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EDITORIAL

ON DETRACTION

All grave unrepented sins cast souls into Hell. Whenever speaking about our neighbor, it is a strong will aided by grace that keeps a person from saying what is wrong instead of what is right.

Detraction is such a vile and venomous thing that it destroys more rapidly than any other sin. And what is most tragic is that it corrupts more quickly the detractor and more stealthy than any other sin. The reason is that it takes less effort to destroy another person than any other means.

In his day, the Curé of Ars had to fight this plague-like menace just as we of our day must fight the same demonic plague. But it is even worse today than at the time of the Curé of Ars.

The reason this plague is more widespread is because the vicious tongue has so many more ways to vent the evil that lurks in the heart of the detractor. Detractors criticize, censure and generally denounce the actions of their neighbors. This is what the Curé of Ars had to say of this vice:

“This is of all evil habits the most common, the most widespread, and perhaps the most vicious and the most harmful. It is a vice which we can never sufficiently detest; a vice which brings in its train the saddest consequences, and spreads harm, and affliction everywhere.”

Generally speaking, detraction takes on two possible forms. The first is the making known of a defect or fault of one’s neighbor unnecessarily, and in such a way, says the Curé of Ars **as to cause him injury, to his good name or otherwise.**

The Curé says: **“When we impute something bad to our neighbor which he has not committed, a defect he does not possess, we commit calumny.”**

“We exaggerate as a rule the bad that our neighbor does”.

St. Francis de Sales says: **“Do not say this or that one is a drunkard, and a thief, because he once stole or was intoxicated. Noah and Lot were intoxicated once, and yet neither the one nor the other were drunkards.”**

St. Peter was not a blasphemer because he blasphemed once.

This same Curé says: **“This vice spares neither good nor bad; it is enough for me to tell you, that this vice is one of those that are responsible for most of the souls that go to hell.”**

Those who boast of being disciples of St. Thomas Aquinas should hear what he says of those who judge others on mere grounds of suspicion.

Aquinas quotes from Tully (De Invent. Rhet. Ii) and points out **“that suspicion denotes evil thinking based on slight indications, and this is due to three causes. First, from a man being evil in himself, and from this very fact, as though conscious of his own wickedness, he is prone to think evil of others, according to Eccles. 10, 3: ‘The fool when he walketh in the way, whereas he himself is a fool, esteemeth all men fools.’**

Secondly, this is due to a man being ill disposed towards another; for when a man hates or despises another, or is angry with or envious of him, he is led by slight indications to think evil of him, because everyone

easily believes what he desires.”

“Thirdly,” says Aquinas, “this is due to long experience when: wherefore, the Philosopher says (Rhet.ii) that *old people are very suspicious, for they have often experienced the faults of others.*”

St. Thomas continues: **“The first two causes of suspicion evidently connote perversity of the affections, while the third diminishes the nature of suspicion, in as much as experience leads to certainty which is contrary to the nature of suspicion. Consequently suspicion denotes a certain amount of vice, and the further it goes, the more vicious it is.”** (Summa Theologica *de iudicio* Q. 60 Art.3).

Furthermore, St. Thomas states very clearly that **“...the judgment of suspicion pertains directly to injustice when it is betrayed by external action, and then it is a mortal sin...”** (Ibid.).

Those guilty of detraction are bound to make restitution before their sin is forgiven even in the internal forum (Confession). Because detraction is so easy, yet so deadly to the supernatural life, the Devil uses it with great relish and success.

The Bishop Speaks

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

What seemed to be so absurd even in theory, and much more so in concrete reality, has been taken up and used for a dual purpose alone: **To avoid the unpleasant and painful reality that the Roman Catholic Church is without a visible Vicar of Jesus Christ and secondly, to rationalize the obvious spirit of anarchy among those who have chosen to “go it alone”.**

The spirit of demonic disorientation and religious anarchy has found a fertile field in this basic fact: There has been no valid successor of St. Peter since the death of Pope Pius XII. Instead of gathering together what was left of the “remnant” of Catholics, almost everyone except the Franciscans, jumped from the Bark of Peter into spiritual “shark infested waters.”

No matter how one wishes to twist objective truth to satisfy one’s subjective intellectual conscience, the simple truth cannot be silenced. Hence, the need for some people to seek an exit to the painful situation by resorting to what may be termed

“psychological Novocain” – the numbing of the mind and emotions by suppressing the truth.

It seems that the majority of people who would like to be Catholic have resigned themselves to whatever mockery of the Mass or other religious aspects of false Catholicism that might be imposed upon them.

In the last article on this subject, we began by explaining where the terms “matter” and “form” came from. And because the essence of man is made up of “matter” and “form”, it follows that BOTH aspects of existing things must be considered. We must keep in mind that these distinctions cannot be separated in reality.

What this means is that in reality whatever exists outside the thinking mind, **must be a union of matter and form. Matter alone cannot exist nor can a “form” exist without residing in the matter to which it gives a “form”.**

Although much of what is said may appear beyond the ability of most people, the very opposite is true: Everyone has the ability to understand reality by understanding the conventional signs of language adopted by the Church wherewith to express the spiritual realities we call

“ideas”.

It is only a question of desire and time. **We must begin with the desire to know** because if we desire something, we find the time to do it. If we say we do not have the time, it really means that we do not wish to make the effort to improve our understanding of the Church, Her doctrines and Her discipline.

It is unfortunately true that the words of St. Paul addressed to St. Timothy are even true in our own day:

“When I went to Macedonia, I asked thee to stay on at Ephesus that thou mightest charge some not to teach novel doctrines, and not to study fables and endless genealogies which beget controversies rather than godly edification, which is in the faith. Now the purpose of this charge is charity, from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned. Some going astray from these things have turned aside to vain babbling, desiring to be teachers of the Law, when they understand neither what they say nor the things about which they make assertion.” (1 Tim. 1, 3—7).

If a graphologist were to examine the handwriting of McKenna, he would no doubt discover a personality most unsuitable for a bishop (If, indeed he is a bishop!). A person’s handwriting reveals much about a person’s character and

temperament. In McKenna’s case, one would discover a personality that “leaps before he looks” and loathes to listen to anyone more intelligent than himself. This would explain his constant inconsistencies and failure to evaluate anything objectively.

Although there is grave reason to question his sincerity and knack of heaping rash judgments upon those whom he erroneously perceives to be obstacles to his haughty ambitions, our present purpose is to examine and expose his obstinate errors.

In a letter circulated among clergymen whom he arbitrarily calls “ORCM priests”, McKenna seems to have “providentially” stumbled upon something that St. Robert Bellarmine had written about the Catholic hierarchy.

When he was not chosen by the “ORCM priests” to be consecrated by Bishop Musey, he “providentially” came upon some strange ideas allegedly penned by St. Robert Bellarmine.

We do not have the actual text of St. Bellarmine and cannot vouch for the authenticity of McKenna’s claims. Some time ago, McKenna wished to quote a Father of the Church on a particular matter and had given the name and source of his quotation. When the quotation was checked, the author had stated the exact

opposite of what McKenna had claimed to substantiate HIS views. This is not an uncommon practice among unscrupulous individuals.

On July 11, 1982, McKenna sent the following letter to the so-called “ORCM” priests:

Dear Fathers,

I have found (perhaps providentially) something quite disconcerting in the writings of St. Robert Bellarmine pertaining to the new bishops consecrated by (or stemming from) Archbishop Thuc. I have written the bishops themselves about it, bringing it to their attention, but while awaiting their deliberation on the matter and having assured them that I do not mean to precipitously make a public issue of it, I yet feel it is something you too should be informed of and would ask you to keep it confidential for the time being.

In one of his treatises entitled De Notis Ecclesiae, St. Bellarmine says that two things are essential for the apostolic succession of bishops, and without either of them one would not be a Catholic Bishop, even though otherwise validly ordained.

These two elements of Apostolic Succession are papal approbation and (surprisingly) ordination by three (at least three) bishops or prelates. Both of these, it turns out, are of Divine Law rather than (as I first assumed)

merely human or ecclesiastical (Canon) law, and as such would not seem to admit of *apekeia* (contrary to what I argued at our meetings).

Apostolic Succession comes not through the episcopacy as such but through the Apostolic See, says St. Robert, asserting that it was through St. Peter’s delegation that even the other Apostles received their authority to ordain bishops, since to him alone Christ gave authority over the whole Church. For this reason, says St. Robert, no particular bishop (having a particular jurisdiction) can legitimately ordain another bishop except by delegation of, and as representing the Supreme Pontiff. And it is for this reason, he says, that the Church has carefully preserved the names of all the popes in order since St. Peter, not being so concerned about the succession of bishops from the other Apostles. Not even St. Paul, St. Robert points out, though chosen an Apostle by Christ, was accepted as such (as such, I mean to say) until he was baptized and ordained in the Church, as is evident from the Scripture.

As for ordination by three, St. Robert shows that even this is evident from the Scripture and descended from apostolic times without interruption. Significantly, too, he makes no mention of theologians holding any contrary position regarding

these requirements for Apostolic Succession. Bishops lacking either papal approval or consecration by three bishops he regards as illegitimate and not Catholic bishops able to trace their origin to the Apostles. Such he considers to be the case with the Greek Orthodox bishops.

If such be the case, then, it would seem that the bishops stemming from Archbishop Thuc are not legitimate after all, despite their good intentions, and that to avoid culpable schism they would have to abstain from any further use of their sacramental powers as bishops (holding themselves as simple priests). Least of all would they as bishops be able to remedy the apparent and probable vacancy in the papacy. The solution to that question I myself am not prepared even to guess, unless it be to gather whatever number of pre-John XXIII bishops may still be left on earth and still orthodox in the Faith (presumably so if retired ?) and look to them to elect a pope to at last end the prolonged interregnum and make it possible to yet save the Apostolic Succession. According to the teaching of St. Robert, the Church would cease to be when there are no more Catholic bishops! The pope himself is not indispensable to the visibility of the Church, but bishops are –at least one anyway.

Anyway, while I believe I have correctly stated St. Robert's teaching on Apostolic Succession

– I can supply any of you with Xerox copies of his Latin text –I am not so sure of its application to the situation of the new bishops. I anxiously await their comments on the information I have sent them – and yours too if I am perhaps overlooking anything again. In the meantime I am suspending, for my own part, any active co-operation with them. Regardless of one's opinion (whether right or wrong), schism as such would not seem possible so long as no action is taken on them (or intended).

Fraternally in Christ
Robert McKenna, O.P.

P.S. Until now there seems to have been no demonstrative evidence for the new bishops being schismatic. Archbishop Lefebvre, Fr. Bolduc, Michael Davies and others who have so insisted base their contention seemingly only on the fact that the new bishops, holding the sede vacante position, mean eventually to elect a pope. But such an argument simply begs the question, assuming as true the very thing to be proved, namely that John-Paul is the pope. If indeed it turns out that these bishops are materially schismatic, it would seem to be for the reasons given above (and only accidentally discovered!).

It is significant to point out the time when this letter was written and circulated: **July 11, 1982**. One

month before my consecration on August 24, 1982. Also meaningful is that it was written shortly after McKenna and the “mini-conclave” (as he called the meeting arranged by laicized Mr. Thomas Fouhy who received the highest praise possible from him) where a few clergymen were in attendance and Rev. Vida Elmer was chosen to be consecrated – and NOT McKenna. This entire clerical comedy might be saved for a future display of “traditionalism” and “Forever Catholicism”.

What McKenna is urging in this letter is a spirit of disloyalty, disobedience and demonic pride. Anyone having the courage to read this letter in its entirety and still remain coherent may do so at one’s peril.

Please keep in mind that it was not long after a meeting in Dallas, TX to which I was invited by Bishop Musey that McKenna was the first person to get up in front of a hall filled with people and proclaim: **“Before I came to this meeting, I was not sure about the question of the Pope. Now I am certain that we are in a state of sede vacante.”**

Even prior to all this, Rev. Vida Elmer telephoned me and asked what I thought about bishops being consecrated. My answer to him was simple and objective: **“The question of a Pope is really secondary. Of primary concern is to have bishops on the local level**
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and then the matter of the Pope can be treated.”

I knew nothing of the plans McKenna and those whose views he is always expressing without being asked might have had. You see, I was deliberately excluded from that meeting by McKenna.

At the Dallas meeting, it had been decided in the meeting that the question of papal validity would not be brought up in public until all were in agreement. Yet, with obvious disdain and disrespect for those of us who were not convinced of the sede vacante position our concerns were completely ignored. This outrageous disregard for those of us who were hesitant to condemn what had not yet been sufficiently proven could not be allowed to pass unchallenged. After the bleating display of Rev. Vida Elmer in defense of the “sede vacante” position I stood before the bishops and the audience and repeated what had been concluded during the meeting, namely, that no public statement would be made on the subject of the Pope.

And when the evidence for McKenna’s “Luther-like” exhibition was presented, there were few – if any - impelling arguments to support the claim that there was not a valid Pope occupying the See – the Seat of Peter.

Oddly enough, it was just before the Vigil of Pentecost and when I

remained alone with Bishop Musey who was giving me all kinds of reasons for the invalidity of the popes since Pope Pius XII – reasons that sounded good, but were not sufficient for me to make a firm judgment. We parted amiably and respectfully. My position was that the evidence must be so compelling that no reasonable person could deny it. Much like the question of the validity of Anglican Orders, there had to be such evidence that honesty would have to accept.

This was the time when Woytla went to England. At that time, I had called Mr. Walter Matt of the Wanderer and asked what the people in his area were thinking about this visit of John-Paul II. He said that everyone was praying that he would not go. To this I said: “If he goes, that will be evidence that he is not a true Pope.” Now please note Mr. Matt’s response to that statement: ”YES”. Yes, it would be evidence to the effect that Woytla was not a true Vicar of Jesus Christ. But, Woytla DID go to England; Woytla DID embrace the false “Archbishop of Canterbury”; Woytla DID embrace this layman posing as an ecclesiastic whose “Church” was presided over by the Queen of England; and, yes, Woytla DID say to this man: **“We are sister Churches. We are all searching for the truth!”**

As simple as that. The proof sufficient to declare without fear of error that this man, Karol Woytla,

whom the world perceives to be the Vicar of Jesus Christ, is NOT a true successor of St. Peter. How many millions witnessed this event cannot be counted. Here was the proof that no reasonable person could ignore or reject.

However, even in the face of this evidence, Mr. Walter Matt boldly continued to refer to this imposter as the “Holy Father”! I allude to this event merely to show the reader how difficult it was – and still is – for many people to accept objective reality.

And, as we go along, we will find this same hypocrisy attempting to mask itself with confusing sophisms under the banner of “Catholics Forever”.

At this point, it would serve us well to recognize certain postulates. A “postulate” is something that has already been dealt with and proven elsewhere. A postulate has to be accepted before any further discussion is possible. For example, honest men cannot reach any conclusions or make any progress in dealing with problems unless there is an orderly progressing.

Certainly, reasonable persons would agree that in the chaotic and anarchistic mentality so prevalent in the name of religion, especially in the Roman Catholic Church where once good order prevailed, there must be someone appointed

by God to keep the basilica of St. Peter from toppling over – as in the case of St. Francis in his day. There was confusion and moral disorders of all kinds and the reigning Pope was at a loss as to what could be done to restore order. There were many “saviors” of the Church who almost all ended outside the Church. Greatly troubled, the Pope must have spent a restless night. In a dream, he saw his church, St. John Lateran, ready to fall over, when suddenly, a little man ran up and with his shoulder pushed it back to its right place. The Pope recognized this little man as St. Francis who had come to him the day before seeking permission to live according to the Gospel.

And where are we now? Over eight hundred years later, we are back in the same place but with a greater problem. Today, we cannot look up to a visible authority in the Vatican. The shepherd has been struck and the sheep have scattered. But, Our Lord promised that He would not leave us orphans.

We are not orphans because in His wisdom, God has provided genuine shepherds to guide the small flock that remains. Our visible spiritual father is the bishop; the bishop given us by the Holy Ghost and not someone who has brazenly usurped that position. Heretics and schismatics are OUTSIDE the Church.

Whatever leads to absurdity must be false. I tried to suggest this to Msgr. Guerard des Lauriers in an effort to show him that his theory leads to absurdity. I suspect he was too enamored with his myth to catch the hint. For, indeed, the entire concept of a “material pope but not a formal pope” is a philosophical absurdity.

Now, here is where I would invite the patient reader to bear with greater patience what must follow in order to make sound judgments in all cases. “Matter” and “form” were simply explained previously, We will now deal with these concepts (ideas) in more detail.

First, let us understand what these terms (words, concepts) mean. Keep in mind that they are often used in different ways in different situations. For example, in moral theology we speak of “material sin” and “formal sin”. What do we mean? Eating meat on Friday is a mortal sin. The act of eating meat is only a part; it is the “material” part. Eating meat is not a sin whenever it is taken by itself. Why is it a sin to eat meat on Friday, then?

Actually, then, there is no such thing as “material sin” because all sinfulness is an act of the will which is not a material but spiritual faculty. Sin in whatever appearance it takes is always an act of disobedience. It is even a matter of controversy among reputable theologians whether or not the material element in

disobedience makes any difference. And the argument defending the position that the material element has little or nothing to do with the sinfulness of an action is based on the words of Our Lord when he spoke of those who commit adultery just by thinking about it and willing to do so – even though they never bring their intention to fruition.

When meat is eaten on Friday by a Catholic, it only becomes a sin when the will knowingly does this. This would be the “form” – the willfulness to disobey a law of the Church. This is where the difference makes the act of eating meat on Friday a sin or not a sin. The good Catholic does not wish to break the law of abstaining from meat on Friday. If a Catholic eats meat on Friday, thinking it is Thursday or Saturday – no sin is committed. The form and intention are lacking because sin is always in the will.

In philosophy, however, these words take on another meaning, as we shall see.

In the case of a papal election, it is necessary to determine the “matter” and the “form”. It is not always easy to do this in many cases. There had been much controversy as to what constituted the essential matter and form and intention for the valid reception of the Sacraments of Holy Orders. Pope Pius XII settled this question when he issued a decree defining and directing just exactly

what the essential matter and form were for the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Before going into “matter” and “form” as proposed, there is still a more fundamental aspect of existence that should be explained. There is a close relation between “matter” and “form” and “act” and “potency”.

A word of warning: Do not be impressed with the magic of mumbled mantras or bottomless babbling designed to hide the simple truth and to give the impression of erudition. Truth is quite simple.

A thing either is or it is not. There is nothing in between. A thing (being) is either an “act” or it is a “potency”.

We ask the question of McKenna and those like him: What exactly is a “material pope”? I know what the Catholic answer to that question would be. The Catholic answer would be that a “material pope” cannot exist because this is a contradiction in terms. As act and potency are related to each other, so too, matter and form are related. Matter and form always go together. Matter is indifferent; the form is definite. Matter is passive; the form is active. Matter is receptive; the form is that which is received by the matter. Matter is potentiality; the form is act. Matter is determinable; the form is that “through which” a thing is made to be what it is.

In the metaphysical science of cosmology, it is shown that all matter is homogenous – it's the same. What makes for the difference in things is the "form" – and they always go together. Matter cannot exist by itself except in the thinking mind. It is then a non-existent logical concept. You will never see a logical concept walking down the street. You may see a corpulent person leading a blob of matter that has taken on the form of a little dog. But, you will never grasp with your senses matter itself without a form.

So, a "material pope" is nothing more than the figment of a tired imagination. For, if we were to violate sound reason and common sense, we would have to conclude that those who promote this nonsensical theory are themselves "material bishops" or "material priests" or "material Catholics".

All of which comes to this: These men are deceivers because they have chosen to deceive themselves. They have chosen to deceive themselves because their perverse will dictates this nonsense for their apparent obedience. Note well, that that which is apparently real is false and that which is real is true.

To speak of a "material pope" does violence to one's intelligence. It basically rejects the Principle of Identity which states "Whatever is, is; and whatever is not, is not."

By adding the word "pope" to the word "material," determinable matter has been determined. Like those who fancy themselves as members of a Non-denominational Church thereby do not belong to any denomination deceive themselves because they have already "denominated" themselves.

How does all this apply to McKenna? He has publicly ridiculed those who are forced by evidence to become "sedevacantists" – much like himself . He publicly ridicules the seriousness of those who lamentably face the reality that there is no valid and legitimate Successor of St. Peter presently occupying the office of Pope and administrator of all Church properties.

Oh what tangled webs we weave when first we practice to deceive!

While always telling everyone how dumb they are and how smart he is, McKenna can only twist the words he reads because they expose him for the "paper theologian" he really is.

Like all heretics, McKenna is very selective in his quotations. A good example is that observed in his Newsletter of July 1986. First of all, allow me to puncture his balloon to let out the air from his accustomed bombastic superficialities. He refers to St. Bellarmine as the great Doctor of (and on) the Church. This is regarding Matter and Form which

Guerard des Lauriers subjectively imagines to be the “matter and form” of the papacy. Bishop des Lauriers’ understanding of matter and form leaves very much to be desired.

Likewise it must be said of his “sudden” disciple, McKenna who himself promoted the objective reality of there not being a valid pope.

The Canon to which McKenna makes selective appeal states something he does not wish to admit but which is the teaching of the Church, nonetheless

Canon 188 begins by saying quite clearly: **“There are certain causes which effect the tacit resignation of an office, which resignation is accepted in advance by operation of law, and hence is effective without any declaration.**

Rightly does McKenna quote the causes for kicking someone out of office, but he confuses “logical difference” with “real difference.” Logical difference is only a mental difference, but we are dealing with **reality** where real differences govern life. Real differences cannot be separated from a real being. We can make a logical distinction between man as a being having an animal body and a spiritual soul. But we cannot separate them in reality, in existence. There can never be a human being that is only animal nor can there be a human being that

is only spirit. These are logical distinctions.

Like so many McKennaisms, we are constantly faced with his subjective imagineering: We have just quoted from the Canon law of the Church by which the daily life of the Church is governed.

He would have us believe that when a person is removed from an office by whatever means, that he still remains in it. Where does he remain – sitting at the desk drinking coffee? How is he to be removed so that he cannot harm the concrete situation represented by or controlled by that office? If he loses the office, he is no longer entitled to anything that the office provides. Let us take a concrete example: When a Religious is informed that he is expelled from a particular Religious Order or Congregation, this means that that Religious loses all rights: The Religious garb of that community may no longer be worn; no longer are there any rights of any kind due such a person. To speak of such a one as a “material Religious” is just as absurd as to think of a “material pope.”

Guerard des Lauriers’ entire theory is based on gratuitous assumptions, none of which can survive serious scrutiny. As for the “great Doctor of (and on) the Church, St. Robert Bellarmine,” we are forced to wonder what happened to this great Doctor’s teaching on the

necessity of three bishops for the consecration of a bishop? What happened to this feverous demand for a papal mandate? I recall Vida Elmer threatening with angered spirit that he “would not recognize these bishops unless they can show him a papal mandate or a first class miracle”?

Vida Elmer publicized his views far and wide. But, he had strongly endorsed the “sede vacante” conclusions of wiser men than he. He proved himself, like McKenna, caught in his own dilemma of disobedience: If he obeyed the bishop (s) the Holy Ghost has given the Church, he risked remaining a simple priest; if he wanted to realize his red-button ambitions, he had to compromise the truth.

It should be kept in mind when subjected to all kinds of imaginary distinctions that among the real distinctions is that of the sede vacantists (The true Catholics): An essential point to the question ignored by McKenna is that the sede vacantist position is more fundamental: It is not merely a question of losing an office and sitting inertly at the office desk, it is a question of the essential distinction between an antipope who was already an heretic before his supposed “election” and a validly elected man who subsequently became an heretic.

It was Pope Pius XII who instructed the Church, clergy and laity, that heretics and schismatics are not members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ which is identified with the Roman Catholic Church.

Those outside the Church are not eligible either for passive or active participation in any Church position. Simply stated: Since Roncali (“John XXIII”) only heretics were invalidly elected by other heretics.

And thus, we need not split hairs over unimportant distinctions and stick to what really matters: Unity in faith and obedience to the true bishops empowered by the Holy Ghost to protect the remnant Catholics from false teachers and usurpers of all kinds – especially those who pretend to be priests and/or bishops.

(To be continued)



THE ROSARY and the Social Question

TO OUR Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries, having peace and communion with the Apostolic See,

Leo PP. XIII.

Venerable Brethren, Greeting and Apostolic Benediction:

The sacred joy which it has been given Us to feel in attaining the fiftieth anniversary of Our Episcopal Consecration has been deepened by the knowledge that it was shared by the people of the whole Catholic world, and that as a father in the midst of his children We have been consoled by the touching testimonies of their loyalty and love, We gratefully accept it and record it as a fresh proof of God's special providence, and one which is markedly full of bounty to Ourselves, and of blessings to the Church.

At the same time We love to offer Our thanks for this signal benefit to the august Mother of God, whose powerful intercession We feel to have been exercised in Our behalf. For hers is the loving kindness which, during the length of years and the vicissitudes of life, has never failed Us, and which day

by day seems to draw nearer to Us than ever, filling Our soul with gladness, and strengthening Us with a confidence of which the surety is higher than the things of time. It is as if the voice of the heavenly Queen made itself heard by Us, at one moment graciously consoling Us in the midst of trials; at another guiding Us by her counsel in directing the great work of the salvation of souls; at still another urging Us to admonish the Christian people to advance in piety and in the practice of every virtue. For Us it is once more a joy as well as a duty to respond to her inspirations. Among the happy results which have already rewarded Our exhortations which were due to her prompting, We have to reckon the remarkable impulse given to the devotion of the Most Holy Rosary. This awakening has made itself felt in the increased number of confraternities instituted for the purpose, the voluminous literature of pious and learned works written upon the subject, and the manifold tributes which Christian art has not failed to bring to its service. And now, as if for yet another time, listening to the voice of the same zealous Mother, who calls upon Us to "cry out and cease not" (Isa. 58:7), We rejoice once more to

address you, Venerable Brethren, upon the subject of the Rosary, standing as We do upon the eve of that month of October which, by the award of special indulgences, We have deemed it well to dedicate to this most popular devotion. Our appeal to you, however, will not be directed so much to add any further recommendation of a method of prayer so praiseworthy in itself, nor yet to press upon the faithful the necessity of practicing it still more fervently, but rather to point out how we may draw from this devotion certain advantages which are especially valuable and needful at the present day.

THE ROSARY AND SOCIETY

For We are convinced that the Rosary, if devoutly used, is bound to benefit not only the individual but society at large.

No one will do Us the injustice to deny that in the discharge of the duties of the Supreme Apostolate We have labored — as, God helping, We shall ever continue to labor — to promote the civil prosperity of mankind. Repeatedly We have admonished those who are invested with the sovereign power that they should neither make nor execute laws except in conformity with the equity of the divine mind. On the other hand, We have constantly besought the

citizens who were conspicuous by genius, industry, family, or fortune, to join together in common counsel and action to safeguard and to promote whatever would tend to the strength and well-being of the community. Only too many causes are at work, in the present condition of things, to loosen the bonds of public order, and to withdraw the people from sound principles of life and conduct.

THREE EVIL INFLUENCES

There are three influences which appear to Us to have the chief place in effecting this downgrade movement of society. These are — first, the distaste for a simple and laborious life; second, repugnance to suffering of any kind; third, the forgetfulness of the future life.

We deplore — and those who judge of all things merely by the light and according to the standard of nature join with Us in deploring — that society is threatened with a serious danger in the growing contempt of those earthly duties and virtues which make up the beauty of a humble life. To this cause we may trace, in the home, the readiness of children to withdraw themselves from the natural obligation of obedience to their parents, and their impatience of any form of treatment which is not of the indulgent and effeminate kind. In the workman, it evinces itself in a tendency to desert his trade, to shrink

from toil, to become discontented with his lot, to fix his gaze on things that are above him, and to look forward with unthinking hopefulness to some future equalization of property. We may observe the same tendency permeating the masses in the eagerness to exchange the life of the rural districts for the excitements and pleasures of the town. Thus the equilibrium between the classes of the community is being destroyed, everything becomes unsettled, men's minds become a prey to jealousy and heartburnings, rights are openly trampled underfoot, and, finally, the people, betrayed in their expectations, attack public order, and place themselves in conflict with those who are charged to maintain it.

For evils such as these let us seek a remedy in the Rosary, which consists in a fixed order of prayer combined with devout meditation on the life of Christ and His Blessed Mother.

DISLIKE OF POVERTY - THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

Here, if the Joyful Mysteries be but clearly brought home to the minds of the people, an object lesson of the chief virtues is placed before their eyes. Each one will thus be able to see for himself how easy, how abundant, how sweetly attractive are the lessons to be found therein for the leading of an honest life. Let us take our stand in front of that

earthly and divine home of holiness, the House of Nazareth. How much we have to learn from the daily life which was led within its walls! What an all-perfect model of domestic society! Here we behold simplicity and purity of conduct, perfect agreement and unbroken harmony, mutual respect and love — not of the false and fleeting kind but that which finds both its life and its charm in devotedness of service. Here is the patient industry which provides what is required for food and raiment; which does so in the sweat of the brow (Gen. 3:19), which is contented with little, and which seeks rather to diminish the number of its wants than to multiply the sources of its wealth. Better than all, we find there that supreme peace of mind and gladness of soul which never fail to accompany the possession of a tranquil conscience. These are precious examples of goodness, of modesty, of humility, of hard-working endurance, of kindness to others, of diligence in the small duties of daily life, and of other virtues, and once they have made their influence felt they gradually take root in the soul, and in course of time fail not to bring about a happy change of mind and conduct. Then will each one begin to feel his work to be no longer lowly and irksome, but grateful and lightsome, and clothed with a certain joyousness by his sense of duty in discharging it conscientiously. Then will gentler manners everywhere prevail; home

life will be loved and esteemed, and the relations of man with man will be hallowed by a larger infusion of respect and charity. And if this betterment should go forth from the individual to the family and to the communities, and thence to the people at large so that human life should be lifted up to this standard, no one will fail to feel how great and lasting indeed would be the gain which would be achieved for society.

REPUGNANCE TO SUFFERING THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

A second evil, one which is specially pernicious, and one which, owing to the increasing mischief which it works among souls, we can never sufficiently deplore, is to be found in repugnance to suffering and eagerness to escape whatever is hard or painful to endure. The greater number are thus robbed of that peace and freedom of mind which remains the reward of those who do what is right, undismayed by the perils or troubles to be met with in doing so. Rather do they dream of a chimeric civilization in which all that is unpleasant shall be removed, and all that is pleasant shall be supplied. By this passionate and unbridled desire of living a life of pleasure, the minds of men are weakened, and if they do not entirely succumb, they become demoralized and miserably cower and sink under the hardships

of the battle of life.

In such a contest example is everything, and a powerful means of renewing our courage will undoubtedly be found in the holy Rosary, if from our earliest years our minds have been trained to dwell upon the Sorrowful Mysteries of our Lord's life, and to drink in their meaning by sweet and silent meditation. In them we shall learn how Christ, "the Author and Finisher of Faith" (Heb. 12:2), began "to do and to teach" (Acts), in order that we might see written in His example all the lessons that He Himself had taught us for the bearing of our burden of labor and sorrow, and mark how the sufferings which were hardest to bear were those which He embraced with the greatest measure of generosity and good will. We behold Him overwhelmed with sadness, so that drops of blood ooze like sweat from His veins. We see Him bound like a malefactor, subjected to the judgment of the unrighteous, laden with insults, covered with shame, assailed with false accusations, torn with scourges, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, accounted unworthy to live, and condemned by the voice of the multitude as deserving of death. Here, too, we contemplate the grief of the most holy Mother, whose soul was not only wounded but "pierced" (John 19:37) by the sword of sorrow, so that she might be named and become in truth "the Mother of Sorrows."

Witnessing these examples of fortitude, not with sight but by faith, who is there who will not feel his heart grow warm with the desire of imitating them ?

Then, be it that the “earth is accursed” and brings forth “thistles and thorns” (Gen. 3:14), be it that the soul is saddened with grief and the body with sickness; even so, there will be no evil which the envy of man or the rage of the devils can invent, nor calamity which can fall upon the individual or the community, over which we shall not triumph by the patience of suffering. For this reason it has been truly said that “it belongs to the Christian to do and to endure great things,” for he who deserves to be called a Christian must not shrink from following in the footsteps of Christ. But by this patience We do not mean the empty stoicism in the enduring of pain which was the ideal of some of the philosophers of old, but rather do We mean that patience which is learned from the example of Him, who “having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). It is the patience which is obtained by the help of His grace; which shirks not a trial because it is painful, but which accepts it and esteems it as a gain, however hard it may be to undergo. The Catholic Church has always had, and happily still has, multitudes of men and women, in every rank and condition of life, who

are glorious disciples of this teaching, and who, following faithfully in the path of Christ, suffer injury and hardship for the cause of virtue and religion. They re-echo, not with their lips, but with their life, the words of St. Thomas: “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16).

May such types of admirable constancy be more and more splendidly multiplied in our midst to the weal of society and to the glory and edification of the Church of God!

FORGETFULNESS OF THE FUTURE - THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

The third evil for which a remedy is needed is one which is chiefly characteristic of the times in which we live. Men in former ages, although they loved the world, and loved it far too well, did not usually aggravate their sinful attachment to the things of earth by a contempt of the things of heaven. Even the right-thinking portion of the pagan world recognized that this life was not a home but a dwelling place, not our destination but a stage in the journey. But men of our day, albeit they have had the advantages of a Christian instruction, pursue the false goods of this world in such wise that the thought of their true fatherland, of enduring happiness, is not only set aside, but, to their shame be it said, banished and entirely erased from

their memory, notwithstanding the warning of St. Paul, “We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one which is to come” (Heb. 13:14).

When we seek out the causes of this forgetfulness, we are met in the first place by the fact that many allow themselves to believe that the thought of a future life goes in some way to sap the love of our country, and thus militates against the prosperity of the commonwealth. No illusion could be more foolish or hateful. Our future hope is not of a kind which so monopolizes the minds of men as to withdraw their attention from the interests of this life. Christ commands us, it is true, to seek the Kingdom of God, and that in the first place, but not in such a manner as to neglect all things else. For the use of the goods of the present life, and the righteous enjoyment which they furnish, may serve both to strengthen virtue and to reward it. The splendor and beauty of our earthly habitation, by which human society is ennobled, may mirror the splendor and beauty of our dwelling which is above. Therein we see nothing that is not worthy of the reason of man and of the wisdom of God. For the same God who is the Author of nature is the Author of grace, and He willed not that one should collide or conflict with the other, but that they should act in friendly alliance, so that under the leadership of both we may the more easily arrive at that immortal

happiness for which we mortal men were created.

But men of carnal mind, who love nothing but themselves, allow their thoughts to grovel upon things of earth until they are unable to lift them to that which is higher. For, far from using the goods of time as a help toward securing those which are eternal, they lose sight altogether of the world which is to come, and sink to the lowest depths of degradation. We may doubt if God could inflict upon a man a more terrible punishment than to allow him to waste his whole life in the pursuit of earthly pleasures, and in forgetfulness of the happiness which alone lasts forever.

It is from this danger that they will be happily rescued, who, in the pious practice of the Rosary, are wont, by frequent and fervent prayer, to keep before their minds the Glorious Mysteries. These mysteries are the means by which in the soul of a Christian a most clear light is shed upon the good things, hidden to sense, but visible to faith which “God hath prepared for those who love him” (I Cor. 2:9). From them we learn that death is not an annihilation which ends all things, but merely a migration and a passage from life to life. By them we are taught that the path to heaven lies open to all men; and as we behold Christ ascending thither we recall the sweet words of His promise: “I go to prepare a place

for you” (John 14:2). By them we are reminded that a time will come when “God will wipe away every tear from our eyes” (cf. Apoc. 7:17), and that “neither mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more” (Apoc. 21:4), and that “we shall always be with the Lord,” and “like to the Lord, for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2), and “drink of the torrent of his delight,” as “fellow citizens with the saints” (Eph. 2:19), in the blessed companionship of our glorious Queen and Mother. Dwelling upon such a prospect, our hearts are kindled with desire, and we exclaim, in the words of a great saint: “How vile grows the earth when I look up to heaven!” Then, too, shall we feel the solace of the assurance, “that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Here alone we discover the true relation between time and eternity, between our life on earth and our life in heaven; and it is thus alone that are formed strong and noble characters. When such characters can be counted in large numbers, the dignity and well-being of society are assured. All that is beautiful, good, and true will flourish in the measure of its conformity to Him who is of all beauty, goodness, and truth the First Principle and the Eternal Source.

CONFRATERNITIES OF THE ROSARY

These considerations will explain what We have already laid down concerning the fruitful advantages which are to be derived from the use of the Rosary, and the healing power which this devotion possesses for the evils of the age and the fatal sores of society. These advantages, as we may readily conceive, will be secured in a higher and fuller measure by those who band themselves together in the sacred Confraternity of the Rosary, and who are thus more than others united by a special and brotherly bond of devotion to the most holy Virgin. In this Confraternity, approved by the Roman pontiffs, and enriched by them with indulgences and privileges, they possess their own rule and government, hold their meetings at stated times, and are provided with ample means of leading a holy life and of laboring for the good of the community. They are, so to speak, the battalions who fight the battle of Christ, armed with His Sacred Mysteries, and under the banner and guidance of the heavenly Queen. How faithfully her intercession is exercised in response to their prayers, processions, and solemnities is written in the whole experience of the Church not less than in the splendor of the victory of Lepanto.

It is, therefore, to be desired that renewed zeal should be called forth in the founding, enlarging, and directing of these confraternities, and that not

only by the sons of St. Dominic, to whom by virtue of their Order a leading part in the apostolate belongs, but by all who are charged with the care of souls, and notably in those places in which the Confraternity has not yet been canonically established. We have it especially at heart that those who are engaged in the sacred field of the missions, whether in carrying the Gospel to barbarous nations abroad or in spreading it among the Christian nations at home, should look upon this work as especially their own. If they will make it the subject of their preaching, We cannot doubt but that there will be large numbers of the faithful of Christ who will readily enroll themselves in the Confraternity, and who will earnestly endeavor to avail themselves of those spiritual advantages of which We have spoken, and in which consist the very meaning and motive of the Rosary. From the confraternities the rest of the faithful will receive the example of greater esteem and reverence for the practice of the Rosary, and they will be thus encouraged to reap from it, as We heartily desire that they may, the same abundant fruits for their soul's salvation.

CONCLUSION

This, then, is the hope which, amid the manifold evils which beset society, brightens, consoles, and supports Us. May Mary, the Mother of God and of men, herself the

authoress and teacher of the Rosary, procure for us its happy fulfillment. It will be your part, Venerable Brethren, to provide that by your efforts Our words and Our wishes may go forth on their mission of good for the prosperity of families and the peace of peoples.

And as a pledge of the divine favor, and of Our affection, We lovingly bestow upon you, your clergy, and your people, the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's, this eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord, 1893, and the sixteenth of Our Pontificate.

LEO PP. XIII.



**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 CATACOMBS,
THE SHELTER
(Continued)**

At the very mention of the word catacombs we seem to see the early Christians gathered in the tombs below the earth, surrounded by the bodies of the dead, seeking in the very bowels of the earth to escape the fury of unjust persecution. We seem to see the living witnesses

of the faith by the uncertain light of the sepulchral lamps, lifting to heaven their pure hands to implore peace and mercy for the Church, strength for the faithful who groaned within the prison walls, and fortitude for those destined to greater torments, and finally death.

We seem to see the priests and bishops, and the Roman pontiffs, too, lifting to heaven the Host of peace and salvation, and offering to God the sacrifice of the Immaculate Lamb slain for our redemption. In a word, at the name of the catacombs, we represent to ourselves the dark habitations of the dead become the dwellings of the living; the place which witnessed at once the most terrible fears and the most joyous hopes.

In this conference I shall continually make use of the science and erudition of the great archeologist, John Baptist de Rossi, in endeavoring to set forth before you today the truth as regards the origin and use of the Christian catacombs.

It is by means of words that we express ideas, and therefore to the word catacomb must correspond the concept which it signifies.

The name itself, catacomb, is derived, from the Greek prefix “kata,” meaning “against,” and the Latin word “cumbere,” “to lie.” Etymologically, therefore, this word signifies a place near the sepulchers; and this is the signification assigned to the word by modern archeologists.

In consequence, it is plain that, properly considered, the word catacomb itself does not mean a sepulcher or cemetery, but a place near the cemetery. That clever archeologist, de Rossi’s successor, Mariano Armellini, Professor of Sacred Archeology in the College of the Propaganda, tells us that the word catacomb was a topographical term, used to signify a tract of country on the Via Appia, about two miles beyond the present walls of Rome. In the course of time this name came to signify the cemetery of St. Sebastian, and afterwards, in the middle ages, it was extended in meaning and application to all subterranean cemeteries of the Christians.

The earliest Christians, however, by the name catacomb never intended to indicate at all their subterranean cemeteries. These were already in existence long

before the adoption of this term, which afterwards was turned to its present signification. In the course of centuries the two ideas became confused, so that by the name of catacomb was understood the Christian cemeteries under ground. Now, this word cemetery, while it recalls to our minds the places where those dear to us are buried, at the same time consoles us with the sweet hope of their eternal happiness and of the future resurrection. For cemetery, derived from the Greek word which signifies repose, reminds us that those who lie there, though bodily dead, still live the life of the soul, which will one day at the sound of the archangel’s trumpet return anew to take up again these spoils of mortality. Thus death is likened to a sleep from which the dead shall wake again at the last day.

This was the belief and the faith and the hope which gave origin to the Christian sepulchers, which today are called the catacombs. Jews and Gentiles had their sepulchers, but St. Paul had proclaimed that there could be no communication between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, and so from the beginning it was repugnant to

Christian sentiment to deposit in the same place the bodies of the saints who were temples of the Holy Ghost, and who should one day rise again to be invested with immortal glory, and the ashes of those, who dying without faith, cherished no hope of immortality or future glory. Separated by the character of Baptism given in life, in death, too, they wished still to be distinct; and this distinction was visible also by the inscriptions upon their tombs. Upon the pagan's was written "mortuus est" ; upon the Christian's, "Secessit in pace." St. Hilarius reminds us of a prohibition which then existed of burying Christians in the same place with infidels, when he writes: "The Lord has admonished us not to mingle with the memory of the saints those who die without the faith."

This same prohibition was sanctioned by the Council of Laodicea, when those of the faithful who interred the Christians in the cemeteries of heretics were excommunicated, and this, as is evident from very early writers, was even at that time no new law. We read, for instance, in St. Cyprian that the bishop Martial was deposed from his See

because, among other accusations brought against him, was one of having permitted his children to be buried in the cemetery of the pagans. In this matter, it appears the Church has ever been most particular, especially in the earliest ages of the Church, on account of the pagan superstition regarding the dead. Impious rites were performed and sacrifices offered to the evil spirits in the pagan places of burial. In consequence, it was natural the Church should endeavor to prevent the burial of her children in such places.

It was, therefore, a reason of faith and communion which impelled the Christians to keep their own burial-places separate from the sepulchers of the gentiles and the heretics of their times, in order that without scandal to the faith they might kneel at the resting-places of their loved ones, pour forth in peace their prayers to God, and mark their tombs by those sculptured or painted symbols, emblems or images, which expressed the certainty of their faith and hope.

To be continued

Could You Explain Catholic Practices?

Rev. Charles J Mullaly, S.J.

IMAGES

Though many years have passed, I have never forgotten an incident that occurred on the little channel steamer from England to France. We were slowly drawing into the harbor of Dieppe. I was watching the chalk-like cliffs of Normandy and the darker houses of the town, when I caught sight of a gigantic crucifix rising above the quay. The corpus, or figure of Christ, was of heroic size and I was thrilled at this sign of our Church.

The passengers, in preparation for landing, were surging toward the bow of the steamer. A group of men and women stood near me at the rail.

“Aren’t Catholics queer people, to put images and statues in their churches and in public places? Queer, isn’t it, that they adore such things?”

Evidently the remark was made for my benefit, but if I had any intention of noticing it, I was anticipated. A well-dressed,

elderly man standing near turned to the speaker.

“Pardon me, but I know from your remark that you are not a Catholic and consequently not familiar with the meaning of the cross and with Catholic practices. I am sure you will not resent a little explanation. When I was in London, I noticed a statue of Nelson in Trafalgar Square. Could you tell me why that statue was placed there?”

The members of the group looked from one to another. At last one of the men replied :

“I am an Englishman, and I can tell you. That statue was placed in Trafalgar Square to teach our children to venerate the memory of a great sailor who died for his country, and to teach our children to imitate his life.”

There was a quiet smile of triumph on the face of the elderly man.

“That crucifix on the quay,” he said, “is to teach you and me to honor Christ, the God-

Man, who died for us, and to teach you and me to imitate His virtues. Catholics do not adore the material of that crucifix any more than you adore the statue of Nelson.”

He opened his watch, and from my position I could see the picture of a sweet-faced, elderly woman. Holding it so that the members of the group might see it, he said :

“That is the picture of my mother, dead these twenty years. I keep it in my watch to make me remember her sacrifices and her love for me. Would you say that I adore that photograph? Catholics keep images of Christ, His Blessed Mother, and the Saints in their churches and in their homes for the same reason that I keep the picture of my mother in my watchcase.”

“Of course you are a Catholic,” said the man who had spoken, “and naturally would give a plausible explanation.”

“Yes,” the old man replied, “I am a Catholic because of the grace of God. I was born a non-Catholic, and after years of travel and study of religions,

I saw that my prejudices were as yours, without foundation and due to ignorance of what Catholics believe and what the Catholic Church teaches. When my eyes were opened, I became a Catholic, and I trust that that same happiness will be yours some day.”

The steamer had drawn into the quay, and as I placed my valise on the counter of the Customs Office to have it marked, I saw next to me the elderly stranger. I could not resist turning to him and saying:

“May God bless you, and may your life in the Catholic Church be ever happy!”



The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena

Translated by Algar Thorold

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

(Continued)

How this devout soul, thanking God for His explanation of the above-mentioned states of tears, makes three petitions.

Then this soul, eager with the greatness of her desire, through the sweetness of the explanation and satisfaction which she had received from the Truth, concerning the state of tears, said as one enamored — “Thanks, thanks be to You, Supreme and Eternal Father, Satisfier of holy desires, and Lover of our Salvation, who, through Your Love, gave us Love Himself, in the time of our warfare with You, in the person of Your only-begotten Son. By this abyss of Your fiery Love, I beg of You grace and mercy that I may come to You truly in the light, and not flee far in darkness away from Your doctrine, of which You have clearly demonstrated to me the truth, so that, by the light thereof, I perceive two other points, concerning which I fear that they are, or may become, stumbling-blocks to me. I beg, Eternal

Father, that, before I leave the subject of these states of tears, You would explain these points also to me. The first is — when a person desirous of serving You, comes to me, or to some other servant of Yours to ask for counsel, how should I teach him? I know, Sweet and Eternal God, that You replied above to this question — ‘I am He who takes delight in few words and many deeds.’ Nevertheless, if it please Your Goodness to grant me a few more words on the subject, it will cause me the greatest pleasure. And also, if on some occasion, when I am praying for Your creatures, and in particular for Your servants, and I seem to see the subjects of my prayer, in one I find (in the course of my prayer) a well-disposed mind, a soul rejoicing in You; and in another, as it might seem to me, a mind full of darkness; have I the right, O Eternal Father, to judge the one soul to be in light, and the other in darkness? Or, supposing I should see that the one lives in great penance, and the other does not, should I be right to judge that he who does the greater penance has the higher

perfection? I pray You, so that I may not be deceived through my limited vision, that You would declare to me in detail, what You have already said in general on this matter. The second request I have to make is, that You will explain further to me about the sign which You said the soul received on being visited by You — the sign which revealed Your Presence. If I remember well, oh, Eternal Truth, You said that the soul remained in joy and courageous virtue. I would gladly know whether this joy can consist with the delusion of the passion of spiritual self-love; for if it were so, I would humbly confine myself to the sign of virtue. These are the things which I beg You to tell me, so that I may serve You and my neighbor in truth, and not fall into false judgment concerning Your creatures and servants. For it seems to me that the habit of judging keeps the soul far from You, so I do not wish to fall into this snare.”

How the light of reason is necessary to every soul that wishes to serve God in truth; and first of the light of reason in general.

Then the Eternal God, delighting in the thirst and hunger of

that soul, and in the purity of her heart, and the desire with which she longed to serve Him, turned the eye of His benignity and mercy upon her, saying — “Oh, best-beloved, dearest and sweetest daughter, my spouse! rise out of yourself, and open the eye of your intellect to see Me, the Infinite Goodness, and the ineffable love which I have towards you and My other servants. And open the ear of the desire which you feel towards Me, and remember, that if you do not see, you can not hear, that is to say, that the soul that does not see into My Truth with the eye of her intellect, cannot hear or know My Truth, wherefore in order that you may the better know it, rise above the feelings of your senses.

“And I, who take delight in your request, will satisfy your demand. Not that you can increase My delight, for I am the cause of you and of your increase; not those of Mine. Yet the very pleasure that I take in the work of My own hands causes Me delight.”

Then that soul obeyed and rose out of herself, in order to learn the true solution of her difficulty. And the Eternal God said to her,

“In order that you may the better understand what I shall say to you, I shall revert to the beginning of your request concerning the three lights which issue from Me, the True Light. The first is a general light dwelling in those who live in ordinary charity. (I shall repeat to you here many things concerning these lights, which I have already told you, in spite of My having done so, in order that your creeping intelligence may better understand that which you wish to know.) The other two lights dwell in those who, having abandoned the world, desire perfection. Besides this I will explain to you your request, telling you in great detail that which I have already pointed out to you in general. You know, as I have told you, that, without the light, no one can walk in the truth, that is, without the light of reason, which light of reason you draw from Me the True Light, by means of the eye of your intellect and the light of faith which I have given you in holy baptism, though you may have lost it by your own defects. For, in baptism, and through the mediation of the Blood of My only-begotten Son, you have received the form of faith; which faith you exercise in virtue by

the light of reason, which gives you life and causes you to walk in the path of truth, and, by its means, to arrive at Me, the True Light, for, without it, you would plunge into darkness.

“It is necessary for you to have two lights derived from this primary light, and to these two I will also add a third. The first lightens you all to know the transitory nature of the things of the world, all of which pass like the wind. But this you cannot know thoroughly, unless you first recognize your own fragility, how strong is your inclination, through the law of perversity with which your members are bound, to rebel against Me, your Creator (not that by this law any man can be constrained to commit any, even the smallest sin, against his will, but that this law of perversity fights lustily against the spirit). I did not impose this law upon you, in order that My rational creature should be conquered by it, but in order that he should prove and increase the virtue of his soul, because virtue cannot be proved, except by its contrary. Sensuality is contrary to the spirit, and yet, by means of sensuality, the soul is able to prove the love which she has for

Me, her Creator. How does she prove it? When, with anger and displeasure, she rises against herself. This law has also been imposed in order to preserve the soul in true humility. Wherefore you see that, while I created the soul to Mine own image and similitude, placing her in such dignity and beauty, I caused her to be accompanied by the vilest of all things, imposing on her the law of perversity, imprisoning her in a body, formed of the vilest substance of the earth, so that, seeing in what her true beauty consisted, she should not raise her head in pride against Me. Wherefore, to one who possesses this light, the fragility of his body is a cause of humiliation to the soul, and is in no way matter for pride, but rather for true and perfect humility. So that this law does not constrain you to any sin by its strivings, but supplies a reason to make you know yourselves and the instability of the world. This should be seen by the eye of the intellect, with light of the holy faith, of which I said to you that it was the pupil of the eye. This is that light which is necessary in general to every rational creature, whatever may be his condition, who wishes to participate in the

life of grace, in the fruit of the Blood of the immaculate Lamb. This is the ordinary light, that is, the light which all persons must possess, as has been said, for, without it, the soul would be in a state of damnation. And, for this reason, because the soul, being without the light, is not in a state of grace, inasmuch as, not having the light, she does not know the evil of her sin or its cause, and therefore cannot avoid or hate it.

“And similarly if the soul know not good, and the reason of good, that is to say virtue, she cannot love or desire either Me, who am the Essential Good, or virtue, which I have given you as an instrument and means for you to receive My grace, and Myself the True Good. See then how necessary is this light, for your sins consist in nothing else than in loving that which I hate, and in hating that which I love. I love virtue and hate vice; he who loves vice and hates virtue offends Me, and is deprived of My grace. Such a one walks as if blind, for he knows not the cause of vice, that is, his sensual self-love, nor does he hate himself on account of it; he is ignorant of vice and of the evil which fol-

lows it: he is ignorant of virtue and of Me, who am the cause of his obtaining life-giving virtue; he is ignorant of his own dignity, which he should maintain by advancing to grace, by means of virtue. See, therefore, how his ignorance is the cause of all his evil, and how you also need this light, as has been said.”

Of those who have placed their desire rather in the mortification of the body than in the destruction of their own will; and of the second light, more perfect than the former general one.

“When the soul has arrived at the attainment of the general light, of which I have spoken, she should not remain contented, because, as long as you are pilgrims in this life, you are capable of growth, and he who does not go forward, by that very fact, is turning back. She should either grow in the general light, which she has acquired through My Grace, or anxiously strive to attain to the second and perfect light, leaving the imperfect and reaching the perfect. For, if the soul truly have light, she will wish to arrive at perfection. In this second perfect light are to be found two kinds of perfection;

for they may be called perfect who have abandoned the general way of living of the world. One perfection is that of those who give themselves up wholly to the castigation of the body, doing great and severe penance. These, in order that their sensuality may not rebel against their reason, have placed their desire rather in the mortification of the body than in the destruction of their self-will, as I have explained to you in another place. These feed their souls at the table of penance, and are good and perfect, if their penance be illuminated by discretion, and founded on Me, if, that is to say, they act with true knowledge of themselves and of Me, with great humility, and wholly conformed to the judgment of My Will, and not to that of the will of man. But, if they were not thus clothed with My Will, in true humility, they would often offend against their own perfection, esteeming themselves the judges of those who do not walk in the same path. Do you know why this would happen to them? Because they have placed all their labor and desire in the mortification of the body, rather than in the destruction of their own will. Such as these wish always

to choose their own times, and places, and consolations, after their own fashion, and also the persecutions of the world and of the Devil, as I have narrated to you in speaking of the second state of perfection.

“They say, cheating themselves with the delusion of their own self-will, which I have already called their spiritual self-will, ‘I wish to have that consolation, and not these battles, or these temptations of the Devil, not, indeed, for my own pleasure, but in order to please God the more, and in order to retain Him the more in my soul through grace; because it seems to me that I should possess Him more, and serve Him better in that way than in this.’ And this is the way the soul often falls into trouble, and becomes tedious and insupportable to herself; thus injuring her own perfection; yet she does not perceive it, nor that, within her, lurks the stench of pride, and there she lies. Now, if the soul were not in this condition, but were truly humble and not presumptuous, she would be illuminated to see that I, the Primary and Sweet Truth, grant condition, and time, and place, and consolations, and tribulations as

they may be needed for your salvation, and to complete the perfection to which I have elected the soul. And she would see that I give everything through love, and that therefore, with love and reverence, should she receive everything, which is what the souls in the second state do, and, by doing so, arrive at the third state. Of whom I will now speak to you, explaining to you the nature of these two states which stand in the most perfect light.”

To be continued:



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