of God, they are to be retained in eternal punishment, for the simple reason that outside the kingdom there is no middle place where a

man can find himself free from pain.

This being so, we have to find the right interpretation of the words of the Lord Jesus: 'This is the bread of life that comes down from heaven, so that if anyone eat of it he will not die. I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever. (John 6, 50-51).

First, in regard to the heretics and schismatics whom I am answering. Their interpretation of this text is denied by the Catholics whom I am about to answer. These Catholics are the ones who do not promise liberation for all who have the sacraments of baptism and the Body of Christ, but do promise liberation to all Catholics in spite of the wickedness of their lives because these and these alone have eaten not merely the sacramental symbol, but the reality of the Body of Christ, by reason of their incorporation in His Body, in the Body of which the Apostle says: 'Because the bread is one, we though many are one body' (1 Cor. 16,17). And, therefore, the one who is properly said to eat the Body of Christ and to drink the Blood of

Christ, is he who is incorporated in the unity of His Body, as one of those members of Christ, of the sacrament or whose Body the faithful regularly partake when they communicate at the altar. Hence, heretics and schismatics who are separated from the unity of this Body can, indeed, receive the sacrament, but to no avail – in fact, to their harm – since the result is to increase the pain rather than to curtail the length of the punishment. The truth is that they are not in the bond of peace of which the sacrament is the outward sign.

To turn now to those who properly understand that no one can be said to eat the Body of Christ who is outside of the Body of Christ. They are wrong in promising eventual liberation from eternal fire to those who fall from the unity of Christ’s Body into heresy or, still worse, into the superstitions of paganism. First, they have failed to notice what an effrontery it is and what a departure from sound doctrine to say that practically all of the founders of impious heresies, who left the Church to become heresiarchs, are better off as far as final salvation is concerned than those who were at no time Catholics but have fallen into the

traps of the heretics. This, in fact, would be the case if it were true that the ex-Catholic heresiarchs are to be ultimately saved by reason of the fact that they were baptized in the Catholic Church and at one time received the sacrament of the Body of Christ in the true Body of Christ. But the fact is that it is worse to be a deserter from the faith and, by reason of desertion, an enemy of the faith than to be one who has never lost what he never had.” (City of God, Book 21, chap.25).

If anyone would prefer McKenna’s heretical position to the sound doctrine of St. Augustine and the traditional teaching and practice of the Church then such a one must be prepared to accept excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church.

For, what has been quoted at length from St. Augustine, Doctor of Grace, is what I hold and must hold even in the face of universal denial of these truths.

Let all who read these words be aware that their attendance at the Masses of even valid priests who are not in union with this bishop (Bishop Louis Vezelis, OFM), Bishop Giles Butler, OFM or with Bishop Madrigal are not only contributing to their own eternal damnation but are

not receiving any supernatural fruit from the outrageous deception of those who are outside the Body of Christ.

The truth is that anyone attending the Masses or receiving Sacraments from McKenna are receiving nothing but condemnation.

Now, is McKenna even a bishop? The answer rests with the application of the doctrine and practice of the Church coupled to the moral principles involving the reception of the Sacraments.

That McKenna is not a valid bishop follows from his own statements which manifest a clear intention NOT TO RECEIVE EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION.

He not only declined, but *refused*.

He further emphasizes this refusal with the declarative statement that he “*saw that he would not have absolute certainty of Apostolic Succession.*”

This must obviously indicate an intellectual conviction that cannot be ignored, and a free act of the will. Among the many things he dogmatically asserts as “doubtful” are basically the things that the Catholic Church believes and

teaches, while the bizarre things he understands, he “sees” with a peculiar “certitude” of his own. Another reason why we cannot accept his validity as a bishop comes from his own affirmation: He makes it a condition for his consecration that there must be three bishops. This condition was not realized and therefore, his consecration would be invalid – according to his understanding of St. Robert Bellarmine. This is more clearly expressed in what follows below.

And, if by some quirk of fate he is a bishop, he is not a Roman Catholic bishop. He is nothing more than a “doubtful bishop” – according to Canon 209.

To be logical with his own premise, McKenna must doubt everything. It is by an act of his will that he *chooses* to doubt despite all the positive evidence before him.

Following his thinking, no one should condemn abortion because those who say the thing in a mother’s womb is just a blob of tissue and those who say it is a human being are entitled to their opinions because there is cause for a doubt of fact. What is that “doubt of fact”? The fact is: No one can be absolutely certain WHEN the rational soul is

joined to matter to constitute a human being.

Logically, then, McKenna and those like him must accept the conclusions of their own false thinking. The Church has never declared with absolute certitude the time when the immortal soul is joined to the material substance to constitute a human being.

The Church teaches that the safest course must be followed. What is that course? The little thing in a mother's womb must be considered to be a human being and therefore, abortion is deemed the murdering of a human being.

This example should instruct the honest seeker for truth to realize the futility of McKenna's pretended theoretical doubt regarding jurisdiction (moral authority) in those whom the Holy Ghost has placed over them.

With some sort of triumphant glee thinly hidden, he hauls out St. Robert Bellarmine and wishes to impose his own twisted ideas upon the bishops by trying to use a saint's opinions to be identified with his own.

Since we do not have the actual text of St. Robert Bellarmine, S.J., we are forced to assume – and assume

rightly! – that Bellarmine's thoughts are not “modified” by McKenna who has not found it difficult to “interpret” the words of others to fit his mold of thought.

Since it is impossible to have the kind of “absolute certitude” demanded by him, it is likewise impossible for him to have the required internal intention for the validity of the sacraments and here, for the validity of episcopal consecration.

There is yet another obstacle to his validity as a bishop. It resides in his insistence of having three consecrating bishops *as a condition*. A condition attached to a contract that is not realized voids the contract. He “accepts” episcopal consecration *on condition that there be three bishops consecrating: the main consecrator and two co-consecrators*. He stated this in a Western Union Mailgram to Bishop George Musey dated 4/20/84. In it he states: “...MY ONLY CONDITION IS THAT YOUR EXCELLENCY HAVE TWO CO-CONSECRATORS...”.

What boggles the mind is that McKenna is able to create a subjective “virtual” reality with the help of a disoriented imagination that permits him to do what he repudiates

in others: To act as a bishop with authority.

What he denies in the bishops consecrated by Archbishop Ngo, he arrogates, assumes, takes upon himself without the least doubt by appealing to an obscure Canon of Church Law, Canon 209. A law that certainly cannot apply to the matter at hand without falling into the trap of heresy.

If McKenna can doubt whatever displeases his fancy, why should others not be permitted to do likewise? Everyone is entitled to follow the same disastrous direction. Frankly, all the Traditionalists actually do this without the absurdity of trying to justify their crass heresies and schism by using the Church's laws. But, is this not the tactic of the Devil and his advocates: To have the victim dig his own grave before executing him?

Whatever ceremony McKenna participated in on French soil is of doubtful validity. Consequently, every thing he has done as a "doubtful bishop" can have no objective certainty. Therefore, whatever priests he has "ordained" are doubtfully valid; whatever bishops he has "consecrated" are doubtful bishops; whatever abbots he has "installed" are doubtful abbots;

whatever Religious groups he has given formal approval cannot be considered of any value such as his preposterous "approval" of the Schuckardt Sect of Spokane, headed by the schismatic Bishop Pivarunas.

Briefly: Everything McKenna attempts to do that requires the authority of a valid bishop is without a doubt null and void.

These conditions were not met. In fact, he went to France to be "consecrated". Why was he not consecrated by Bishop Musey? Why could there not be three bishops for his alleged consecration? If it was Musey who invited him to be consecrated, why did McKenna go to France? Did he embrace des Lauriers' absurd theory (Note: ONLY a theory, not a certainty!) simply for the purpose of flattering the old man into consecrating him? This is a valid question.

Whatever happened to the merry-go-round insistence on three bishops and a papal mandate?

Equally important is the matter of "Doubtful Bishop McKenna's" wild consecration spree that has spawned a mess of invalid bishops.

We have the names of those whom he has attempted to consecrate or

ordain. He has attempted to consecrate those whose priestly ordinations are not above serious doubt. Among these are certainly all those whose ordination stems from Marcel Lefebvre. He has almost fanatically rejected the sound doctrine of the Church regarding the three elements required for validity of any Sacrament, but especially the Sacrament of Holy Orders. According to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church's sound doctrine, those whose Baptism or reception of Holy Orders is subject to even the slightest doubt must be ordained without any condition. McKenna has attempted to consecrate such non-priests. He has also failed by gross negligence in attempting to consecrate a man who was already validly consecrated by Old Catholics. The name of that man is Francis Slupski who ministers to Bircher-Feenyites in Rockford, IL

He has attempted to consecrate a man from Europe, Oravec, whose priestly ordination is under a serious cloud.

He has attempted to consecrate the non-priest Sanborn who purports to receive his ordination from non-bishop Marcel Lefebvre. Likewise, he attempted to consecrate a former member of the bogus "Society of St.

Pius X" by the name of Neville. There are others.

These are meant only to establish a pattern of unscrupulous abuses of the Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

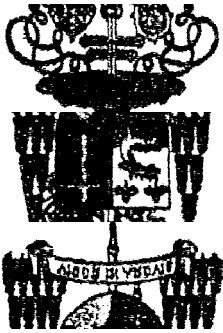
Remnant Catholics had an opportunity to band together under true bishops when the four bishops signed a solemn promise before the Blessed Sacrament on August 25, 1982.

Because of the historic and religiously important nature of this matter of bishops, we will terminate this portion of the series for the next issue of The Seraph.

(To be continued)



Sermons and Addresses
OF
HIS EMINENCE
WILLIAM CARDINAL
O'CONNELL
ARCHBISHOP OF BOSTON



THE EARLY CHURCH
A SERIES OF FIVE
CONFERENCES

DELIVERED AT THE
CATHOLIC SUMMER
SCHOOL,

PLATTSBURGH, N. Y., 1895.

THE NATIONS THE BUILDING

IN the last conference, we watched the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost, in the little cenacle at Jerusalem; and tracing the earliest indications of its growth, we followed the Apostles in their career from Palestine, through all the different lands, where driven by persecution, and carried on by the zeal of their faith, they spread the new doctrines

throughout the world. In different lands they planted this little seed, and then watered the soil that had received it with their life blood. We must push our research still further, and watch with interest, how warmed by the sun of God's providence and protection, the buried germ sprung forth into a thriving and sturdy tree, which, spreading its branches wider and wider, gave shelter to an innumerable throng and withstood the storms of centuries of persecution.

In connection with this subject, namely, the propagation of the Christian faith in the first three centuries, three questions present themselves as especially worthy of consideration, inasmuch as each has been the subject of attack by those who would consider the spread of Christianity to be of no weight in establishing the divinity of its doctrines. And first, is it true that from the very start, the number of converts to the new faith was very considerable, in fact, wonderfully great; or were the followers of the new religion a mere handful, an inconsiderable few? Secondly, what was the character, intellectually and socially, of the first believers? Were they people of no position, a credulous and infatuated multitude, or were they rather of all classes, many of them among the richest,

noblest, and most learned of their day? Thirdly, can the propagation of the faith among the nations be attributed to purely natural causes, or must we look for an explanation of its marvelously rapid growth in the divinity of its origin and its providential protection?

For a truthful answer to these questions, we must, like true historians, read the testimony of those who have left to us a faithful description of the Church in the first centuries of its existence. Renan, speaking of the propagation of the faith, as it is recounted in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters of St. Paul, writes that there is little to boast of in the success of the Apostles in evangelizing the nations, “for,” says he, “they considered that they had spread the Gospel in a country when they had made a few addresses and preached a few sermons,” that as a rule, they considered themselves quite fortunate when they had made a dozen or so of converts; that not unfrequently, the churches established in different places by the Apostles, of which we hear so much in the Acts and Epistles, consisted of fifteen or twenty people, and that all the converts brought to the faith by St. Paul in the East, and in the West, did not exceed a thousand. So that in Renan’s eyes the descriptions given by St. Luke and St. Paul of the

growth of the infant Church are simple exaggerations, or, indeed, open lies.

Gibbon and Montesquieu, admitting the wonderful growth of the Church, pretend to explain it all by the operation of purely natural causes. But, after all, unlike Renan, they do admit that the number of converts was very considerable, and indeed enormous.

The accusation that the early Christians were of the lowest classes of society, people of little repute, and credulous women, is almost as old as Christianity itself. For Origen himself was obliged to refute this calumny which was common enough even in his time, and Minucius Felix also assures us that this was a common accusation against the followers of Christ. Hence if to-day we hear it said that, after all, the Catholic Church is made up of people of no education or position, and is simply a gathering of the credulous and illiterate of the world, we must remember that this assertion has been repeated in all ages, back to the time of Christ Himself. But assertions are not arguments, and words are not facts.

In studying the history of any event of any country, it is necessary to gather our knowledge from

documents which can be proved to be the most trustworthy description of the events narrated. According to this criterion, the story of the propagation of the faith in the earliest times is best studied in the Acts of the Apostles, whose author is St. Luke. It matters not now, whether the student be a Christian, a Jew, or a Mohammedan. We are considering the credibility of the documents from a purely historical standpoint. Putting aside, therefore, the question of inspiration, and looking at it simply as a book of human authority, this testimony of the Evangelist Luke fulfills all the requisites of credibility. How can our opponents prove that St. Luke did not know the facts he describes? how can they prove that he was deceived or intended to deceive his readers?

He was a writer who described contemporaneous facts; he was, moreover, a learned man and a veracious witness. Some of the things of which he writes, he saw with his own eyes, and the rest he describes as they were narrated to him by the Apostles themselves, that is, by immediate witnesses.

If, therefore, from a purely critical standpoint, we deny credence to a man who possesses all these prerogatives of credibility, of what facts of history can we be certain?

Now let us open the Acts of the Apostles to the place where is recorded in simple and concise terms the story of the day of Pentecost. We find there that the number baptized and received into the Church on that occasion was three thousand people. Again, later on, the same author tells us that on the occasion of the miracle wrought by St. Peter at the gate of the Temple, five thousand people believed and were aggregated to the faith. Here, therefore, within a few days from the birth of the Christian Church, we find that the number of converts made at Jerusalem alone was over eight thousand. Now when we consider that in the natural order of events the influence of this great number would be very considerable among their relatives, friends, and circle of acquaintances, added to the fact that it became a duty of each one in turn to spread the knowledge of the true religion and become himself an Apostle, it is evident that in a very short time, this number would be at least doubled. In point of fact, St. Luke confirms the supposition, when he says “that the multitude of believers increased every day,” so that it was necessary to choose seven deacons to relieve the Apostles of some of their minor duties.

In this light we can understand how terrified the high priests and

Sadducees became at the sight of such great desertion among their followers. What else can be assigned as a reason of the bitter jealousy they entertained towards the leaders of the new faith? Nor were their conversions among the people alone, for upon the same authority we know that many, even among the priests, renounced the old religion and gave their allegiance to the new doctrines. If, therefore, as is narrated in the Acts, a great crowd of the priests became subject to the faith, it is evident that the influence of this fact alone would have its effect upon a very wide circle of the Jews.

It is true, indeed, that seeing the rapid spread of the new tenets, a fierce persecution was raised against the Church in Jerusalem during which St. Stephen was martyred and the disciples scattered. But this dispersion of the Christians of Jerusalem was the very best means of carrying the faith to other lands. The disciple Philip, one of this number, evangelized the Samaritans, and with such fruit, that even Simon the Magician, who had for a long while deluded the people, himself received Baptism and brought over a great number of converts with him, so that it became necessary that the Apostles, Peter and John, should go among them to administer to them and properly constitute the Church.

How can we explain the necessity of this special attention if we suppose that the number of converts was a mere handful?

Again we learn that the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron, countries lying southwest of Jerusalem near Joppa, who had heard the Gospel from the apostle Peter, and who had seen the dead raised to life, in great crowds, embraced the faith. The word which the Evangelist uses to designate the number of converts is very strong, for he says: "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him and were converted to the Lord" (Acts ix, 35). Mark that he says "all." Therefore, the two towns, en masse, came over to the faith. Later on, we read of a like accession in Joppa, where again, after hearing the preaching of the Prince of the Apostles, confirmed by another miracle, the resuscitation of Tabitha, St. Luke says: "*et crediderunt multi in Domino.*"

Now Joppa was a city of no small population: "many" is a comparative term. It is evident therefore, that not a dozen or fifteen, but a large number, perhaps hundreds, entered the fold on this occasion.

The persecution which the Christians were obliged to endure at Jerusalem and in the immediate neighborhood, drove them into such distant regions

as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch. This last city was the metropolis of Syria and the seat of the Roman Proconsuls. Here again, it is recorded that a great number gave their names to the faith (Acts xi), so that for the work of organization of this great body, the Apostles sent to them Barnabas, who in turn brought "great multitudes to the Lord." (Acts xi, 24.)

The conversions multiplied so rapidly and the Church grew to such large proportions that St. Barnabas was obliged to call for more assistance, which he received in the person of St. Paul, himself a convert. Such was the zeal and continuous labors of these two missionaries who during a whole year took up their residence in that city, that the Church at Antioch became one of the most numerous and best known, and it was there that the disciples were first called Christians. At that time, Antioch contained at least two hundred thousand inhabitants: now will Renan please explain to us how a Church consisting of ten or a dozen people could have arisen to such extraordinary prominence among all the congregations of that time. It is not exaggerating in the least to calculate that at least a tenth part of the citizens of Antioch became Christians. We can therefore estimate the number of the faithful in the time of St. Paul to be at least

twenty thousand souls.

Now if we follow St. Paul and Barnabas to Iconium, the capital of Lycaonia, we see again the enormous strides the faith continues to make in its constant progress. St. Luke designates the faithful as "*copiosa multitudo*," a very great multitude, both of the Jews and of the Greeks, and he adds, "every day the number increased."

The same story is told of Thessalonica, where the defection among the Jews from the old religion became so threateningly great that the obstinate Hebrews raised a persecution against them. Is it likely that they would have arisen against a handful of dissenters? Now in reality, the accusation made against the new converts which moved the magistrates to take measures against them, was that they had set the city in an uproar. Now in a city like Thessalonica of a numerous population, it would require a good share of the inhabitants to be considered capable of disturbing the peace of the whole city. By this expression is intended to mean a religious revolution. It is hard to understand how Renan's interpretation can be made to agree with the plain words of the narration.

In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts,

we are again enlightened on the point of this marvelous increase in the number of the Christians. The proof of this wonderful growth in the city of Ephesus is of a nature so singular and striking as to leave no doubt as to its meaning. The preaching of St. Paul was followed with such fruit, that the temple of Diana, the goddess whose worship was especially cultivated there, was utterly deserted. Not only in Ephesus, but all over Asia the same results followed the labors of this apostle. The proof of this is manifest from most competent authority, and from a source which can scarcely be denied. Demetrius, a silversmith by trade, who gained a livelihood by manufacturing articles used in the worship of Diana, complained bitterly to his brethren that his trade had been ruined by the preaching of the Apostles, inasmuch as the people, not only of Ephesus, but of all Asia, no longer venerated images made by hand, and so “not only this our craft,” says he, “is in danger to be set at naught, but also the temple of great Diana shall be reputed for nothing: yea, and her majesty shall begin to be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth.”

Now, how can we suppose, considering the matter in all fairness and impartiality, that Demetrius could have made this plea, with any show

of sense or hope of attention, unless it was an evident fact that in the city of Ephesus and the country around, an alarming number of conversions had taken place.

Another singular fact may be adduced to prove how futile and false is the supposition of Renan and all his following. It seems that magic or witchcraft was practiced as a science among these people who seemed to have possessed whole libraries on this curious art. The Apostles naturally condemned this practice and the books used by the magicians. Just at this time, some of their number had attempted by this art to perform wonderful deeds, but with small success; in fact the magicians themselves were visibly injured by their diabolical pretensions. Whereupon all these people who possessed the books brought them to the Apostles to be burned; that is, they submitted to the teaching of St. Paul. We can calculate the number of these new converts from the value of the books which they brought. This we are told amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver, a sum equal to about twelve thousand dollars, which in that day was a very large sum of money, representing a great many people.

Before St. Paul had preached in Ephesus, he had labored in Corinth, and founded in that city a church

numbering a very large congregation. St. Luke narrates that Crispus, a ruler of the synagogue, believed, and all his family, and many of the Corinthians were baptized. Indeed, Christ Himself had said in His apparition to the Apostle, "I have many people in this city" (Acts xviii, 10). St. Paul lived in Corinth a year and a half, which is of itself sufficient proof that the harvest of souls must have been very rich in that place.

Now, again, if Renan reads history aright, what does St. Paul mean writing to the Colossians (i, 6) when he assures them that "the Gospel as they had heard it, had been spread throughout the world," and in writing to the Romans (i, 8) that "their faith is spoken of in the whole world." He was not writing in hyperbole or exaggeration; he was telling the simple truth.

We know from the character of St. Paul that he would never have gloried in a feeble conquest, such as would have been a few conversions here and there in the principal cities; he would have accounted that very small fruit. When, therefore, we hear of St. Paul boasting of the wide spread of the Gospel, we can easily argue that already the numbers of the faithful had grown to enormous proportions.

Here I might notice the opinion of some authors, who, though they are obliged to concede that during the apostolic times a great multitude of people in various countries embraced the faith, nevertheless contend, that from the time of Nero to that of Trajan the harvest of preachers was very small. Now, from the beginning of the reign of Nero to the end of that of Trajan there was a period of sixty-two years; and, not to dwell too long upon this discussion, I will content myself with bringing forward the testimony of writers of that very time, who prove that this opinion is entirely unfounded.

First of all, Cornelius Tacitus, in his fifteenth book of "Annals," recounting the infamous calumny cast upon the Christians by Nero, that they were the cause of the burning, of Rome at that time, but which no one believed, takes occasion to indicate something of the proportions which the Christian religion had attained; and he writes that the Christians thrived in great numbers not only in Judea but in Rome; that of these a great crowd were put to death, not as guilty of arson, but as enemies of the human race. If, therefore, Tacitus says a great number of Christians suffered martyrdom, it is plain that in Rome at that time, the number of Christians must have been very considerable;

for certainly not all were denounced to the magistrates, but by far the greater part went into hiding to escape this punishment.

Then, again, Pope St. Clement, who in his first letter to the Corinthians, written, according to the judgment of critics, a short time after the persecution of Domitian and before the death of that emperor, recalling to the memory of the faithful of Corinth the martyrdom of the apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul writes that in Rome was gathered a great multitude of the faithful. Therefore, by the testimony of Tacitus, the pagan, and St. Clement, the Christian, it is plain that even at the times of the heaviest persecutions, the Christian flock was extremely large. But if we consider the Church which flourished at this same time in the provinces and in the kingdoms subject to the Roman Empire, there can be no doubt that the number of the faithful reached very large dimensions. For Pliny the Younger, proprietor of Bithynia, wishing to consult the Emperor as to how he should act towards the Christians, informs Trajan that the cities and towns of that province were filled with them; so that there seemed a danger that the contagion of their superstition, as he designates Christianity, would spread over the whole country; and he complains that

the temples were desolated and the sacred solemnities entirely forgotten.

I do not wish to deny that by the fierceness of the persecution of Domitian the Church suffered some loss. But neither can it be disputed that when the unjust and cruel decrees of that tyrant were abolished, the Christians took on new strength and vigor, spreading again more rapidly than before, both in the East and in the West. Of this we have ample testimony in the writings of Lucius Caecilius Lactantius, who, writing of the persecution of Domitian, says: "On the rescision of the acts and decrees of the tyrant, the Church was not only restored to its pristine state, but shone forth even more clearly and vigorously, stretching out its ample arms to East and West until no corner of the earth was there so remote unto which the religion of God had not penetrated."

(To be continued)



Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.

SACRAMENTALS

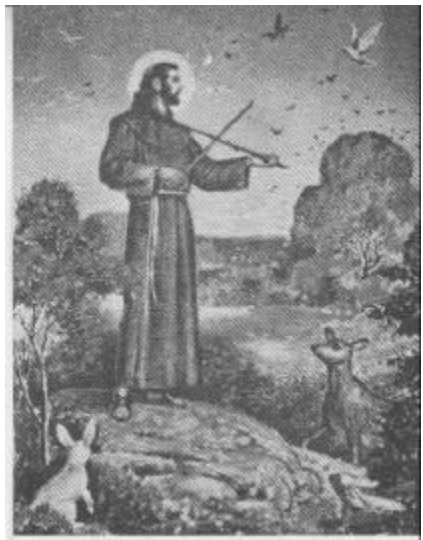
Sacramentals are actions or objects set aside or blessed by the Church and which in their performance or use bear some resemblance to a Sacrament. They are intended to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion. The Sacraments were instituted by Christ, the sacramentals were instituted by the Church.

The sacramentals do not give grace directly; they enliven our piety and increase our devotion and thus are means of our obtaining graces. They do not remit sin or the temporal punishment due to sin, though the fervor they engender may cause the remission of venial sin and even of some temporal punishment due to sin.

The Sign of the Cross is one of the most frequently used sacramentals of the Church. It is not only a prayer but also a profession of faith in the unity of the Holy Trinity and in the Incarnation and death of our Savior when we use the words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Blessings and things blessed are sacramentals. Thus holy water is a sacramental, as are the consecrations by a Bishop and the holy oils and chrism so consecrated. Palms, and ashes distributed on Ash Wednesday, rosaries, scapulars, medals, etc., blessed by the Church are sacramentals.

We should be grateful to the Church that she has given us so many means to inspire our devotion and thus aid us to obtain many graces to love God and to serve Him with greater ardor.



The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

A TREATISE OF DISCRETION

(Continued)

How the soul, after having mounted the first step of the Bridge, should proceed to mount the second.

“You have now seen how excellent is the state of him who has attained to the love of a friend; climbing with the foot of affection, he has reached the secret of the Heart, which is the second of the three steps figured in the Body of My Son. I have told you what was meant by the three powers of the soul, and now I will show you how they signify the three states, through which the soul passes. Before treating of the third state, I wish to show you how a man becomes a friend and how, from a friend, he grows into a son, attaining to filial love, and how a man may know if he has become a friend. And first of how a man arrives at being a friend. In the beginning, a man serves Me imperfectly through servile fear, but, by exercise and perseverance, he arrives at the love of delight, finding his own delight and profit in Me. This is a necessary stage, by which he must pass, who

would attain to perfect love, to the love that is of friend and son. I call filial love perfect, because thereby, a man receives his inheritance from Me, the Eternal Father, and because a son’s love includes that of a friend, which is why I told you that a friend grows into a son. What means does he take to arrive thereat? I will tell you. Every perfection and every virtue proceeds from charity, and charity is nourished by humility, which results from the knowledge and holy hatred of self, that is, sensuality. To arrive thereat, a man must persevere, and remain in the cellar of self-knowledge in which he will learn My mercy, in the Blood of My only-begotten Son, drawing to Himself, with this love, My divine charity, exercising himself in the extirpation of his perverse self-will, both spiritual and temporal, hiding himself in his own house, as did Peter, who, after the sin of denying My Son, began to weep. Yet his lamentations were imperfect and remained so, until after the forty days, that is until after the Ascension. But when My Truth returned to Me, in His humanity, Peter and the others concealed themselves in the house, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, which My Truth had promised

them. They remained barred in from fear, because the soul always fears until she arrives at true love. But when they had persevered in fasting and in humble and continual prayer, until they had received the abundance of the Holy Spirit, they lost their fear, and followed and preached Christ crucified. So also the soul, who wishes to arrive at this perfection, after she has risen from the guilt of mortal sin, recognizing it for what it is, begins to weep from fear of the penalty, whence she rises to the consideration of My mercy, in which contemplation, she finds her own pleasure and profit. This is an imperfect state, and I, in order to develop perfection in the soul, after the forty days, that is after these two states, withdraw Myself from time to time, not in grace but in feeling. My Truth showed you this when He said to the disciples ‘I will go and will return to you.’

“Everything that He said was said primarily, and in particular, to the disciples, but referred in general to the whole present and future, to those, that is to say, who should come after. He said ‘I will go and will return to you;’ and so it was, for, when the Holy Spirit returned upon the disciples, He also returned, as I told you above, for the Holy Spirit did not return alone, but came with My power, and the wisdom of the

Son, who is one thing with Me, and with His own clemency, which proceeds from Me the Father, and from the Son. Now, as I told you, in order to raise the soul from imperfection, I withdraw Myself from her sentiment, depriving her of former consolations. When she was in the guilt of mortal sin, she had separated herself from Me, and I deprived her of grace through her own guilt, because that guilt had barred the door of her desires. Wherefore the sun of grace did not shine, not through its own defect, but through the defect of the creature, who bars the door of desire. When she knows herself and her darkness, she opens the window and vomits her filth, by holy confession. Then I, having returned to the soul by grace, withdraw Myself from her by sentiment, which I do in order to humiliate her, and cause her to seek Me in truth, and to prove her in the light of faith, so that she come to prudence. Then, if she love Me without thought of self, and with lively faith and with hatred of her own sensuality, she rejoices in the time of trouble, deeming herself unworthy of peace and quietness of mind. Now comes the second of the three things of which I told you, that is to say: how the soul arrives at perfection, and what she does when she is perfect. This is what she does. Though she perceives that I have

withdrawn Myself, she does not, on that account, look back, but perseveres with humility in her exercises, remaining barred in the house of self-knowledge, and, continuing to dwell therein, awaits, with lively faith, the coming of the Holy Spirit, that is of Me, who am the fire of charity. How does she await me? Not in idleness, but in watching and continued prayer, and not only with physical, but also with intellectual watching, that is, with the eye of her mind alert, and, watching with the light of faith, she extirpates, with hatred, the wandering thoughts of her heart, looking for the affection of My charity, and knowing that I desire nothing but her sanctification, which is certified to her in the Blood of My Son. As long as her eye thus watches, illumined by the knowledge of Me and of herself, she continues to pray with the prayer of holy desire, which is a continued prayer, and also with actual prayer, which she practices at the appointed times, according to the orders of Holy Church. This is what the soul does in order to rise from imperfection and arrive at perfection, and it is to this end, namely that she may arrive at perfection, that I withdraw from her, not by grace but by sentiment. Once more do I leave her, so that she may see and know her defects, so that, feeling herself deprived of consolation and afflicted by pain, she

may recognize her own weakness, and learn how incapable she is of stability or perseverance, thus cutting down to the very root of spiritual self-love, for this should be the end and purpose of all her self-knowledge, to rise above herself, mounting the throne of conscience, and not permitting the sentiment of imperfect love to turn again in its death-struggle, but, with correction and reproof, digging up the root of self-love, with the knife of self-hatred and the love of virtue.”

How an imperfect lover of GOD loves his neighbor also imperfectly, and of the signs of this imperfect love.

“And I would have you know that just as every imperfection and perfection is acquired from Me, so is it manifested by means of the neighbor. And simple souls, who often love creatures with spiritual love, know this well, for, if they have received My love sincerely without any self-regarding considerations, they satisfy the thirst of their love for their neighbor equally sincerely. If a man carry away the vessel which he has filled at the fountain and then drink of it, the vessel becomes empty, but if he keep his vessel standing in the fountain, while he drinks, it always remains full. So the love of the neighbor, whether spiritual or

temporal, should be drunk in Me, without any self-regarding considerations. I require that you should love Me with the same love with which I love you. This indeed you cannot do, because I loved you without being loved. All the love which you have for Me you owe to Me, so that it is not of grace that you love Me, but because you ought to do so. While I love you of grace, and not because I owe you My love. Therefore to Me, in person, you cannot repay the love which I require of you, and I have placed you in the midst of your fellows, that you may do to them that which you cannot do to Me, that is to say, that you may love your neighbor of free grace, without expecting any return from him, and what you do to him, I count as done to Me, which My Truth showed forth when He said to Paul, My persecutor — ‘Saul, Saul, why persecute you Me?’ This He said, judging that Paul persecuted Him in His faithful. This love must be sincere, because it is with the same love with which you love Me, that you must love your neighbor. Do you know how the imperfection of spiritual love for the creature is shown? It is shown when the lover feels pain if it appear to him that the object of his love does not satisfy or return his love, or when he sees the beloved one’s conversation turned aside from him, or himself deprived of

consolation, or another loved more than he. In these and in many other ways can it be seen that his neighborly love is still imperfect, and that, though his love was originally drawn from Me, the Fountain of all love, he took the vessel out of the water, in order to drink from it. It is because his love for Me is still imperfect, that his neighborly love is so weak, and because the root of self-love has not been properly dug out. Wherefore I often permit such a love to exist, so that the soul may in this way come to the knowledge of her own imperfection, and for the same reason do I withdraw myself from the soul by sentiment, that she may be thus led to enclose herself in the house of self-knowledge, where is acquired every perfection. After which I return into her with more light and with more knowledge of My Truth, in proportion to the degree in which she refers to grace the power of slaying her own will. And she never ceases to cultivate the vine of her soul, and to root out the thorns of evil thoughts, replacing them with the stones of virtues, cemented together in the Blood of Christ crucified, which she has found on her journey across the Bridge of Christ, My only-begotten Son. For I told you, if you remember, that upon the Bridge, that is, upon the doctrine of My Truth, were built up the stones, based upon the virtue of His Blood,

for it is in virtue of this Blood that the virtues give life.”

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

Of the means which the soul takes to arrive at pure and generous love; and here begins the Treatise of Prayer.

“When the soul has passed through the doctrine of Christ crucified, with true love of virtue and hatred of vice, and has arrived at the house of self-knowledge and entered therein, she remains, with her door barred, in watching and constant prayer, separated entirely from the consolations of the world. Why does she thus shut herself in? She does so from fear, knowing her own imperfections, and also from the desire, which she has, of arriving at pure and generous love. And because she sees and knows well that in no other way can she arrive thereat, she waits, with a lively faith for My arrival, through increase of grace in her. How is a lively faith to be recognized? By perseverance in virtue, and by the fact that the soul never turns back for anything, whatever it be, nor rises from holy prayer, for any reason except (note well) for obedience or charity’s sake. For no other reason ought she to

leave off prayer, for, during the time ordained for prayer, the Devil is wont to arrive in the soul, causing much more conflict and trouble than when the soul is not occupied in prayer. This he does in order that holy prayer may become tedious to the soul, tempting her often with these words: ‘This prayer avails you nothing, for you need attend to nothing except your vocal prayers.’ He acts thus in order that, becoming wearied and confused in mind, she may abandon the exercise of prayer, which is a weapon with which the soul can defend herself from every adversary, if grasped with the hand of love, by the arm of free choice in the light of the Holy Faith.”

Here, touching something concerning the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, the complete doctrine is given; and how the soul proceeds from vocal to mental prayer, and a vision is related which this devout soul once received.

“Know, dearest daughter, how, by humble, continual, and faithful prayer, the soul acquires, with time and perseverance, every virtue. Wherefore should she persevere and never abandon prayer, either through the illusion of the Devil or her own fragility, that is to say, either on account of any thought or movement

coming from her own body, or of the words of any creature. The Devil often places himself upon the tongues of creatures, causing them to chatter nonsensically, with the purpose of preventing the prayer of the soul. All of this she should pass by, by means of the virtue of perseverance. Oh, how sweet and pleasant to that soul and to Me is holy prayer, made in the house of knowledge of self and of Me, opening the eye of the intellect to the light of faith, and the affections to the abundance of My charity, which was made visible to you, through My visible only-begotten Son, who showed it to you with His blood! Which Blood inebriates the soul and clothes her with the fire of divine charity, giving her the food of the Sacrament [which is placed in the tavern of the mystical body of the Holy Church] that is to say, the food of the Body and Blood of My Son, wholly God and wholly man, administered to you by the hand of My vicar, who holds the key of the Blood. This is that tavern, which I mentioned to you, standing on the Bridge, to provide food and comfort for the travelers and the pilgrims, who pass by the way of the doctrine of My Truth, lest they should faint through weakness. This food strengthens little or much, according to the desire of the recipient, whether he receives sacramentally or

virtually. He receives sacramentally when he actually communicates with the Blessed Sacrament. He receives virtually when he communicates, both by desire of communion, and by contemplation of the Blood of Christ crucified, communicating, as it were, sacramentally, with the affection of love, which is to be tasted in the Blood which, as the soul sees, was shed through love. On seeing this the soul becomes inebriated, and blazes with holy desire and satisfies herself, becoming full of love for Me and for her neighbor. Where can this be acquired? In the house of self-knowledge with holy prayer, where imperfections are lost, even as Peter and the disciples, while they remained in watching and prayer, lost their imperfection and acquired perfection. By what means is this acquired? By perseverance seasoned with the most holy faith.

(To be continued)



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