

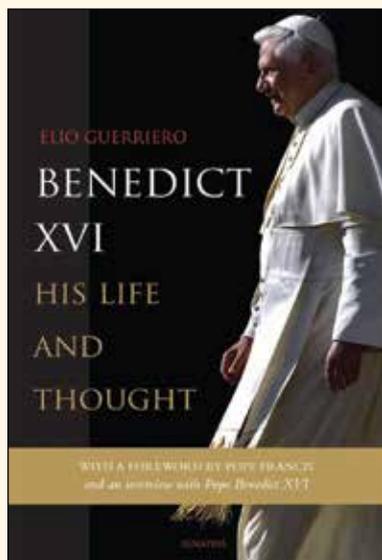
RELIGIOUS LIFE

A PUBLICATION OF THE INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS LIFE



▶ Nov/Dec 2018 ◀

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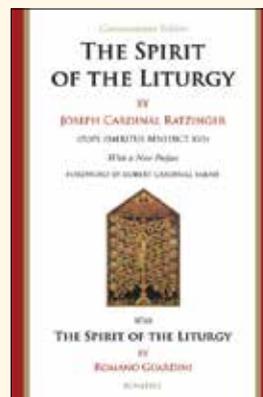
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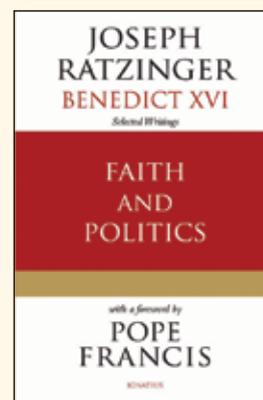
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—Lincoln, Nebraska





Institute Insights

REV. THOMAS NELSON, O.PRAEM.

Mary above all women had a contemplative heart. She was able to rest peacefully in the Lord's love and will for her because of her profound humility. There was no self in her. She was all God's. Servant of God Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J., reflects upon Mary's humility in his *Theological Reflections*. We are all called to form a contemplative heart after the example of Our Lady and cloistered nuns lead the way for us. The Holy Father manifests his care for this vocation in his recent document *Cor Orans*. Rt. Rev. Marcel Rooney, O.S.B., gives us a fine summary of that document in his article, "Fostering a Contemplative Heart: Reflections on *Cor Orans*." Honesty of heart is a fundamental disposition in forming a contemplative heart as Bro. Daniel Sokol, O.S.B., explains for us in "Working Towards Honesty of Heart: Part I."

As we see in the Blessed Virgin Mary, a contemplative heart must rest upon a humble heart. Pride kills contemplation. The sin of boasting proceeds from a pride. This is a sin we often fall into without noticing it. Dr. Elaine Murray Stone gives us some practical spiritual guidance in this area in her column *Taming of the Tongue*. Perhaps the greatest sign of humility is obedience. Certainly, Mary's obedience to God manifests her true humility. Consecrated religious who imitate her in a special way take a vow of obedience as a way of fostering a humble and contemplative heart. Many questions arise about religious obedience and there is no better person to answer those questions than Rev. Thomas Dubay, S.M., in his column, *Back to Basics: Q & A on the Essential Elements of Religious Life*.

Humility can be seen as a proper self-esteem rooted in God's love for us as sinners. Many people struggle with proper self-esteem because of past trauma and childhood wounds. Often religious women and men carry those wounds with them into religious life and are never adequately healed. Dr. Theresa Burke has developed a program called *From Grief to Grace* which opens a wounded soul to the healing grace of Christ. Many religious have found it helpful. We interview Dr. Burke in this issue of *Religious Life*.

Pope Francis, a religious himself, never tires of promoting consecrated life. We present here his address to priests, religious, consecrated persons and seminarians in his recent apostolic visit to Lithuania in "The Call to Closeness." Consecrated Life in exemplified in individuals and communities. In *Answering the Master's Call*, Sr. Greta Juniper, S.S.F., tells us her vocation story and her many years of service to the Church and her congregation. In *Affiliate in Focus* we read about the common witness to consecrated life from the Missionaries Sisters of the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Mercy, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Lastly, the spirit of the evangelical counsels are lived by the laity in canonically approved Third Orders. The Dominican Laity has given the Church many great saints and even a Doctor of the Church. You can read about them in Anne Tschanz's column *Holy Orders for Lay People*.

About the Cover: *Our Lady of Good Counsel* is an original mixed media painting with oil and gold leaf by Kitty Cleveland, a singer/songwriter and inspirational speaker from New Orleans, Louisiana. As a "music missionary," Kitty has since released 12 CDs of music and prayer, including two CDs with Lighthouse Catholic Media. She has appeared numerous times on television, on the radio, in concert, and as a keynote speaker both at home and abroad. For more information visit KittyCleveland.com.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

November/December 2018

Vol. XLII No. 6

Our Mission: *Religious Life* is published six times a year by the INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS LIFE, Inc. (IRL). The IRL is a national organization founded in 1974 to encourage, support and assist authentic consecrated life as set forth by Vatican II and its implementation by the Holy See. Membership in the IRL is comprised of bishops, priests, religious and lay persons.

Religious Life is sent to active members of the IRL (\$30 per year for U.S. membership) or to those who request it. Institutional or library subscriptions are also available. Send all correspondence to *Religious Life*, P.O. Box 7500, Libertyville, IL 60048, or call 847-573-8975.

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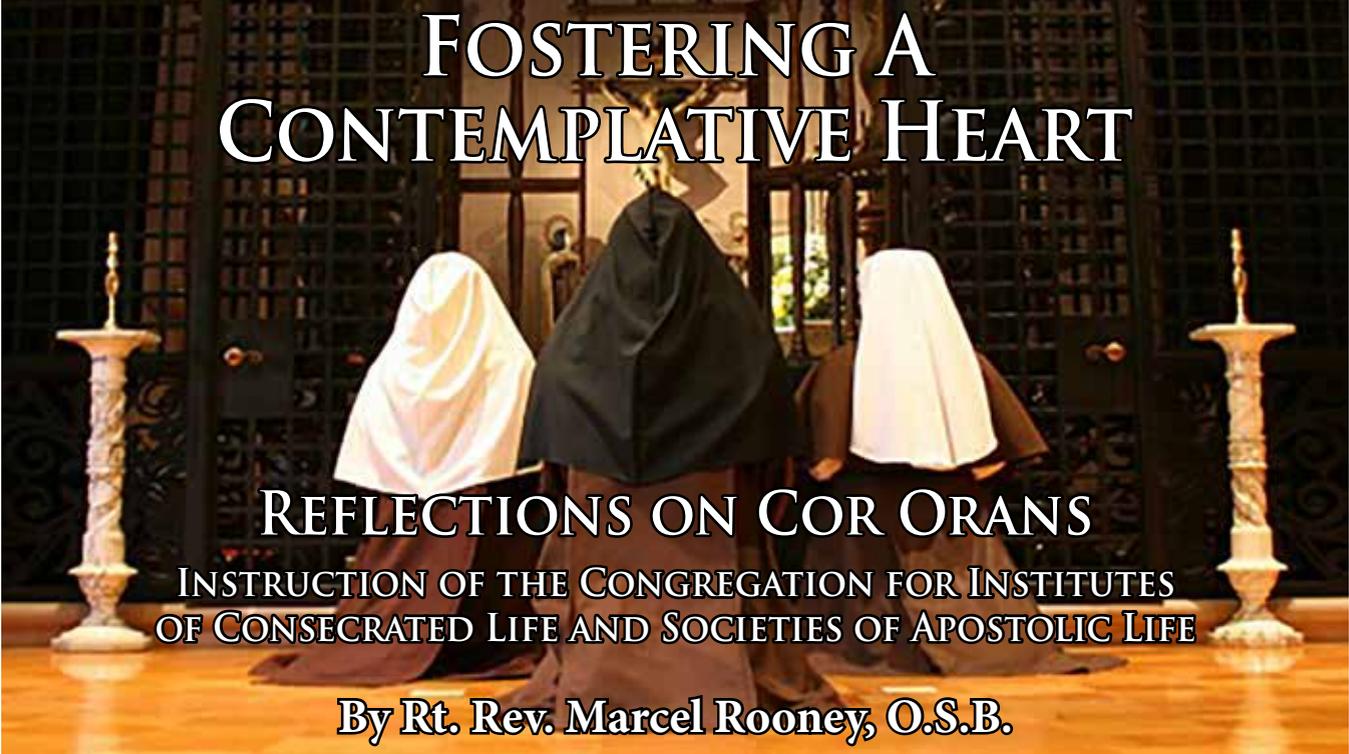
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FOSTERING A CONTEMPLATIVE HEART

REFLECTIONS ON COR ORANS INSTRUCTION OF THE CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

By **Rt. Rev. Marcel Rooney, O.S.B.**

To be understood properly, the Vatican Instruction, *Cor Orans* (“A Praying Heart”), needs to be read in conjunction with the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis, *Vultum Dei Quaerere* (“To Seek the Face of God”), which was issued on July 22, 2016. The Pope’s Constitution is a reflection on the contemplative life of women’s religious and monastic Orders. It is a way of bringing the Church’s teaching on this important witness to Christ up to date—in particular, summarizing and superseding the teachings of popes going back to Pope Pius XII, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and some of the regulations of Canon Law.

Pope Francis’ Constitution discusses briefly twelve aspects of consecrated life in general and the monastic-contemplative tradition in particular. These include 1) formation; 2) prayer; 3) the Word of God; 4) Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Penance–Reconciliation; 5) fra-

ternal life in community; 6) autonomy of monasteries; 7) federations of monasteries; 8) cloister; 9) work; 10) silence; 11) communications media; and 12) asceticism. One can note immediately that the pope is jumping between the most deeply spiritual elements of contemplative life to the most practical elements, such as federations of monasteries. In fact, the two elements are intertwined in one’s daily life, as any monastic religious knows.

Cor Orans is an attempt to implement the Holy Father’s Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere*. It does this by providing guidance and suggesting concrete actions, to bring the papal Constitution to the level of an individual monastery and an individual religious. It has an introductory part, which situates the document in the history of the Holy See’s concern for monastic-contemplative life. Further, it lays down general norms, many of which are aimed at explaining the terms to be used in the ensuing Instruction. There follows four chapters which bring the Constitution behind this Instruction into concrete applications, an example of turning theology into practical spirituality.

The first chapter, concerning the **Autonomous Monastery**, discusses elements such as a monastery’s foundation, canonical erection, affiliation, and suppression—as well as the important matter of the reciprocal relationship which a given monastery has with the

bishop whose ministry is dedicated to the diocese in which that monastery exists. The point of autonomy is that such will favor stability of life and internal unity among the sisters (par. 17). It gives the resident nuns a sense of true ownership of their house and the life it is intended to foster. They do this by the exercise of their capitular rights, by sharing on-going formation and instruction, by retreats, days of recollection, and other types of teaching (which can be done through video and audio means). This chapter includes specific directions regarding elements of administration. It also foresees the detailed elements involved in the transfer of a monastery from one geographical location to another. Besides the bishops of the dioceses involved in such a radical displacement of a monastery, certain elements will demand involvement from the Holy See also. It is expected also that the local Constitutions of a given monastery will provide some guidance for such a situation. This has an obvious corollary, and that is the involvement of a Federation, both its president and its council.

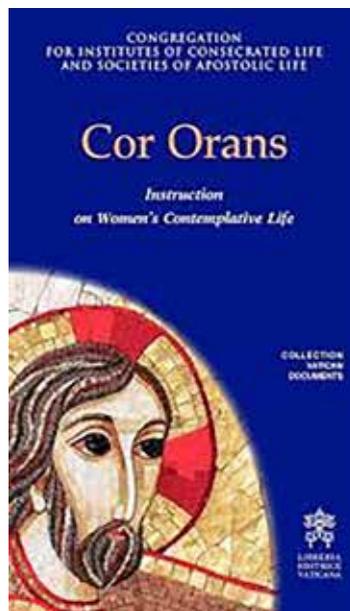
The second chapter of the Instruction discusses the **Federation of Monasteries**. The purpose of a Federation is “so that monasteries which share the same charism do not remain isolated but keep it faithfully and giving each other mutual fraternal help, live the indispensable value of communion” (Par. 86). This Instruction, following the mandates of *Vultum Dei Quaerere*, says that “all monasteries must initially enter a Federation” (par. 93). The rest of the second chapter outlines the roles of the Federation President, Council, Assembly, and other offices. Since most religious are already in Federations, the Holy See had ample evidence of the workings of such before writing both the Apostolic Constitution and Congregational Instruction.

It has been my experience that some autonomous monasteries that do not belong to a Federation are very worried about this directive legislation. Lacking experience of how the relationship of Federation and autonomous monastery works, the nuns are sometimes deeply concerned that they will lose their autonomy and be forced into both practices and spirituality that is not true to their interpretation of their charism. It is easy for me, a Benedictine abbot, to cite the very salutary experience

of Benedictine men and women with Federations. The Federation becomes a blessing of support when needed, of helpful correction through Visitations, of a general fraternal communion. The women of the Visitation Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the United States have also had a good experience with relating a Federation to an individual autonomous monastery. Hence, this should not become a stumbling-block for an autonomous monastery. Rather, it is a gentle help from the Holy See, intended to strengthen and affirm the charisms of individual monastic-contemplative communities. One other point should be added; Communities should make

use of the services of Religious Assistants, whether appointed to a given Federation by act of the Holy See (often a priest from a community of the same Order), or of the Vicar for Religious appointed in every diocese to assist when questions arise either of a practical/canonical nature, or one with greater spiritual dimensions. At some point, questions will arise which need more expertise in answering. Before going through a lengthy process of posing such a question to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life in Rome, it would be the wiser course to use first the assistance of those persons who are near at hand and are qualified to give counsel to a community.

Chapter three of the Instruction tries to get at the living, vital heart of what makes contemplative life to be the sacramental that it is intended to be within the Church, one of the prerequisites for an authentic consecrated life dedicated to contemplation—**the Cloister**. By this is meant a real separation from the world, which corresponds to the spirit of what Saint Paul wrote to the Romans: “Do not conform (the underlying Greek verb means to be remade in such a way that our inner lives conform to the godless lives of those who are dedicated only to “this world”—a Pauline phrase meaning a world alienated from the true God) yourselves to this age but be transformed (the original Greek verb here, *metamorphous the*, means to undergo a sort of metamorphosis which make us take on more of the image of God rather than that of worldliness) by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God’s will, what is good, pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12:2). The cloister symbolizes this turning away from



all that is secular and self-centered and godless (turning away = conversion). It protects the contemplative religious, but also gives the Church a vivid sign that our citizenship is not here on earth, but is in Heaven (Eph 2:19). The contemplative community is intended to “visibly depict the goal toward which the whole ecclesial community walks” (par. 159). The Instruction rightly notes that this cannot be a matter of mere externals; the cloister must first be in the heart of the nun, it must be that deep inner space from which one “seeks the face of God.” That is why the Instruction urges strongly the preservation of interior and external silence to foster this inner space which make room for the grace of



communion with the Lord to be received. Hence, the need for the cloister being so arranged that it will not be interrupted by access from outsiders. Care in celebrating the Sacred Liturgy is both a factor that nourishes this inner union with God symbolized by the cloister, but also manifests it.

Today, it is especially important to be vigilant about the use of contemporary means of communication that may introduce “noise, news and words...” (Par. 168), which could be threatening to the atmosphere of inner silence demanded by this special calling in religious consecration. Even if the lips are not speaking, it is very easy for contemporary means of communication to introduce a busy-ness that is foreign to the contemplative spirit. Contemplatives do need to know some of what is going on in the wider world; it can be a help to foster a good apostolic sense in their prayer for the Church and the world. But this needs to be handled with great care. The Instruction also delineates the different kinds of cloister. For example, papal cloister excludes any external works of the apos-

tolate. Constitutional cloister, is defined in the Constitutions of an Order, Federation, or community. This latter form may associate some legitimate work of the apostolate or Christian charity to the fundamental and central element of contemplation as the goal of vowed religious consecration. Some outsiders are permitted to enter a community’s space which has this type of cloister, such as those people needed for service to the community; nuns who are guests of a given monastery; and young women in vocational discernment (Par. 216). Since Pope St. John Paul II, a third kind of cloister has been added—“monastic cloister” (cf. *Vita Consecrata*, no. 59), a form more rigorous than that

common to all religious, but less rigid than papal cloister. This form makes it possible to associate the primary function of divine worship with wider forms of reception and hospitality.

The fourth and final chapter of *Cor Orans* concerns **Formation**, a crucial element for the flourishing of contemplative cloistered life. It does not begin with the individual, but rather with God. God calls; it is up to the individual then to take the steps necessary for responding to that call with more than a vague desire for holiness, but rather with the concrete steps by which the individual can open herself

to the action of the Holy Spirit and begin to conform more closely her life to that of Christ. Formation is the development not just of the spiritual life, but involves the possibility of development of one’s psychic, moral, affective, and intellectual gifts. In other words, formation is for full human development as well as the life of the Spirit within a person. Therefore, the choice of the person in charge of formation is one that must be taken

(Continued on pg. 19)

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WORKING TOWARDS HONESTY OF THE HEART

BY BRO. DANIEL SOKOL, O.S.B.

In a time when truth is at best something that is relative and at worst a deception, it would be helpful to spend some time looking at the value of honesty and telling the truth to oneself and to others.

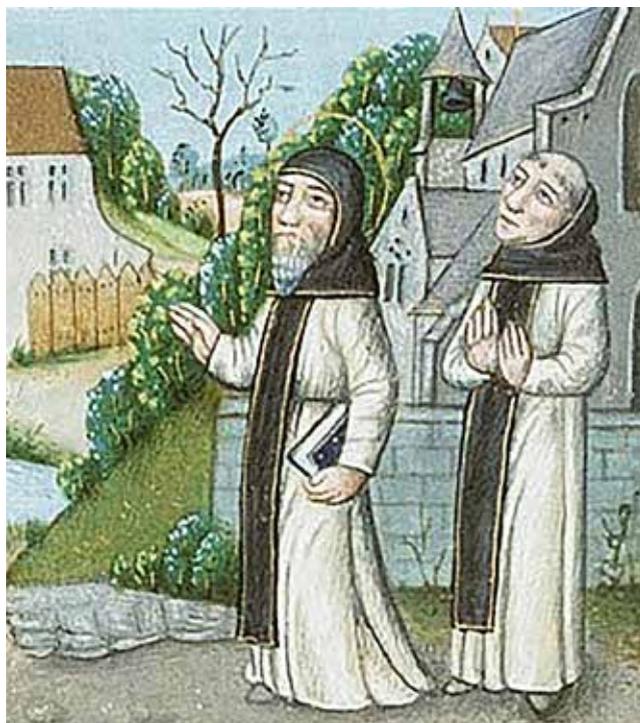
Saint Irenaeus defines truth as the teaching of the Son of God. St. Gregory the Great speaks of good leaders as ones who pay “no regard to self-love,” and who are not persons who wish “to be loved more than the truth.”

Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, “The Lord Jesus, ‘the way, and the truth, and the life’ (Jn 14:6), speaks to our thirsting, pilgrim hearts, our hearts yearning for the source of life, our hearts longing for truth. Jesus Christ is the Truth in person, drawing the world to himself” (no. 2).

THE “MAN OF TRUTH”

The Psalmist speaks of the “man of truth” who rests on God’s holy mountain (which is an image of Heaven), and wants to understand who will reside there. Saint Benedict includes this reference to Sacred Scripture in the Prologue of his Holy Rule. “Who will dwell in your tent, Lord; who will find rest upon your holy mountain? (Ps 14[15]: 1)... One who walks without blemish, he says, and is just in all his dealings; who speaks the truth from his heart and has not practiced deceit with his tongue; who has not wronged a fellowman in any way, nor listened to slanders against his neighbor” (Ps 14[15]: 23) (*RB Prol* 25-27).

Saint Benedict also has some good advice for anyone who wants to become a person of truth. “Hour by hour keep careful watch over all you do, aware that God’s gaze is upon you, wherever you may be. As soon as wrongful thoughts come into your heart, dash them against Christ



and disclose them to your spiritual father. Guard your lips from harmful or deceptive speech” (*RB* 4:48-52).

What virtues are revealed in this short section from the Holy Rule? Several points may be made from just these few lines of the Rule quoted above.

- Vigilance is necessary because delay can be deadly to the soul. The words “careful watch” indicate something valuable, something to be protected, something of inestimable value, such as the soul. Gospel accounts and the fathers of the Church recommend vigilance over one’s heart and one’s tongue.

- Awareness is necessary to recognize that an evil thought has crossed one’s mind. We can become so busy or distracted, that we hardly notice the parade of unworthy thoughts that flow through the heart like a wandering river.

- Knowing that God sees all we do and all we say is a way of preventing ourselves from dishonoring our good God, and of harming our integrity when we refrain from speaking the fullness of truth.

- We acknowledge particular thoughts to be unworthy of the dignity of a true Christian, then we:

- Take decisive action: by “immediately” dashing them against Christ. Christ is the Rock Who will give the necessary graces to neutralize these thoughts before they have a chance to harden into sin.

- Disclosure to a Spiritual Father or at least an

honest listener who will be willing to hear and discern your “thoughts” is a worthy practice.

- This takes a lot of courage!
- Posting a guard over deceptive speech is helpful to both ourselves and our neighbor in working towards honesty in the heart.



When we open our heart, we open it up to more than just the process of discernment and clarity, or as a preparation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We open up to the power of God working in us through the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth and love. We recognize God’s goodness wanting to manifest Himself

within us. Of course, this process requires truth in the heart.

MANIFESTATION OF THOUGHTS

Saint Benedict, again using words of the psalmist, says, “Confess to the Lord, for He is good; His mercy is forever (Ps 105[106]:1; Ps 117[118]:1). So too the Prophet: To you I have acknowledged my offense; my faults I have not concealed. I have said: Against myself I will report my faults to the Lord, and you have forgiven the wickedness of my heart” (Ps 31[32]:5) (*RB* 7: 46-48). He also says, “As soon as wrongful thoughts come into your heart, dash them against Christ and disclose them to your spiritual father” (*RB* 4:50). Honesty helps prepare us to make a proper Sacrament of Reconciliation.

It is not an easy task to reveal your thoughts to another. It takes work. Disclosure, unlike confession, reveals all kinds of thoughts, distractions and desires. Confession discloses sin and faults to a priest and with proper penance and repentance, receives absolution. Radical self-disclosure, on the other hand is a process of discernment that allows the Holy Spirit to enter in and work through both parties. Manifestation of thoughts to another has a lot to do with honesty, humility, and obedience to the voice of conscience which is God’s “natural law” at work in us. Distillation of thoughts helps to sort out the good from the bad and the ugly, and it can become an excellent process working towards self-knowledge, and the recognition of God’s gift of the indelible imprint of His own true image and likeness on our soul. We also become more aware of God’s goodness towards man.

"It is not an easy task to reveal your thoughts to another. It takes work. Radical self-disclosure is a process of discernment that allows the Holy Spirit to enter in and work through both parties."

WAYS WE CAN INCREASE OUR GROWTH IN HONESTY

Many people recognize that something somewhere is not quite right, but they lack the necessary tools, energy or courage to do something about it. Here are some suggestions for approaching the process of self-disclosure and honesty of heart:

- Practice radical honesty before the Blessed Sacrament. Do not be afraid to seek the truth, but above all become more aware of God’s goodness and mercy.
 - Pray for clarity of thought, distillation, and distinction of the good from the bad.
 - Share the process of distillation of thoughts with a trusted friend.
 - Face squarely our weaknesses and all of the circumstances surrounding a particular fault.
 - Always tell the full, unvarnished truth, no matter what the cost. A tiny moment of embarrassment is certainly worth avoiding even the smallest sin.
 - Keep free from too much busyness. It is good to contemplate the beauty of earth, the eternal joys of Heaven, the wonders of our faith, etc.
- “If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue free from vicious talk and your lips from all deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be your quest and aim”(Ps 33[34]:14 15) (*RB Prol* 17).☪



Q & A on the Essential Elements of Religious Life

The Vow of Obedience – Part II

BY REV. THOMAS DUBAY, S.M. +2010

Q *One must admit that authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, do err and do go to extremes at times. An example of an extreme would be the undue multiplication of rules and regulations. Would you please comment on the Church's right to legislate small details—for example, what vestments a priest should wear at Mass, how often we should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, what sort of garb religious should wear. Could it be rightly said that the Church, not unlike the pharisees, has added human precepts to the simplicity of Christ's law of love and that therefore we should obey Saint Paul's admonition, "let no man lay any law upon you except the law of Christ"?*

A Yes, authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, do go to the extremes both of too little and too much governing. They do err. And, it must be added, so do their critics. Jesus did promise that His Church, because of the presence of the Spirit of truth, would never mangle His message, but He did not promise that all leaders would be immune from any error in governing. This being said, we may proceed to the main question.

Perhaps we should begin with the thought of Saint Paul since the quotation seems conclusively to rule out any legislative minutiae adding to the marvelous simplicity of Jesus' new pattern of life. Actually the above application of this Pauline idea to the Church's legislation is prime example of the mis-

use of Scripture. Its relevance is only apparent. The Apostle in the context is referring to the demands of the old dispensation, not to the possibility of regulations in the new dispensation of the Church. Paul himself makes the "small" regulations referred to in the question. He determines what man and women shall wear at worship (1 Cor 11:2-16; see also 1 Pet 3:3), what the faithful may and may not do at the Eucharistic celebration (1 Cor 11:19-34); how prayer services are to be conducted (1 Cor 14:26-40). In the pastoral letters we find many "small" laws: what is to be worn at worship, the traits (including marital status) of the presiding elders and the deacons (1 Tim 2:9-15; 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9), the conditions for the enrollment of widows (1 Tim 5:9-16). Throughout his correspondence Saint Paul assumes his right to make regulations, and he expects them to be obeyed. Hence, far from being an argument against the Church's right to legislate what she considers significant, the Pauline corpus is a clear argument for it.

It is of course possible that a leader in the Church may err in legislating in trivial matters. Vatican II itself indicated that religious congregations had taken on practices that had become obsolete. Yet the possibility of an abuse of a right does not destroy the right. Further, the person objecting to a regulation as small should

possess the humility to entertain the thought that possibly the matter in question is more important than he may imagine.

In any event Christ surely gave to His Church the right and the duty to make laws. Whatever her leaders bind on earth is bound in Heaven—an astonishing power (Mt 16:19; 18:18). They who hear His representatives hear Him; they who reject them, reject Him (Lk 10:16). Jesus did not establish an airy angelism, a structureless community.

The three examples of legislating small details given in the question are liturgical vestments, the religious habit and the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It can hardly be said that symbolic clothing in divine worship is a small detail when one considers that there are few if any societies that do not provide special garb for those officiating in religious ceremonies. A universal practice points to deep significance. In the Church, a catholic institution, there is the further consideration of promoting worldwide unity. We humans do incarnate our community and its oneness in visible forms. Once again we know that we are not angels. If we are to preserve the Catholic community of the *ekklesia*, oneness in our liturgical life is of immense importance. Much of the same is to be said of the religious habit apropos

of its symbolic value and its promotion of unity in a congregation. If a business and common services have the right to regulate dress for their common good, surely the Church has the same right. The widespreadness of the regulation of dress in these three groups suggests that they do not consider the matter an unimportant detail.

Regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation two brief observations. One is that a sacrament is obviously important. The second is that the Church no longer makes any detailed regulations about the frequency of its reception for religious.

Q *Given the fact that we are adults not children, our rules really necessary in our lives as dedicated men and women? In the past few decades many of us have passed through a spectrum from detailed regulations to some regulations to no regulations. Not all of these approaches can be correct. What have we learned in these experiences?*

A We have learned that both extremes yield sad results. A multitude of rules suffocates initiative and smothers people. A total absence of rules leads to fragmentation and mediocrity.

Since the present swing of the pendulum is in the direction of few or no regulations, we may reflect on what this current experience is teaching us. Saint Paul points out that laws are not made for the good but for the bad. A community of saints needs few regulations because they are actually being led by the Holy Spirit. But because most of us would confess to being sinners, we do need regulations. People who claim to need no laws are equivalently claiming to be saints. And of course saints are the last ones to want to be rid of rules.



The history of religious life tells a long tale of fidelity and infidelity to the way of the evangelical counsels. Part of the long tale bears on our point: orders flourish when they are faithful to the wisdom enshrined in the rules written by their saintly founders; they wither and die when they are unfaithful. When members slowly disregard the rule of life and when chapters canonize their disregard by a series of mitigations, decline inevitably sets in. And the decline is often followed by death.

Current experience tells the same tale. Newly-founded, vigorous congregations always have a rule, a sufficiently but not excessively detailed rule. Communities which have abandoned a reasonably specific set of norms for prayer find that many members scarcely pray at all. If they have no directives regarding poverty, there is a great deal of egocentric “my car... my furniture... my library... my trips... my jewelry.” Factual frugality disappears. The laity look upon these groups with a sad pity.

When one reflects seriously for a few moments on the very concept of a ruleless community, he immediately sees it to be a ludicrous concept. No civil society, no governmental unit, no business, no hospital would think for a moment of trying to function without regulations. Adults do not operate this way.

Q *Some canonists advise general chapters that new or renewed constitutions and directives should emerge from the “lived experience” of the members of the institute. What do you think of this advice?*

A There is a valid sense in which lived experience is a source for specific norms in the life of evangelical counsels. Founders and foundresses did come to specific rules through learning from daily experience with their companions. Canon law itself stems partially from the Church’s twenty centuries of applying the Gospel to concrete life. Each of us as individuals ought to profit from the realities of our daily experience and existence as we grow in the imitation of Christ. This is true, but it is only part of the truth.

The expression, “lived experience,” as a source of norms is ambiguous. There is the lived experience of the saints, of the mediocre, of the wicked—and of the many types in between. Few of us would claim to be in the first group. What we are doing and what we’d like are by no means an assurance of what we ought to be doing and liking. That the majority in a given institute may have extensive wardrobes and personal cars, that they may drink and dine elegantly, that they may enjoy expensive pleasure trips and vacations is by no means indicative of what their legislation on poverty are to permit. That a congregation may have little or no communal prayer life does not suggest what norms for prayer they ought or ought not to have. To legislate from the lived mediocrity is a disaster.

Yet this is not the only problem. Many institutes are badly polarized. There is no one “lived experience.” One of the reasons they are polarized

is that they disagree about their experiences. To legislate on these bases is to invite chaos. What actually happens is that the group, being unable to agree on specifics, produces flowery, vague, least-common-denominator statements. All can agree with the statements because they really say nothing. Each member of the community understands them to mean exactly what he wants them to mean. This solution prolongs the polarization and may intensify it.

Legislation in religious life together with healthy experience needs also the objective norms of Scripture, canon law and the rich heritage of the saints. Most of us admit to being sinners. We know as Saint Paul tells us, “that our human wisdom is foolishness to God” (1 Cor 1:20). We tend to mediocrity. We often do not even see the unvarnished ideal, let alone pursue it. We know we need clear ideals and reasonably specific norms showing us how to reach them. Sinners who know they are sinners are not at all confident that they are “listening to the Spirit.” They know they are often listening to nothing more exalted than their own desires. Scripture tells us that “he who trusts his own promptings is a fool” (Prov 28:26). Our promptings are closely aligned with our experiences. The only people who safely legislate from their lived experience are the saints. But the saints are precisely the ones who faithfully cling to the objectivity of Scripture and the Church’s law. St. Teresa of Avila surely had a mind of her own and she expressed it. But Teresa also repeatedly affirmed and lived her complete attachment to the Church’s teachings and discipline. She saw no clash between the two.

Q *It seems to me that a religious community is especially vulnerable because it is to-*

tally dependent on the good will of its members. We do not have jails. If some of the members lacked this good will, they can seriously interfere with the freedom of others who want to live the radical Gospel. It ill-hooves me to judge others, but I can honestly say I have seen this happen. I think our modern society clearly mirrors the situation where the tyranny of permissiveness has greatly reduced the freedom of Christians to live as they wish. I am quite certain that this can happen in religious life too. So how can we disregard this freedom from abuse?

A Someone has well said that your freedom to swing your arms ends where my nose begins. The question underlies for us an ideal seldom realized by the more vocal advocates of the misconceived freedom, namely that permissiveness diminishes genuine freedom. What is even less realized is that this permissiveness lessons freedom not only in others whose rights are curtailed but also in the one who takes advantage of normless living. The inveterate talker who recognizes no limitation on his perhaps neurotic impulse to manufacture an endless stream of words obviously infringes on the rights of others to their own peaceful thoughts and privacy. But he does himself little no little damage. As Scripture reminds us, in a flood of words sin is not lacking, and every sin, being contrary to right reason, makes a person less human, less free. Idle chatter diminishes the chatterer in several ways: he is wasting time and thus not growing... he is not living continual prayer... he is pouring himself out into nothingness... he is likely enough inflicting boredom on his unfortunate listener... he slips into all sorts of faults; detraction, exaggerations, egocentrism, calumny... he is neglecting duty. If freedom is first of all a living capacity to be and to do, each of these aberrations diminishes humanness and consequently freedom.

The sinner is a slave to his smallness, his unhumanness (Jn 8:24). What is true of idle talk (of which we will have to give an account on the last day: Mt 12:36), is true of all sins; because they destroy the humanness of the sinner or at least lessen it, they destroy his freedom, or at least lessen it.

The question, however, is directly concerned with the curtailment of liberty in others when a member of a community lacks good will. This is undoubtedly true, and any reflective person who has lived long in community could recite a litany of examples. I mention a few. Luxurious living (expensive drinking, dining, recreating, traveling) creates an atmosphere that is corrosive of the freedom of poverty-minded people that live their convictions. True enough, these latter can live frugally to some extent, but only one who has not experienced what I have in mind here would maintain that their freedom is not impaired.

Uninhibited use of electronic media is a frequent and obvious infringement on the freedom of others.

A final example: communal prayer. If one lives in a group that does not take seriously its obligation to pray together, his freedom for this activity is obviously curtailed.

How to counteract the tyranny of permissiveness? One first step is the recognition of it. We must recognize subtle repression and permissiveness within community. A second step is to speak out at the appropriate time. We have the duty of admonishing one another in important matters (Mt 18:15; Col 3:16). A third step is wise legislation and enlightened leadership. Every member has a right to enjoy the maximal freedom to achieve what he came into religious life to achieve. Wise rules protect, promote and extend this freedom. ☩



ANSWERING THE MASTER'S CALL



Putting My Trust in God

BY SR. GRETA JUPITER, SSF

I grew up in New Orleans, Louisiana, the fourth child born of eight children to Emelda and Ulysses Jupiter. A cradle Catholic, my parents were devout Catholics, to whom I attribute my faith foundation. My mother made sure that we went to Mass every Sunday. She took me to Our Lady of Perpetual Help novena and many times hosted the Rosary at our house.

I attended a Catholic school from first through twelfth grade. Even though, I was taught by the Sisters of the Holy Family, entering religious life was not something that I considered. I visualized marrying and having children just as everyone else in my family did.

As a child, I enjoyed life and I had fun in and out of school. I loved going to movies and dances, and I always knew the latest dance moves. School was a place to learn and have fun with my friends. Sometimes too much fun. That's when I learned about detentions.

The social life of my family revolved around church and school. We were involved in all activities: church fairs, CYO, junior daughters, Ladies and Knights of Peter Claver, school dances, major fundraisers and special events. If an event was not sponsored by the school or parish, we couldn't go to it.

While in high school, the question was always "What do you want to

become?" I imagined that I would get married and have children. Surprisingly, when I was a junior in high school, the principal asked me if I would attend a live-in at the Sisters of the Holy Family motherhouse. When the principal asked you to do something, you say *yes*. And so I went not knowing what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the sisters lived a normal life, and were real human beings. They were happy, friendly and did normal things. Such as recreate. I saw a lot of what went on behind the convent walls, and it was all good. Therefore, I thought to myself, maybe I should consider religious life as one of my options for the future. I didn't tell this to anyone, but I confided to the chaplain at my school, and he told



me to pray daily over it. I began going to Mass every day before school at St. Louis Cathedral. In the meantime, I continued to enjoy life.

Months later, in the middle of the night while lying in the bed in a semi-sleep mode, a voice said to me "I want you to become a sister. I want you to enter religious life and become My bride." I wanted to cry, because I really wasn't ready for that kind of commitment. I feared leaving my family. I didn't tell anyone, but I continued to pray, and eventually I was at peace with the decision to enter the convent. I told my mother and she didn't believe me. She thought I was joking since I had never shown an interest in religious life before. I eventually convinced her that I was serious, and she began working on my trousseau. My dad was a convert and he thought that I would be giving up the family name and he would not get to see me for many years.

On September 8, 1965, I entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family with a desire to dedicate my life to God in whatever capacity He was calling me to. The Sisters of the Holy Family's mission is to minister to persons from the cradle to the grave through education, healthcare, and pastoral care with a preferential option for the poor.

After going through the formation program and before I made



my first vows, the Superior General called me into her office and asked me what ministry was I interested in. I told her I liked teaching. I was thinking of becoming an elementary school teacher, but she told me that she would like for me to teach on the high school level, and to think about what subject I would be interested in teaching. I said that I liked chemistry. That year, I began classes at Xavier University in New Orleans with chemistry education as my major and math as my minor. I received my Bachelor's degree from Xavier and went on to receive my Master's degree from the University of New Orleans in curriculum and instruction.

My first mission was in Lafayette, Louisiana, at Holy Rosary Institute which was a boarding school for boys and girls in grades seven through twelve. I was assigned as a science teacher and the second boarder directress. It was a challenge because I was only a few years older than the seniors. However, taking the boarders to the skating rink and shopping center was fun. I didn't enjoy my stay there as much as I should have because my mother was diagnosed with cancer and I wanted to be in New Orleans while she was alive. Due to my responsibilities, I could only take off one weekend a month. My mother died the following January.

At the end of the school year, I was offered a job as the Chemistry Lab Instructor at Xavier University in New Orleans. I was given permission to accept the offer, and I gladly accepted the job. I taught at Xavier for two years until my community said that they needed me to teach

in our own high school, St. Mary's Academy, which was my alma mater. I taught there for six years and then I was missioned to *Regina Caeli* High School in Compton, California.

I didn't want to leave New Orleans, but as an obedient servant of the Lord, I went to California where I stayed for thirteen years. I began as a science teacher, then promoted to vice principal and finally principal. I never had a desire to be an administrator, I was comfortable as a teacher, but God had other plans. After serving as principal for four years, I was missioned back to New Orleans to work in the development department. With a change in leadership, I was asked to apply for an associate superintendent position in the Archdiocese, which I did and I was accepted into that position. I served as associate superintendent of schools for four years, after which I was asked to serve as the first president of St. Mary's Academy. I said yes and ministered as president until Hurricane Katrina devastated the school three years later. It was completely flooded by eight feet of water. It was impossible to reopen the school during that school year. After several months of meetings with our administration and two

other principals and their administration from a Catholic boys' school and a girls' school, we decided to open a school where all three of the schools' students could attend. The school was called the MAX school. MAX for St. Mary's Academy, St. Augustine, and Xavier Prep.

The following year we were able to reopen St. Mary's Academy at a temporary location. At the end of December, I asked for a change in assignment and later worked for the Road Home program to help people get money to rebuild their homes. That was a government program which hired persons for a two-year period to establish the program and distribute the funds. At the end of that program, I became assistant manager of an apartment complex for low-income senior citizens. I helped to bring the elderly back to their original residence before the hurricane and assisted others in securing an apartment.

My life had taken many twists and turns in different directions which I had never imagined, but the biggest shock occurred when I was elected as the Assistant Congregational Leader. That began a journey of a totally different experience. Five months before the end of my four-year term as the Assistant Congregational Leader, the Congregational Leader went into a coma, and I became the interim Congregational Leader. Five months later I was elected as the Congregational Leader.

My journey in life has been faith-filled for the last 53+ years. My experience has taught me that when you put your trust in God and let Him be the pilot, He will stretch you beyond your limits and will not let you down. You can never outdo Him in generosity.☺

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HOLY ORDERS FOR LAY PEOPLE



Following in the Footsteps of St. Dominic —Dominican LAY FRATERNITIES—

BY ANNE TSCHANZ

There are many heroic and holy men and women who have been members of “Third Orders,” but perhaps none so well-known as the saintly luminaries of the Dominican Third Order, or as they are now referred to The Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic. St. Catherine of Siena, St. Rose of Lima, St. Martin de Porres, and Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, to name a few, were all Dominican Tertiaries. Perhaps this is due to the very mission of the Dominican Order which is, as Pope St. John Paul II said nothing less than “the arduous task of the evangelization of the world.” And as part of the Dominican family, Lay Dominicans “share in its apostolic mission by prayer, study and preaching...” (*Rule I:4*).

The motto of the Dominican Order is *Veritas* (“Truth”), and it is this clear focus on a fundamental principle of our Faith that God is Truth which gives the laity of the Dominican Order their clear directives as witnesses to Jesus Christ in the world. Pope Benedict XVI (whose predecessor Pope Benedict XV was a Dominican Tertiary) said in speaking about Saint Dominic that “Christ is in fact the most precious good that men and women of all times and all places have the right to know and to love.”



In our own times, when so many are echoing the words of Pontus Pilate: “What is truth?” (Jn 18:38) and there is “a famine of the hearing of the Word of God” (Amos 8:11), the example of the founder of the Order of the Preachers gives lay people a model to follow for evangelization: prayer first, then study and, finally, preaching. This is the mission for all Dominicans—preaching and the salvation of souls.

Dominic was born in Spain in 1170 and lived during the time of the Albigensian heresy, whose adherents denied the humanity of Christ, the Sacraments, the goodness of marriage and childbearing, and even promoted suicide. People

were attracted to the sect because of their persuasive teaching and ascetic lifestyle, which contrasted unfavorably with the wealth, pomp, and ordinary lives of the Catholic clergy.

To counter this heresy, Saint Dominic came into France in the early 13th century like a “fresh breeze” and began to preach. The heretics spoke of him as their most dangerous enemy for his eloquence and knowledge of the truths of the Faith silenced and angered his opponents. Despite threats against his life, Dominic’s only weapon was “God’s Word, living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12).

According to tradition, it was Dominic who encouraged devotion to that other powerful weapon, the Rosary. While the Rosary was something that developed over time, we do know that Dominic had a tender devotion to Our Lady, that is, according to Pope Benedict XVI, “a precious legacy to his spiritual children.” Pope Pius XI stated: “The Rosary of Mary is the principle and foundation on which the very Order of St. Dominic rests.”

The early Third Orders arose from a desire amongst the lay faithful to live a more apostolic life and many of them were followers of Dominic from the beginning. The

origins of the Third Order came out of a pious, evangelical and fervent group of men and women who were deeply unhappy with the laxity found among those who professed to be Christians. In 1285, the Master General of the Dominicans devised a Rule for them, in which they were called to be zealous propagators of the Catholic Faith, eager to bring the Word of God wherever the Holy Spirit led them.

The current updated Rule, faithful to the original, dates from 1987. With the promises made, a Lay Dominican is canonically obligated (without penalty of sin) “to fan anew the flame of the tradition and vocation of the Lay Branch of the Order of Preachers.” This dovetails with the Vatican Council II document *Gaudium et Spes* in which it says: “By their prophetic mission, lay people are called to be witnesses to Christ in all circumstances and at the very heart of the community of mankind” (GS 43,4). Saint Dominic reminds us that “the seed will molder if it is hoarded up. It will be fruitful if it is sown.” As leaven in the world, they must be ready “to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Pet 3:15-16). They should embody the second motto of the Dominicans taken from St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*: “To contemplate and to give to others the fruits of our contemplation.”

As people of the Middle Ages moved from the countryside to cities and universities, the Dominicans were there to meet them intellectually and spiritually. St. Catherine of



Siena, born in 1347, is an example of one profoundly in union with Our Lord through prayer, works of charity and as part of the Third Order. One of twenty-five children, she took a vow of virginity at age 7 and at age 16 became a Dominican Tertiary. You cannot preach what you do not know so she devoted the next several years to prayer and meditation. Always solicitous of the poor, she cared for the sick, especially lepers, and offered her sufferings for the renewal of the Church and for sinners. Like St. Joan of Arc, she was very involved with the issues of the day while experiencing a profound mystical union with Our Lord. Working for the reform of the Church, she strove to foster peace between warring factions, energetically urged the Holy Father to return from Avignon to Rome and worked tirelessly to end the great Schism. She was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1970.

St. Rose of Lima, inspired by Saint Catherine, was also a Dominican Tertiary. Born in 1586 in Peru, her family wanted to contract a marriage for their beautiful daughter, but she resisted their efforts and made a vow of virginity. Her life of mortification and prayer in the face of hardships were offered to Jesus

for the souls in Purgatory and for the sins against Our Lord. She was the first person in the Americas to be canonized.

Another Peruvian Dominican and friend of Saint Rose was St. Martin de Porres. The child of a Spanish knight and a freed slave from Panama, Martin was born in 1579.

In his homily during Martin’s canonization in 1962, Pope St. John XXII said: “He forgave the bitterest injuries.... He tried with all his might to redeem the guilty; lovingly he comforted the sick; he provided food, clothing and medicine for the poor; he helped, as best he could (those) who were looked upon at that time as akin to slaves: thus he deserved to be called by the name the people gave him: ‘Martin the Charitable.’”

Popular today is Bl. Margaret of Castello, a severely handicapped woman who was abandoned as a child by her parents and survived on the streets through the goodness of strangers. She instructed children in the Faith and was permitted to wear the Dominican habit as a tertiary. In modern times, St. Arnold Janssen, founder of the Society of the Divine Word, was a lay Dominican. As was Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, born to an affluent Italian family in 1901. Devoted to works of charity and social action in support of Catholic teaching, he died in 1925 and is a Patron of World Youth Day.

Those wishing to follow in the footsteps of these holy ones must first discern with the local chapter if they are truly called to Dominican life; if yes, then they begin an in-

quiry period. Then follows the candidacy period of one year where the life of St. Dominic is studied, as well as the history of the Order, the Rule and the requirements of Lay Dominican life. After this period, if it is mutually agreeable, the candidate makes a temporary promise to live according to the Rule for three years. Upon first (temporary) profession is when the man or woman is invested in the Scapular of St.



Dominic. Finally, a person may be invited to live according to the Rule of the Fraternities of St. Dominic until death by making a perpetual promise. After death, one may be buried in a full Dominican habit and they are remembered in the prayers, Masses and penances of the whole Order.

A Lay Dominican’s spirituality has four key elements: *prayer*, *study*, *community* and *the apostolate*. Their prayers take the form of daily celebration of the Holy Mass, praying Liturgy of the Hours and recitation of the Rosary. *Lectio Divina*, that is, prayerful meditation on Scripture, and monthly participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation are strongly recommended. They study the recent documents of the Church, the history of the Order and Dominican writers. They invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Catherine of Siena, Patroness of the Dominican Laity, for fruitfulness in the apostolate. The local chapters meet regularly to worship, pray, study and socialize together. Finally, they go out to all the world to “proclaim the Good News” (Mk 15:16) to everyone who needs to hear the saving message of the Gospel, while

respecting the dignity of the human person and promoting unity and dialogue (Rule II:12). Amazingly, for so venerable an Order, the Dominicans have never experienced any schisms or breakaways since their founding in 1216.

Christianity is being driven more and more out of the public square. Lay Dominicans, in sharing in the prophetic, priestly and royal office of Jesus Christ through Baptism and Confirmation, are by the special charism of the Order, called to preach the Word of God in their workplace, in their families and in places that may be beyond the reach of religious and priests.

Accompanied by the prayers of the cloistered Dominican nuns, they witness to their “faith, listen to the needs of their contemporaries and serve the truth” (Rule I:5). And “inspired by the charism of the Order, they are mindful that apostolic activity comes out of an abundance of contemplation” (I:7). For in the end, the goal is union with Jesus Christ and life everlasting.

Today, there are about 200,000 Lay Dominicans around the world, with 80,000 or so in Vietnam alone, a country where many of them gave their lives for the Faith. May the Lay Dominicans, lit by the zeal of Dominic, continue to fulfill their mission to preach and defend the Faith. Dominic was described as having “all love for his neighbor, all pity for the poor, and the simplicity of his conduct, without a shadow of insincerity either in word or in deed, made him dear to all.” Through Dominic’s intercession, “we ask God,” said Pope Benedict XVI, “to enrich the Church always with genuine preachers of the Gospel.”

LAY FRATERNITIES OF SAINT DOMINIC

Founder: St. Dominic of Osma and promulgated in 1285

Motto: *Veritas* (“Truth”)

External Sign: The Dominican Scapular

Spirituality: Prayer, study, apostolate and community

Mission: *Contemplare et contemplata aliis tradere* (“to contemplate and hand on to others the fruits of contemplation”)

Formation Stages: Inquiry (1 year), Candidacy (1 Year), Temporary Profession (3 years), Final Professed

Websites: LayDominican.org or OPLaityWest.org





Pope Francis' Address to Priests, Religious, Consecrated Persons & Seminarians on His Apostolic Visit to Lithuania

The Call to Closeness

The following is an edited address given by Pope Francis on September 23, 2018, in the Cathedral of Saints Peter & Paul in Kanusa, Lithuania, during his apostolic journey to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

My entire visit to your country has been summed up in one expression: “Jesus Christ, our hope.” Now, we have heard a text of the Apostle Paul that invites us to hope with perseverance. Paul tells us this after having proclaimed to us God’s dream for every human being, and indeed for all creation: “God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him” (Rom 8:28). He “straightens” all things: that would be the literal translation.

Today I would like to share with you some aspects of this hope: aspects that we—as priests, seminarians, consecrated men and women—are asked to embody in our lives.

First, before his invitation to hope, Paul repeats three times the word “groan”: creation groans, men and women groan, the Spirit groans within us (cf. Rom 8:22-23, 26). This groaning comes from an enslavement of corruption, from a yearning for fulfilment. Today we would do well to ask if we ourselves groan inwardly, or whether our hearts are still, no longer yearning for the living God.

Ours should be the longing of the deer for springs of water as we seek God’s mystery, His truth and His beauty. Dear friends, we are not “God’s bureaucrats”! Perhaps our “prosperous society” keeps us sated, surrounded by services and material objects; we end up “stuffed” with everything and filled by nothing. Perhaps it keeps us distracted and entertained, but not fulfilled. Even worse: sometimes we no longer feel hunger. As men and women of special consecration, we can never afford to lose that inward groaning, that restlessness of heart that finds its rest in the Lord alone (Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1.1). The restlessness of the heart. No instant news, no virtual communication can substitute for our need of concrete, prolonged and regular moments—calling for sustained effort—our need of daily dialogue with the Lord through prayer and adoration. We need to keep cultivating our desire for God, as St. John of the Cross wrote. This is what he said: “Try to be continuous in prayer, and in the midst of bodily exercises, do not leave it. Whether you eat, drink, talk with others,

or do anything, always go to God and attach your heart to Him” (*Counsels to a Religious on How to Attain Perfection*, 9b).

This groaning can also come from our contemplation of the world around us, as a protest against the unsatisfied needs of our poorest brothers and sisters, before the absence of meaning in the lives of our young, the loneliness experienced by the elderly, the misuse of creation. It is a groaning that would mobilize efforts to shape events in our nation, in our cities, not by acting as a pressure group or in a bid for power, but in service to all. We too should be moved by the cry of our people, like Moses before the burning bush, when God spoke to him of the suffering of His people (cf. Ex 3:9). Listening to God’s voice in prayer makes us see, makes us hear and feel the pain of others, in order to set them free. Yet we should also be concerned when our people stop groaning, when they stop seeking water to quench their thirst. At those times, we need to discern what is silencing the voice of our people.

The cry that makes us turn to God in prayer and adoration is the same that makes us sensitive to the plea of our brothers and sisters. They put their “hope” in us, and they require us to discern carefully and then to organize, boldly and creatively, our apostolic outreach. May our presence not be haphazard but one that can genuinely respond to the needs of God’s people, and thus be leaven in the dough (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 33).

The Apostle also speaks of *perseverance*: constancy in suffering and in the pursuit of goodness. This calls for our being centered in God, firmly rooted in Him and faithful to His love.

The older among you know what it is to bear witness to this constancy in suffering, this “hoping against hope” (cf. Rom 4:18). The violence you endured for your defense of civil and religious freedom, the violence of slander, imprisonment and deportation, could not prevail over your faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord of history. You have much to tell us and teach us. Yet you also have much advice to give, without the need to pass judgment on the apparent limitations

of the young. And you, the young, when you meet with little frustrations that can discourage you and make you want to turn in on yourselves, seeking activities and pastimes at odds with your consecration, go back to your roots and consider the path taken by your elders. I see that there are young people here. I am repeating this, because some are young. And you, younger ones, when faced with

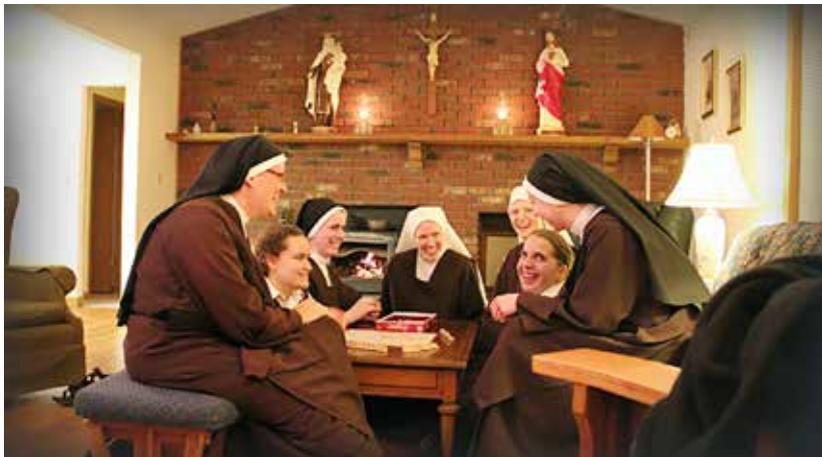
the little frustrations that discourage you, you tend to close in on yourselves, to resort to behavior and escapism that is not consistent with your consecration. Seek out your roots and keep to the path that your elders walked. It is better to take a different path than that you live in mediocrity. That was for the young. You are

still in time, and the door is still open. It is tribulation that brings out what is distinctive about Christian hope. For when our hope is merely human, we can become frustrated and end in failure. That does not happen with Christian hope: it is renewed and purified when tested by tribulation.

It is true that we are living in different times and situations, but it is also true that this advice proves most helpful when those who experienced those hardships do not keep them to themselves but share them with others. Their stories are not simply expressions of nostalgia for times past, as if they were somehow better, or veiled criticisms of those who have a more fragile emotional makeup. A community of disciples can draw upon great resources of constancy if it can integrate—like the scribe in the Gospel—both new and old (cf. Mt

13:52), if it is conscious that historical experiences are the roots that enable the tree to grow and flourish.

Finally, looking to Jesus Christ as our hope means *identifying ourselves with Him, sharing as a community in His lot*. For the Apostle Paul, the salvation we await is not merely negative: freedom from some internal or external, historical or eschatological tribulation. Paul instead speaks of it as something



supremely positive: our sharing in the glorious life of Christ (cf. 1 Thess 5:9-10), our sharing in His glorious Kingdom (cf. 2 Tim 4:18), the redemption of our bodies (cf. Rom 8:23-24). Each of you should try to glimpse the mysterious and unique plan that God has for him or her, for each one of us. For no one can ever know us as profoundly as God does. He calls us to something apparently impossible; He gambles on us, trusting that we will reflect the image of His Son. He expects much of us, and we put our hope in Him.

Us: That “us” includes, but also exceeds, each of us as an individual. The Lord calls us, justifies us and glorifies us together, and with us, He includes all creation. Often we so stress personal responsibility that our responsibility as a community ends up in the background, no more than a backdrop. But the Holy Spirit gath-

ers us, reconciles our differences and generates new energies to advance the Church’s mission (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 131, 235).

This cathedral in which we are gathered is dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. Both these apostles were conscious of the treasure they had received; both, at different moments and in different ways, had been asked to “put out into the deep water” (Lk

5:4). All of us are in the boat that is the Church. We too want constantly to *cry out* to God, to *persevere* amid tribulation and to hold fast to Jesus Christ as the *object of our hope*. And this boat sees it as central to her mission to proclaim the eagerly-awaited glory that is God present in the midst of His

people in the Risen Christ, a glory that one day, to fulfil the yearning of all creation, will be revealed in the children of God. This is the challenge that impels us: the mandate to evangelize. This is the basis of our hope and our joy.

How often we encounter priests, religious men and women, who are sad. *Spiritual sadness* is an illness. They are sad because they do not know... Sad because they do not find love, because they have not fallen in love with the Lord. They left aside a married life, family life, because they wanted to follow the Lord. But now they seem tired... And then sadness descends on them. Please, when you find yourselves sad, stop. And seek out a wise priest, a wise sister. Not wise because they have university degrees, no, not for that reason. Wise because they have been

(Continued on pg. 22)



THE TAMING OF THE TONGUE

Practical Spiritual Guidance
to Grow in Christian Virtue

The Sin of Boasting

BY DR. ELAINE MURRAY STONE +2005

*“Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast. Save in the Cross of Christ, my God:
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His Blood.”—Isaac Watts*

Having examined in previous reflections on self-glorification as it is manifested through lies and deceit, we must consider the problem in a quite different form. We should look at it in circumstances where there is no intention to deceive, but simply blatant, unwholesome boasting of the kind spoken by arrogant, puffed-up people.

Boasting is directly contrary to that great Christian virtue—*humility*. It is both an indication of extravagant pride and an advertisement of low spiritual station. Boasting is most unbecoming in a practicing Christian, and we should do everything possible to keep ourselves from doing it. It is amazing how blind we can be to such a fault in ourselves. Our boasting can be brought to light, however, through vigorous self-examination or by patiently listening to the gentle protests of friends.

From the onset, we ought to remember:

“Let another praise you, and not by your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips” (Proverbs 27:2).

The Apostle St. James says:

“So the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things, How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire. And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is an unrighteous world among our members, staining the whole body.” (James 3:5-6).

“Boasting is directly contrary to that great Christian virtue—humility. It is both an indication of extravagant pride and an advertisement of low spiritual station.”

Saint Paul refers to this matter of boasting in a different way when he compares it unfavorably with love (charity).

“Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful” (1 Cor 13:4).

Saint Paul's way of putting it demonstrates most vividly how deficient in love the boaster must be.

“I want to learn never to say anything which can tend to my own praise or glorification,”

wrote St. Jane de Chantal to St. Francis de Sales, and he replied,

“No doubt, it is a good thing to speak as little of ourselves as possible, for whether we excuse or accuse ourselves, whether we praise or blame ourselves, such words are apt to foster vanity. So that unless charity requires us to speak of ourselves, it is better to remain silent” (A Selection from the Spiritual Letters of St. Francis de Sales: Letter 158, pg. 311).

In attempting to be silent about ourselves, when it is our nature through habit to be boastful, we might follow the advice of Lorenzo Scupoli.

“The more contrary these acts are to the natural will, the more quickly will they produce the good habit in the soul” (The Spiritual Combat: ca. 35, pg 122).☩

Points to Remember

- Boasting is directly contrary to Christian humility.
- Let others praise you.
- It is better to be silent than boastful.

Cors Orans (cont. from p. 5)
very seriously.

An excellent point is brought out and that is the necessity for on-going formation for everyone in the community. A half-century ago a consecrated religious might have felt that with the profession of solemn vows, “finally, formation is over!” This document makes it clear that formation must continue throughout the life of the religious, since the inner springs of the Spirit need to be fed with fresh growth in all the elements which characterize a mature religious, totally dedicated to “seeking the face of God.” It depends upon each religious taking it upon herself to continue her personal growth. But it also needs the community’s willingness to take



Love which alone will satisfy the human heart when God calls that heart to be with Him in a communion vivified by the action of the Holy Spirit.

If a person is incapable of making the leap of faith necessary, reluctant to live out the hope-filled trust that is necessary and finds it very difficult to surrender to the love necessary for such a deep communion, it may be that that person is not fitted for the

life of a contemplative religious. *Cor Orans* concludes by pointing out the changes that must be made in the Church’s Canon Law, in the light of the Apostolic Constitution and this Instruction which provides for its implementation.

In sum, this document is a mixture of very practical points, as well as an attempt to restate in contemporary terms some of the most profound spiritual elements which underlie contemplative consecrated life. It is to be hoped that this will enhance the growth of vocations to this very special expression of faith-life in the Church and will deepen the appreciation for the same. Such would be a great grace not just for contemplative religious, but for all of us who want to follow Jesus closely, as faithful disciples, filled with love and joy.☺

The Mending

*There is no shattering love cannot mend,
No shards its gentle hands shall not make whole.
Healing, its glances brush like wings across
The deepest rawness of the heart, and leave
At last, at last no trace of briney woe.*

*What though we walked in ruins of a dream,
What though our tears had faded out the rose
And gold of what was once a splendid bond?
There is no shattering love cannot mend,
No shards its gentle hands shall not make whole.*

*Sweet is the love that never knew a wound,
But deeper that which died and rose again.*

—Mother Mary Francis P.C.C.





InnerView



With Dr. Theresa Burke, Ph.D., LCP, NCP, Founder of Rachel's Vineyard & the Grief to Grace Program

In 1994, you published *Rachel's Vineyard: A Psychological and Spiritual Journey for Post Abortion Healing*. What led you into this ministry?

In 1986, I founded one of the first organizations for helping women and men recover from the emotional and spiritual aftermath of abortion. As a Master's student, I led a support group in graduate school for women with eating disorders. Many of them revealed histories of abortion and exhibited symptoms of post-traumatic stress. I discovered that just talking about their abortions was not a cure and then incorporated scripture stories, meditations and rituals of faith to facilitate grieving and reconciliation. The outcome was powerful! In 1994, I published *Rachel's Vineyard: A Psychological and Spiritual Journey for Post Abortion Healing* as a 15-week support group model. Soon after, I adapted the curriculum into a format for weekend retreats. In 2003, *Rachel's Vineyard* became a ministry of Priests for Life and Gospel of Life Ministries. Now in over 80 countries and translated into almost 30 languages, it's clear that God truly does want to heal people!

Tell us about your own faith background.

I was raised in the Catholic faith, but the biggest influence on my spirituality came from my parents. I was one of five children, and we shared a devotion to the daily Rosary since

childhood and I continued that with my own five children. My parents instilled an awareness of faith and social justice by example. My father was very involved with helping a community of disabled nuns—The Sisters of Christ Crucified. What made the biggest impression upon me was the belief that their sufferings had redemptive value. My mom was involved with a special project for immigrating Latin Americans and helped with housing for Vietnamese refugees. Through this quiet activism, I was exposed to a deep suffering that was incompatible with a more superficial spirituality.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux's Little Way and St. Teresa of Calcutta have always been sources of inspiration. Mother Teresa worked in the slums of Calcutta, and I knew I was working in the slums of the soul, in places of the deepest poverty and grief, where the love of God had been twisted by lies, deception, and evil. Bringing the light of Christ into the trauma has been at the very heart of our retreats. Mother Teresa reviewed our treatment manuals and wrote me some beautiful letters of encouragement. I believe I was given a grace through Mother Teresa's intercession as I began to train people from all over the world and duplicate myself so the ministry could spread. Once enough people were trained, they started to teach others, and it began to grow exponentially.

You found in your work that many participants suffered sexual

abuse. This led to your current program Grief to Grace.

I began offering *Grief to Grace* as a follow-up for my friends in *Rachel's Vineyard*. *Rachel's Vineyard* retreats consistently included participants who had suffered sexual abuse. But trauma touches all peoples—psychological and spiritual trauma from natural disasters, sexual abuse, divorce, homelessness, poverty, disease, death, war, abortion and abandonment in its many forms. It creates core wounds which diminish our capacity to love and serve. We become increasingly reactive, defensive, blaming, shaming, addicted, acting out or withdrawing into our own little places of comfort or isolation.

This program focuses specifically on healing the wounds of abuse and offers *Living Scripture* exercises in a retreat format to help survivors unite their suffering with the agony, betrayals, abandonment and suffering of Christ.

Since its inception, *Grief to Grace* has drawn retreat attendees from around the world, including many priests and religious who seek to grieve childhood wounds in our safe, confidential and spiritually nurturing environment that respects their vocations and faith.

Your work has involved priests and consecrated men and women. Are these hidden wounds something that needs to be ad-

dressed in formation because they are more prevalent today?

I have been told many times that there are few places for those with religious vocations to heal. As issues surface, problems can trigger profound hurt for the individual struggling to heal within their community. It can also propel the fear of scandal if some members of a community need help. The result is that many religious suffer in silence. There are few places that honor and integrate into the actual treatment the unique dimensions of one's spiritual life.

I know that Jesus will do everything in His power to heal His beloved who suffer with so much shame and grief, hiding their histories even from God, because they believe their works alone will provide redemption from what they suffer. A religious sister being invited into a safe space to heal past traumatic experiences or a religious missionary brother or priest opening up their wounds to God has the potential to completely transform a vocation!

We have begun to take initiatives to develop a network of superiors who are making regular referrals of individuals from religious communities who are recognizing the need for healing among their own. We hope to train religious communities to help other religious communities and then become active agents for change in the wider needs of the secular world.

Because our program is so beautifully integrated with spirituality, it becomes a perfect fit for religious communities to offer at their retreat houses as an apostolic outreach. We dream about *Grief to Grace* being a source of renewal for religious communities to competently address many contemporary crises which

confront the People of God and the Church. The Living Scripture Institute offers an extraordinary opportunity to "heal the healers" and launch a bold program of education on trauma; a unique and effective evangelization integrated with a step by step process to restore human dignity and entice a new era of vocation to serve God's people.

What are the results of your programs?

Most people say it is life changing and exceeded their expectations. Said Sr. Maria Caritas of the Cross, SOLT: "Blinded by my own woundedness and emotional pain, I was not able to effectively serve those whom I was called to minister to. The retreat gave me a safe environment to have a voice, to work through the many years of shame and depression that resulted from my childhood traumatic experiences. The aftercare recommendations have sustained me and even shifted me from being a Sister just trying to survive to a Sister who is thriving. What a profound difference! I would recommend this retreat for any religious or priest who has suffered the wounds of abuse or any trauma, because I think it would help them to be free to be who they were made to be."

Are you seeing wounds in young people that are different from past generations?

There is no question that we are living in a world with many threats to humanity due to war and terrorism; the threats to families due to divorce, pornography, addictions, alcohol and drugs, abortion and abuse; and threats to the Church because of abuse scandals and cover-ups.

People can suffer for many years and not even realize they need heal-

ing until they become physically or emotionally ill. In this stance of powerlessness, we find our radical dependence on God. At some point we surrender to God, letting go with a leap of faith and desperation into the very heart of God. We surrender to love. We surrender to mystery. And we open ourselves to encounter, not only God, but one another as we share God's love and healing power, filling the despair with the power of His presence.

How can people participate in Grief to Grace?

Our programs are open to any adult or teen who has experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse, as well as abandonment or neglect, including those who have been abused by clergy. Please contact us in complete confidence to learn more. We understand it can be difficult to talk about what has happened, and that interested individuals may be a long way from deciding to attend a retreat. A calendar listing upcoming retreats can be found at GriefftoGrace.org.

Are there online or print resources you can recommend?

You can reference my book, *Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion* with David C. Reardon. We are working to launch on-line courses on every aspect of trauma through the Living Scripture Institute. Dr. Dan Allender has a wonderful book called *The Wounded Heart* and it comes with a workbook. I understand he has an online group for someone who wants to travel that study with others online.

For more information, please visit us online at GriefftoGrace.org or RachelsVineyard.org 

Call to Closeness (*cont. from p. 17*)
able to move forward in love. Go and ask for counsel. When that sadness starts, we can predict that if it is not cured in time, it will turn you into sad old spinsters and bachelors, men and women who are not fruitful. And of this sadness you should be afraid! It is the devil who sows this.

Today, the “deep water” into which we must “put out” is “the changing scenarios and ever new challenges” of this Church on the move. Yet we need to ask once more: What is it that the Lord is asking of us? Which are the peripheries that most need our presence so that we can bring them the light of the Gospel (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 20)?

Otherwise, if you do not reflect the joy of a vocation, who will be able to believe that Jesus Christ is our hope? Only the example of our lives will show the reason for our hope in Him.

There is something else linked to sadness: confusing a vocation with a business, with a company. “I am employed here, I work here, I am enthusiastic in this... and I am happy because I have this.” But tomorrow a bishop comes along, another one or the same one, or another superior, and says to you: “No, stop doing that and come this way.” It is the moment of defeat. Why? Because in that moment you will realize that you have gone down a dubious path. You will realize that the Lord, who called you for love, is disappointed by you, because you preferred to become a wheeler-dealer. At the outset I said to you that the life of one who follows Jesus is not that of a bureaucrat: it is a life of loving the Lord, and of apostolic zeal for His people. Let me give you a caricature: what does a priest bureaucrat do? He has his schedule, his office hours, he opens the office at that hour, does

his work, closes the office... and the people are outside. He does not draw close to the people.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you do not wish to be bureaucrats, let me give you a word: *closeness!* Closeness, nearness. Closeness to the Tabernacle, a heart-to-heart with the Lord. And closeness to the people. “But, Father,



the people do not come...” Go out and find them! “But, the youth of today do not come...” Make up something new: an oratory, for accompanying them, helping them. Closeness to the people. And closeness to the Lord in the Tabernacle. The Lord wants you to be pastors of His people, and not clerks of the state! Later I will say something to the sisters, but later...

Closeness means mercy. On this earth, where Jesus was revealed as the merciful Jesus, a priest cannot *not* be merciful. Especially in the confessional. Think of how Jesus would welcome this person (who comes to confession). Life has already beaten him down, poor thing! Let them feel the embrace of the Father who forgives. If you cannot give them absolution, for example, give them the consolation of a brother, of a father. Encourage them to go on. Convince them that God forgives everything. But do this with a father’s

warmth. Never chase someone from the confessional! Never chase them away. “Look, you can’t... I can’t right now, but God loves you, you pray, come back, and we’ll speak...” Like that. Closeness. This is being a father. Is that sinner whom you are sending away not important to you? I am not speaking about you, because I do not know you. I am speaking about other situations. And mercy. The confessional is not a psychiatrist’s room. The confessional is not for digging into a person’s heart.

And for this reason, dear priests, closeness for you also means having mercy in your very being. And the being of mercy, do you know where you get this from? There, at the tabernacle.

And you, dear sisters... Often we see good sisters—all sisters are good—but who gossip and gossip and gossip... Ask that one in the front row on the other side—the second last one—if in prison she had time for gossiping, while she was sewing gloves. Ask her. Please, be mothers! Be mothers, because you are the icon of the Church and of Our Lady. And every person who sees you, may they see Mother Church and Mother Mary. Do not forget this. And Mother Church is not an “old spinster.” Mother Church does not gossip: she loves, serves, helps others to grow. Your closeness is the way to be a mother: as icon of the Church and icon of Our Lady.

Closeness to the Tabernacle and prayer. That thirst of the soul which I spoke of, and with others. Priestly service and consecrated life not as bureaucrats, but as fathers and mothers of mercy. And if you do this, when you are elderly you will have a beautiful smile and shining eyes! Because you will have a soul full of tenderness, meekness, mercy, love, fatherhood and motherhood. ☁

Benedictines of Mary Dedicate their New Abbatial Church

This past summer, the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* announced that the Benedictine Sisters of the Priory of Our Lady of Ephesus would become Our Lady of Ephesus Abbey with their prioress, Mother Cecilia Snell, consecrated as its first abbess. The nearly completed priory church would be dedicated as the Abbatial Church of Our Lady, Queen of Apostles.

On September 9, 2018, Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr., Bishop of the Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph, along with Bishop Robert Finn, former ordinary, diocesan priests and deacons, Benedictine monks from Conception Abbey and other friends of the community gathered for the dedication of the new church.

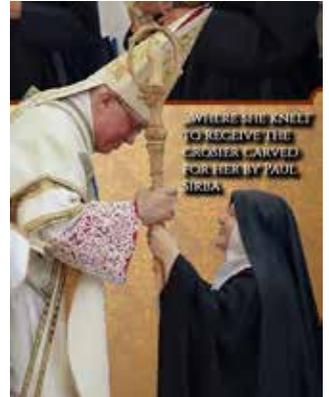
The Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles were established in 1995 in the Diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania. They follow the monastic schedule of hours as defined in the Rule of St. Benedict, and chant the Divine Office in Latin, according to the 1962 Breviarium Monasticum.

In 2006, they relocated to the Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph.

Abbess Cecilia was consecrated first abbess in a ceremony held on September 10th, with Bishop Robert G. Morlino of the Diocese of Madison celebrating Mass and officiating. During his homily, Bishop Morlino announced that the sisters would be establishing a daughter house in his diocese.

The sisters are widely known for the release of their very successful musical CDs which has helped to fund their much-needed building projects.

For more information, visit BenedictinesofMary.org.



2018 World Day of Cloistered Life Resources Available Online

Catholics throughout the world are encouraged to support the cloistered and monastic life on WORLD DAY OF CLOISTERED LIFE, which is Wednesday, November 21, 2018, the Memorial of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple.

“The primary purpose of WORLD DAY OF CLOISTERED LIFE, traditionally known as *Pro Orantibus* Day (“For Those Who Pray”), is to support—both spiritually and materially—the gift of the cloistered and monastic life,” notes Rev. Thomas Nelson, O. PRAEM., National Director of the INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS LIFE. And as Pope Francis reminds us, “it is an opportune occasion to thank the Lord for the gift of so many people who, in monasteries and hermitages, dedicate themselves to God in prayer and in silent work.”

Pope Pius XII first instituted this ecclesial worldwide event in 1953 to publicly recognize women and men who so generously give of themselves to this unique calling and who each day, from the various convents and monasteries spread throughout the world, offer prayer and sacrifice unceasingly. Pope St. John Paul II later expanded its celebration and encouraged Catholics to

highlight and support this hidden vocation in any way possible.

Since his election, Pope Francis has strongly encouraged the faithful to express appreciation to cloistered women and men, especially on this day dedicated to them. “Let us thank the Lord for the witness of the cloistered life and let us not fail them in our spiritual and material support in accomplishing such an important mission.”

The nationwide effort to publicize WORLD DAY OF CLOISTERED LIFE (*Pro Orantibus* Day) is coordinated by the INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS LIFE. The IRL was founded in 1974 by Servant of God Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J., and is comprised of bishops, priests, religious and laity who support and promote the vowed religious life.

A free packet of resources is available online at CloisteredLife.com.



New House of Discernment Now Open in Minneapolis

Bethany House is a women's discernment house, sponsored by the Office of Vocations in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Located in Minneapolis, it opened in September of 2017 and is a home for women ages 20-27 who live in community and discern whether they are called to consecrated life.

This is a new initiative of the Office of Vocations in partnership with the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus, a religious community based in New Ulm that recently established another convent in St. Paul. The women may work or go to school, but the objective is the same—to sit at the feet of Jesus like Mary of Bethany, listening. “This is about discerning God’s will, and that’s the goal... wherever God may lead them,” said Fr. David Blume, vocations director for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Father Blume was inspired to found Bethany House after a young woman told him: “Our men have a path, but for us women, we don’t have a path—we have 500 paths, and it’s kind of confusing.” The Vocations Office takes care of the house’s administration while the Handmaids oversee the formation and pastoral aspects.

Handmaid Sr. Mary Joseph Evans makes it clear that this is not a Handmaid discernment house. “They have total freedom to discern any community. ... Because we’re diocesan sisters, part of our role in our service of the diocese is to walk with young women in general, in



helping them know and discern and embrace the Lord’s will, just like a diocesan priest would for the men.”

Residents live in the former convent and commit to nine months of common living as well as a week-day schedule that includes a 5:45 AM Holy Hour with morning prayer in the parish’s Adoration chapel. The women then attend daily Mass before heading to classes or work. They share three evening meals each week and pray night prayer together each night. Then they observe “grand silence” until after Mass the following day. A 2-month summer program is also an option.

One resident described the experience as a retreat. “And that’s how they really set it up to be,” she said. “We’re retreating to Jesus, and Jesus is really retreating to us more, I feel like, because He wants to be in our hearts.”

For more information, please visit their website: 10000vocations.org/Bethany-House.

Mount Angel Abbey Benedictines Launch Brewery & Taproom

The Benedictine monks at Mount Angel Abbey in Mount Angel, Oregon, had the grand opening of their St. Michael’s Taproom at their Benedictine brewery this past September. Several years ago, a friend offered Rev. Martin Grassel, O.S.B., who knew nothing about brewing beer and is now head brewer, and the abbey some brewing equipment, and after some initial hesitation they decided to go forward. They began brewing beer in partnership with another brewing company in 2013. On November 11, 2017, a group of 100 volunteers gathered for their own brewery raising, erected with Douglas firs from the Abbey’s tree farm.

“To say the taproom should be a place of hospitality and welcome and family-friendliness would be too shallow,” says Father Martin. “It should be a place

where people are more than just welcome: a place where they will feel blessed, where they will feel the peace of the Abbey, where they will encounter faith in an inviting and

non-threatening way, where they will want to come back because of the spiritual atmosphere.”

Instead of gimmicky brews, the Belgian-style traditional artisan beer uses hops grown on the abbey grounds and water drawn from their well. The taproom is open to visitors five days a week.

For more information, please visit their website: MountAngelAbbey.org/Benedictine-Brewery.



Little Sisters of the Poor to Receive 2019 *Pro Fidelitate et Virtute* Award

Please mark your calendars for the 2019 National Meeting of the INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS LIFE. The dates are April 26-28, 2019 on the seminary campus of the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. Our theme is “Forming Apostles for Today,” recognizing the unique challenges that face religious communities and the laity as they seek to evangelize the culture and provide solid formation for young men and women seeking to be true missionary disciples of Our Lord.

Our honorees this year are the Little Sisters of the Poor who will receive the *Pro Fidelitate et Virtute* Award at the banquet on the 27th. At the Saturday evening event, our special guest will be the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, who grew up in the village where St. Jeanne Jugan founded the Little Sisters.

There will be a Special Session for religious only this year. The speakers are Rev. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., and Rev. Thomas Acklin, O.S.B., from St. Vincent Archabbey. Their talk will be on the subject



of spiritual direction, based on their popular book, *Spiritual Direction: A Guide for Sharing the Father's Love*.

Sr. Marysia Weber, RSM, will give two talks on Saturday morning on “Called from the iGen and Millennial Generation: A Look at Challenges and Opportunities to Form Future Apostles.” Her primary work includes assessing and treating seminary candidates, priests and religious. She has also offered numerous formation workshops on a variety of formation issues for U.S. Bishops, seminary formators and vocation directors.

Other speakers include: Dr. Denis McNamara speaking about being formed by the Liturgy and Dr. Theresa Burke talking about her program “From Grief to Grace,” which focuses specifically on healing the wounds of abuse. The domestic church as the school of discipleship will be the focus of the talk given by Sr. John Mary Sullivan, FSE. Rev. Brian Mullady, OP, will discuss the four pillars of formation: spiritual, intellectual, human, apostolic. Finally, Rev. Thomas Nelson, O.PRAEM., will give the concluding talk on Sunday morning.

Upcoming 2018-2019 IRL Events

Forming Apostles for Today

- **Los Angeles IRL Regional Meeting**
—January 26, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Parish, Wilmington, CA
- **IRL National Meeting**
—April 26-28, 2019
University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL
- **Midwest Regional Meeting**
—March 9, 2019
St. Francis Prayer Center, Independence, MO



Is Christ Calling You?



Visit:

- ReligiousLife.com
- CloisteredLife.com
- ReligiousBrotherhood.com
- SpeakLord.net
- VocationBlog.com

Affiliate in Focus

Striving to Extend the Love of Mary by Becoming Children of God...

The Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Mercy Lincoln, Nebraska

The Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Mercy, are dedicated to serving Christ and His Church by doing all for the glory of God through the sanctification of their members and through their various apostolates. Established in the Diocese of Lincoln in 1999, the community traces its roots back to their mother community,

the Congregation of Mary, Queen of the World, in Saigon, Vietnam (now Ho Chi Minh City).

The spirit of the congregation is that of evangelical spiritual childhood, as espoused by their founder, Rev. Bernard Maria Bùi Khải-Hoàn, CMC. They recognize their privilege to be children of God, expressed by Jesus in His filial love as He taught, “Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mt 18:3). The spiritual qualities of a little child are littleness or humility, poverty, confidence, love, trust, zeal, simplicity and openness.

They find examples to live their charism in the life of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, and in St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort’s *True Devotion to Mary*. They celebrate the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary as their principle patroness



and honor Saint Joseph as the family guardian of the congregation. The sisters reserve the 25th of the month to honor the mystery of the Incarnation where amongst other devotions, they recite the Joyful Mysteries (except during Holy Week).

During formation, the young sisters become deeply imbued with the spirit of the congregation which is to become like the Child Jesus and a daughter of Mary. This is a lifelong process of “becoming like Christ,” so that one can truly say: “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

Striving to extend the love of Mary, Queen of Mercy, to everyone they serve, they engage in the apostolates of pastoral care, education, childcare, health care, and social work. The Sisters strive to instill a deeper love and appreciation for the Catholic faith in the Vietnamese Catholic youth, while nurturing their faith and maintaining

their Vietnamese identity. They prepare these students to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

At their Little Flower Child-care Center, where the children are primarily non-Vietnamese, they develop the children spiritually, physically, intellectually and emotionally in a healthy Christian environment. The children also learn about Vietnamese

customs and celebrate the “Feast of the First Morning of the First Day,” or *Tết* as it is commonly known here, the biggest celebration of the year for the Vietnamese people.

Members of the community visit families and individuals in material and spiritual poverty to spread the joy and love of the Gospel and to promote a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Apostolic works always come from a life intimately united with Jesus Christ. The effects of apostolic life, as it says in their Constitutions, will depend on the level of union with Him. “Whoever remains in Me, and I in him will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without Me” (Jn 15:5).

They rise at 5:30 AM for Morning Prayer, followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. After returning from their apostolates in the evening, the sisters celebrate Evening Prayer and



end the day with Compline followed by the Grand Silence. Vocations are welcomed to the Congregation with gratitude to God and with joy as not only a special gift given by God to the individual sister, but also as a gift to the entire Church and to the Congregation.

The sisters organize funds for the missionary treasury and are attentive to the missionary work in their homeland. This year, the Church of Vietnam has declared a Holy Year in honor of the 30th anniversary of the canonization of 117 Vietnamese martyrs, starting on June 19th, the day of their canonization, to November 24th, the feast of the Vietnamese martyrs. About 300,000 Catholics died for their Faith during waves of persecution since the Gospel first came to their shores 500 years ago. 🙏



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In the Spirit of the Founders. . .

Passing on the Traditions and Culture

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Mercy, has its origins in southeast Asia, where in the late 1950's, Rev. Bernard Maria Bui Khải-Hoàn, CMC, founded a community known as the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary, Queen of the World. Father Bernard was a devoted father whom his spiritual daughters who referred to as *Bố* or "Dad" in English. He wanted to form each sister to, first, become a fully mature person; second, an authentic Christian; then a true consecrated religious; and finally,

In Nebraska, the third president of the IRL, Most Rev. Glennon P. Flavin, Bishop of Lincoln, established the first canonical Vietnamese parish in the country. Here, refugees from the Vietnam War could worship in their own language and pass on their traditions and culture to future generations. In 1985, he invited three sisters from the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of the



Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Mercy who were living in Springfield, Missouri, to assist the local Vietnamese community.

By 1998, the Community in America be-

came a saint. The motherhouse of the congregation is in the Archdiocese of Saigon and it was here that Father Bernard Maria died in 2006, having been ordained 59 years and 52 years a religious.

In 1975, some of Father Bernard's sisters were forced to flee the country during the Vietnam War. They ended up in Australia in what they hoped would be a temporary exile, but they soon realized that they would not be returning home. God had other plans for them.

came a Region of the Motherhouse in Vietnam. The sisters living in Lincoln received permission from their founder and the Sister Superior General in Vietnam to maintain their constitutions independently of the Region. The Diocesan Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Mercy was established by Most Rev. Fabian Bruskewitz on May 4, 1999, with their Motherhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska. Today, eleven sisters serve the people of the Diocese.



Theological Reflections

BY REV. JOHN A. HARDON, S.J.

SERVANT OF GOD/IRL FOUNDER (1914–2000)



Christ—God’s Gift through Mary’s Humility

The greatest gift God has given us is the gift of Himself in the Incarnation. The narrative which describes this gift in detail is the account of the Annunciation in St. Luke’s Gospel (cf. 1:26-38).

This mystery is a description of the Incarnation, and from another viewpoint the Annunciation, which was the origin of the Church founded by Christ. God chose Mary because of her humility. Everything about the Annunciation depicts Mary as a humble person who is troubled by the Angel’s extraordinary praise. Proud persons like to be praised, but they never get enough. Mary was far from being proud. She had vowed herself to virginity and she inquired, “How can this be so?” when told she was to be the Mother of the one who is to come, even though she was vowed to virginity. Though she did not understand, she accepted because she believed in God’s omnipotence. “Be it done unto me.”

The essence of humility is allowing God to do to us what He wants to do, offering no resistance. What are we to make of this? God consistently favors humble people for His greatest tasks. So if you want to do great things—be humble. A humble person is one who is little in his own eyes. Greatness and humility are never incompatible. The genius of humility is to give God all the credit for whatever virtue, intelligence or ability a person may have. Humility

is the only lesson we all need to learn.

The essence of pride is not in possessing much, because little people can often be proud. Little people with much power are near the heart of the crisis in the modern world. Pride is giving credit to oneself for what is a gift of God. God’s grace goes to the humble and is withdrawn from the proud; Scripture tells us so. This is awe-fully true! Think of standing before God in judgment; unless we are humble, we will not be saved. True greatness never makes the mistake of thinking that “what I have is mine.”

God seems ruthless when He deals with pride, because He wants us to live the truth. God is indeed lavish with His blessings and prodigal with His gifts. Just watch the millions upon millions of leaves falling from the trees in autumn—a symbol of divine prodigality; but this same God insists that no one foolishly, which means dishonestly, talk or act as though what they possessed was really their own. Most of us are sober enough not to verbally say “all I have is my own.” It is our behavior. Acting as though it is our own, because truth is mainly expressed not in words, but in deeds, just as the worst lies are not told in sentences but in the way we act.

Mary was the most gifted person God ever made. She had the fullness of grace, and with this plenitude, she had everything else that God could give her. Yet she never for a moment

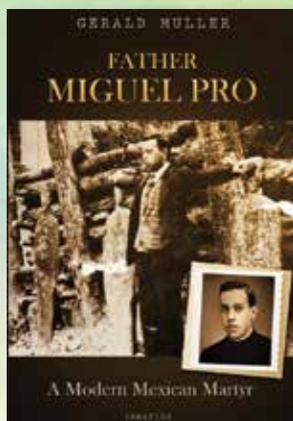
doubted that what she had was not hers by right, but given her as a gift from God. The more we have been blessed by Him, the humbler we should be. God wants us aware that He is the owner of the graces and gifts that He gives us and He wishes them used according to His will, including our wills which too are His.

If we reflect on Mary’s privileges especially on the Annunciation, we are struck by a very wonderful thing. In becoming man, where did God start? Let us understand the divine logic there; it can change our lives. God started with one single person, a sinless virgin, a young girl in her middle teens. When about to redeem the human race He started with a simple, humble, sinless child.

Why should we strive to overcome our faults, our sinful tendencies, our pride, our impatience, and our passions? There is one very important reason. We are to become more sinless so that God may use us more effectively as channels of His grace.

Mary’s sinlessness was in God’s redemptive Providence. He uses innocent people to be instruments of His grace. The more sinless we are, the more God will miraculously use our innocence to carry His merciful love. There are no tricks here and no one can cheat God. All the paraphernalia of the apostolate notwithstanding, we shall be precisely as effective in the supernatural order as we are holy.✠

HEROIC STORIES OF MODERN JESUIT MARTYRS



◆ FATHER MIGUEL PRO A Modern Mexican Martyr

Gerard Muller

Fr. Pro worked courageously to bring bread to the poor and the Holy Eucharist to the faithful during the brutal persecution of the Church in Mexico in the 1920s. Being a Jesuit priest he was viciously hunted by the secret police of the anti-clerical government of Mexico. His life was full of high drama as he eluded them many times with secret disguises and hiding places, and when finally captured, Father Pro was executed without a trial. Standing in front of the firing squad, his famous last words were, “Viva Cristo Rey!”

Illustrated with photos.

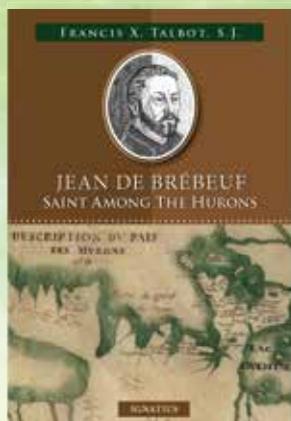
MPROP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$15.95

“Read this story of this holy man and gain the strength that he had to live and die for Jesus!”

— Fr. Larry Richards, Author, *Be a Man!*

“An inspirational read for our time! Fr. Pro shows us the joy of committing our life to Christ no matter the cost!”

— Terry Barber, Author, *How to Share Your Faith with Anyone*



◆ JEAN DE BREBEUF Saint Among the Hurons

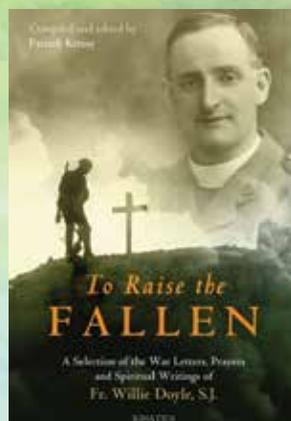
Francis Talbot, S.J.

This swift-paced book, more than a powerful biography of a great saint and Jesuit missionary, is a vital chapter in the tragic history of New France in North America three centuries ago, a story of the failure of colonization partially redeemed by the blood of the martyrs of the Church. Be deeply inspired by the strong faith and courage of this brave priest who was killed by those he brought the Gospel to.

SAHP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$18.95

“This work has the sweep and grandeur of an epic tale!” — *America*

“An incredible tale of suffering, dedication and courage.” — *Chicago Tribune*



◆ TO RAISE THE FALLEN The Story of Fr. Willie Doyle, S.J.

Patrick Kenny

Irish military chaplain, Fr. Willie Doyle, died in action in WWI when hit by a German shell while bravely rushing to the aid of wounded soldiers. He had often taken great risks amidst enemy fire to aid those wounded on the battle fields, and became a legend among his men. This book introduces this remarkable figure from Irish Catholicism whose faith, courage and generosity in the face of untold devastation continues to inspire Christians and non-Christians alike.

TRTFP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95

“Fr. Doyle is one of the unsung heroes of the First World War. This book reveals how he cheerfully endured the horrors of trench warfare to bring spiritual solace to his comrades in uniform.”

— George Marlin, Author, *The Sons of St. Patrick: A History of the Archbishops of New York*



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Forming Apostles For Today

2018 IRL National Meeting

April 26-28, 2019

Divine Mercy Sunday

Today, as never before, the Church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations. I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians, and missionaries and young churches in particular, respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time. —Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio

Our theme for this year's National Meeting, "Forming Apostles for Today," recognizes the unique challenges facing religious communities, consecrated men and women and the laity as they seek to evangelize the culture and provide solid formation for young men and women desiring to be true disciples of Our Lord. Our speakers will focus on spiritual direction, forming young adults in a social media culture, the basic pillars of formation, healing the wounds of abuse and being formed by the Liturgy.



We are blessed to have as our special guest the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, who will be the celebrant of the Mass before the Banquet. We are honoring this year the Little Sisters of the Poor who are celebrating 150 years in the United States and will be receiving the *Pro Fidelitate et Virtute* Award.

Fr. Thomas Ackin, O.S.B., and Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., will be presenting at the Special Session for Religious only on Friday the 26th, speaking about spiritual direction and sharing the Father's love. Sr. Marysia Weber, RSM, will give two talks on Saturday morning on "Called from the iGen and Millennial Generation: A Look at Challenges and Opportunities to Form Future Apostles."

Scheduled Speakers:



Most Rev.
Robert Vasa



Fr. Thomas
Acklin,
O.S.B.



Sr. Marysia
Weber, RSM



Dr. Theresa
Burke, Ph.D.



Fr. Boniface
Hicks, O.S.B.



Dr. Denis
McNamara,
Ph.D.



Sr. JohnMary
Sullivan, FSE



Fr. Brian
Mullady,
O.P.



Fr. Thomas
Nelson,
O.PRAEM.