

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

Among its summer courses, the Franciscan Institute also offers specific studies in Franciscan Spirituality. These courses are part of a development and influence of Franciscanism upon the intellectual and tional life of the Church. Special attention is also given to Catholic and to the social interests and tasks of the Third Order Secular. Teachers, missionaries, directors of souls, novice masters and mistresses and all who are charged with the education and spiritual formation of the faithful religious or of the faithful in general should find these courses a help in understanding more fully the richness of their Franciscan heritage and in imparting the Franciscan message to others.

The attention of those interested in Franciscan Spirituality is called especially to the following courses

Sources of Franciscan Spirituality
The *Itinerarium* of Saint Bonaventure
Readings from David of Augsburg
History of the Franciscan Order
Third Order Workshop



These courses may be audited or taken for graduate credit leading to the degree of Master of Arts. The complete schedule for the Franciscan Institute Summer Session, beginning July 30 and ending August 9, is as follows:

725	History of Franciscan Theology. Part III: Duns Scotus.....	2 cr
	Eligius Buytaert, O.F.M.	
630	Franciscan Spirituality. Part II: Sources of Franciscan Spirituality. Life and writings of St. Francis.....	2 cr
	Ignatius Donaghue, O.F.M.	
630a	Readings from David of Augsburg.....	1 cr
	Ignatius Donaghue, O.F.M.	
605	History of Franciscan Philosophy. Part II: Duns Scotus.....	2 cr
	Allan Wolter, O.F.M.	
605a	Readings from Duns Scotus.....	1 cr
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540	History of the Franciscan Order. Part 1.....	2 cr
535	Third Order Workshop. Nature, aim and importance of the Third Order Secular, spirit and activities of the Tertiary apostolate, mutual relations of the Third Order and other Catholic organizations; in- ternational coordination of Tertiary forces.....	2 cr
	Gerard Fitzsimmons, O.F.M.	
518a and b	Latin Palaeography of the 13th to 15th centuries.....	2 cr
	Gaudens Mohan, O.F.M.	
505a	The <i>Itinerarium</i> of Saint Bonaventure.....	2 cr
	Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.	

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OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

As the rose gradually unfolds under the light of the warm sun, even so does the beautiful teaching bequeathed by our divine Savior to His Church gradually bring forth blossoms and flowers of ineffable delight and entrancing charm. This is what our Savior meant when he said: *But when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will teach you all truth* (John 16, 13). The Holy Spirit is the spiritual Sun, the divine Agent, Who teaches all truth in His Own good time, as the faithful need new life, new courage and new nourishment in the vale of tears, on the long and oft-times dreary and dismal way to eternity. Theologians call this the Development of Doctrine. It conveys nothing new, but only revives, elucidates and renders palatable the truths that were committed to the Deposit of Faith at the time when Jesus taught the Twelve in the hamlets and fields of Palestine.

The Devotion to the Sacred Heart is nothing new. It was the one and, we might say, only devotion of the Blessed Mother to her Divine Child; and it increased as the thirty-three years rolled by and as the seven words, one after the other, pierced her own immaculate heart. It seems that our Lord Himself did not wish to leave this earth until He had given an irresistible stimulant to this Devotion. This happened when the sword of Longinus pierced His Heart on Calvary, and again when He bade Saint Thomas place his hand in His Sacred Side. Thus the start was made and the further development of the Devotion was left to loving souls among the flock of Christ.

It is significant that we find these loving souls among womankind in particular. This is a beautiful tribute and well deserved. When the Apostles, all except Saint John, had fled, the holy women stood guard beneath the Cross. Again on Easter morning, when Saint Peter and the other Apostles were still asleep, the holy women made their way to the sepulcher, and Mary Magdalen hurriedly awakened the sleepers. For this reason she bears the honorable title of *Apostola Apostolorum*. That may be the reason why in the course of Christianity the first to be illumined on the Mystery of the Sacred Heart were the holy nuns, Saint Gertrude and Saint Mechtilde. Needless to add, we are of course aware of the remarkable revelations that were made by the Sacred Heart of our Savior to another holy woman, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, on June 16, 1675; she may therefore be called the chief champion of this Devotion.

Meanwhile the Order of Saint Francis had always evinced a keen interest in the spread of this Devotion. It could not be otherwise when we recall the

leading part our great scholars, missionaries and saints exercised in the Mysteries of our Divine Savior, such as the Crib, the Holy Eucharist, Kingship, the Holy Name, and especially the sacred Passion. Saint became the Herald of Divine Love when, as the Church says, "the world was growing cold." The Seraphic Doctor wrote most eloquently on the Sacred Heart. In consequence he is frequently called the Doctor of the Sacred Heart. His Office on Christ's Passion is an armory of striking and illustrations of the Love of the Savior's Heart. The writings of the Discalced Mystics abound in similar sayings and expressions.

It is most appropriate that the month of June, which is frequently the Month of Roses, should be dedicated to the Sacred Heart. The Feast is celebrated after the Octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi; in fact it is a continuation of this Feast, because Our Savior's Love for mankind still lives and pulsates in our tabernacles. As the human heart gathers, feels and expresses and sometimes buries within itself man's entire nature and all its open and inmost sensations, so does the Feast of the Sacred Heart assemble the mysteries and meanings of the other Feasts of Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. Thus it recalls to us Bethlehem and Epiphany, Nazareth and the roads around Jerusalem, of Palestine, the Cenacle, and above all, Calvary.

For what do we really understand by the Devotion of the Sacred Heart? It is all contained in the one word, love; the love of God for His creature. God's love is infinite and its first object must be His infinite Self. The Mystery of the Blessed Trinity is a mystery of infinite love. This mystery is so profound and glorious, so ineffable and incomprehensible, that human language cannot describe, nor human intelligence grasp it. We often wonder what we shall be doing on the long day of eternity. Here is the answer. If you have listened to beautiful opera, you have at least a very faint idea. But remember there will be no hard seats, no cold feet, no ushers running around with trays of soft drinks, no babies crying, no people yawning, no one snoring. There will be heavenly bliss and unspeakable joy over what God will then reward those who love him. And let us hope that we shall all be there, at least in the rear seat. We shall be there if, while we have time, we seek to understand the immense love of the Sacred Heart and endeavor to return this love in our prayers and in our daily tasks.

Our Lord revealed a solemn and sacred truth when He said to Nicodemus who was a teacher in Israel and came to him by night: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that those who believe in Him*

shall not perish but may have life everlasting (John 3, 16). This is what the Sacred Heart means to us. It is not the statue or the picture that we venerate, but the Love of God, which is here represented, and which was contained, as it were, in the Heart that throbbed in the Savior's breast as He walked among us, which was pierced by the lance, which is still with us in the prisons of our tabernacles. Listen to what Saint Paul has to say on the love of the Redeemer's Heart: *Yes, O God, I, the very least of all saints, there was given this grace, to announce among the Gentiles the good tidings of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men as to what is the dispensation of the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God.* You must read the whole passage which concludes in these solemn words: *That He may grant you from His glorious riches to be strengthened with power through His Spirit unto the progress of the inner man; and to have Christ dwelling through faith in your hearts so that, being rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God* (Eph. 3, 8-19).

Reading these beautiful lines you will appreciate better and feel more intimately the beautiful invocations that have been assembled in the Litany of the Sacred Heart, and the many other prayers that come from the inspired *fullness of God* (Eph. 3, 8 . . . 19).

And what does it all mean? It means exactly what Jesus said to the Doctor of the law: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"* (Matt. 22, 37-39). This declaration is so sweeping that it leaves no room for anything but the love of God. The doctors of the Law and the Pharisees knew these words by heart and frequently would rattle them off as children do in school. But coming from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth these words carried with them a special significance and a power hitherto unknown. We do not know them by heart; but try and speak them slowly before the tabernacle, not once but again and again, and you will find in them the answer to the question you may have often asked yourself: How must I love God? It is not so difficult after all. God has given you a free will and a heart that can love. True love does not consist in feelings or sensations, in tears and other sensible manifestations; and certainly not in visions or revelations. It is in the will, and God frequently wants it to stay there. But it needs exercise, daily

and hourly. Do you recall that Jesus asked Peter three times the same question and only the third time, when Peter in his humility begged that Jesus answer Himself, Jesus seemed satisfied. But as Peter found out later, he had to give proof of his love.

How do we give proof of our love? If we fulfill the second commandment which is like to the first. And here is where the shoe pinches. It is easy to say that we love God, but listen to Saint John: *If any one says, I love God but hates his brother, he is a liar. For how can he who does not love his brother whom he sees, love God whom he does not see?* (I John 4, 20). Would you have believed that the gentle Saint John could use such language? But he could, and he is very much in earnest; in fact he makes the law of love rather complicated.

The spiritual life really has some tricks in it. First of all we are told that we must love our neighbor as ourselves; which is a very high and unimpeachable standard; in fact we carry it all the time with us. Then, we are told that if we do not love our neighbor we cannot love God. All of which means that the love of our neighbor is commanded by God and that this love is the measure of our love for God. There is no way out. Surely we would love all our neighbors if we did not see them. But here is trouble; we see them, we live with them; we pray with them, we talk to them, we work with them and eat with them. They are always at our elbows, and, try as we may, we cannot get away from them. Their manners displease us, their words hurt us, their very presence makes us nervous.

But this is the cross in monastic life, and in this cross we shall find our salvation. The best way to start the process is to begin with yourself. Some people have said, "The more I see of other people, the more I like myself." Just try to do it around and tell the truth. "The more I watch my own frills and fringes, my freaks and fancies, my frivolities and foolishness, the more I am beginning to appreciate the good that is in my neighbor." This brings us back to the Biblical yardstick: *Love thy neighbor as thyself.*

But what is the use of speculating and theorizing about charity when we can have that sublime and unspeakably beautiful and eminently practical Canon on Charity by Saint Paul the Apostle. Mother Church reads it for us on Quinquagesima Sunday, just when Lent begins. If we wish to test our memory let us learn this unsurpassed classic by heart. We find it in the thirteen chapters of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The present writer used to make all

theologians learn the whole chapter by heart. On a certain day one of them had occasion to stop a controversy among a group of travellers by reciting the whole chapter. A certain gentleman, who probably had never read the Holy Bible, was so struck by its beauty and power that he handed the young man a handsome check — which he did not turn over to me. To us the devout and frequent meditation on this text may mean the solution of all our spiritual problems.

Yes, says Saint Paul, if I do not have charity, *I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.* And then he goes on to enumerate the properties of this divine virtue. *Charity is patient, is kind.* These are the two basic qualities. Then there follow nine negative and five positive characteristics. Every one drives home and penetrates deep into our hidden self. And mind you, every one hits one of the seven capital sins squarely on the head, so that charity will not only serve you as a stimulant for all virtue, but as a large broom wherewith to clean out God's temple within you. *For the greatest of these is charity.*

And here is another powerful text; one that will rejoice your Franciscan heart, for it was written by the seraphic pen of Saint Bonaventure. We priests say it after Mass, and all Religious should say it after Holy Communion. Mark the beginning and you will want to read it to the end. "O most sweet Lord Jesus, pierce through the marrow and inmost parts of my soul with the wound of thy love, sweet and strong above measure; with a love that is true, serene, apostolic and most holy; so that my soul may ever languish and be dissolved by naught else but the love and longing for Thee." This is a feeble effort to return to the Sacred Heart the love wherewith He has loved us.

New York

Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.



Let thy priests go clad in the vesture of innocence, thy faithful cry aloud with rejoicing (Ps. 131, 9). Now see why the prophet says this. Under the Law the priests offered victims which could justify no one; but after the Blessed Virgin carried to the Temple a living victim, a holy victim, a victim pleasing to God, namely, her Blessed Son, then could the priests go clad in the vesture of innocence because they can offer a sanctifying and justifying victim; and because of this the faithful who understand can cry aloud with rejoicing.

Saint Bonaventure:

Sermon on the Purification

MEDITATIONS IN PREPARATION FOR MASS

IV

I Pray For Them

Saint Paul tells us that the priesthood of Christ differs from that of the Old Testament. *For He (Christ) does not need to offer sacrifices daily for His Own sins, and then for the sins of the people* (Heb. 7, 27). The entire priesthood of Christ, with its prayers and sacrifice, was directed toward the salvation and sanctification of His fellow men. And because our Lord is the sinless Son of Man and the divine Son of God, His sacrifice was especially pleasing to God on high. He was indeed a worthy intercessor for the human race. *It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, undefiled, set apart from sinners, and become higher than the heavens* (Y 26).

Our Lord never lost sight of the fact that He was a priest, a mediator between God and man, *appointed for men in the things pertaining to God* (Heb. 5, 1). *I pray for them . . .*, He would say; *sanctify them in truth and for them I sanctify Myself* (John 17, 9 . . . 19). The sacrifice of the Mass which our Redeemer offered was for the benefit of the human race, for *He died for all men*. Always our Lord was thinking of others, working for them, praying for them, and giving His life as a sacrifice for them. That is why, He instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, He did so with the words, *My blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many* (Mk. 14, 24).

The Catholic priest is not perfectly sinless like Christ, the *Son who is ever perfect* (Heb. 7, 28). Therefore in the Holy Mass he does have to offer sacrifice *first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people*. This is indicated in the very words of the Mass: *Ego indignus famulus tuus . . . propter numerabilibus peccatis et offensionibus, et negligerentibus meis*.

Yet the liturgy of the Mass itself also indicates quite clearly that we, the Catholic priests of Jesus Christ, are to imitate Him in this, that we exercise our priesthood and offer the sacrifice in behalf of our fellow men. *Et pro omnibus circumstantibus, sed et pro omnibus fidelibus christianis vivis et defunctis*. Or again: *Offerimus tibi . . . pro nostra et totius mundi salute*. The exhortation: *Orate fratres: ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat*. The memento of the living and also that of the departed directly call to mind the priest's office of mediator, whereas the entire Mass Liturgy with its words

Offerimus, Offerimus, Rogamus, Nobis, etc., indirectly remind the priest that he is praying and sacrificing for the people.

The more the priest realizes his position as mediator between God and man, the better will he pray. Reading the daily papers he cannot be ignorant of *the tribulationes plebium, pericula populorum, captivorum gemitus, miserias orphanorum*, as Saint Ambrose calls them. His own contacts with souls reveals *the necessitates peregrinorum, inopiam debilium, desperationes languentium, defectus senum, suspiria juvenum, vota virginum, lamenta viduarum*. Each new need of the Church, seen and sympathized with, serves to enlarge his priestly heart and enrich his priestly prayer. The love and compassion of a son praying for his mother will be manifest in the prayer of the priest for the Church as he offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I have chosen you and appointed you, says our Lord. Yes, *appointed FOR MEN in the things that pertain to God*. That is why we must offer the Mass in His spirit of love for men. *Do this*, He commands, *in remembrance of me*.

V

A Body Thou Has Fitted to Me

Nowadays it sometimes happens that a blind person receives the gift of sight through a skillful operation. Such a person truly appreciates the wonderful faculty of sight. But the average man does not. His bodily senses and powers are simply taken for granted until accident or disease assails them.

The God-Man, Jesus Christ, on the other hand, had a keen and perfect appreciation of His bodily gifts. He realized what it means to be a creature; to have come from absolutely nothing into bodily existence. To see the green of Nazarene pastures, to feel the cool breeze of Lake Genesareth on His cheek, to scent the fragrant flowers plucked by Mary, to taste the daily bread given by the Father. All these things were gratefully received and used by the Son of Man. *A body thou hast fitted to me* (Heb. 10, 5).

All through His life Christ acknowledged that His body had been given by God. Of course, His sinless body bore the yoke of the Ten Commandments. But in addition it yielded up its powers to the service and glory of God. Our Savior fasted in the desert, spent sleepless nights in prayer, plodded wearily through the Palestinian roads and preached continuously the Kingdom of God. Last of all, He took bread and wine and said to His Apostles: *This is My Body*;

This is My Blood. And on the following day He offered up His body and human life in the Sacrifice of the Cross. This is the manner in which He uses His body.

We know that our Lord wants us to imitate His life and virtues. Consequently we should strive to assimilate His attitude toward the human body and use it as He himself did.

Nowhere, however, is the imitation of Christ more obligatory or opportune than at the time of Holy Mass. *Do THIS*, He says, *in remembrance of Me* (Lk. 22, 20). Here in the Mass we can and should truly glorify God with our body. Here our bodily powers truly serve their Creator in the most perfect manner.

The tongue, so often the instrument of sin, here at least blesses God and utters the solemn words of Consecration. The eyes, so easily led away by idle or sinful curiosity, here are fixed intently on the most Blessed Sacrament. The mind, often occupied with the chaff of secular magazine and newspaper literature, now fastens on the kernel of God's word and the sublime prayer of the Missal. The hands, man's chief instrument of crime, now carry out the sacred actions for which they were anointed. All the bodily powers, no longer intent on self-indulgence, are alert and poised for the beautiful drama that we call the Mass. We frail humans live so much in the body and by the body that here in the Mass the priest can make the body worthy of its existence. He comes closest to Christ, whose life was a serving of God with His human nature.

Children have blood and flesh in common, says Saint Paul. Now we are the brothers of Christ. Therefore we can say with Him, *A body Thou hast fitted for me*. And we shall also imitate His perfect use of the body, if we begin to celebrate Holy Mass in His spirit. For the norm and inspiration of our life is to be found in the Sacrifice of the Mass. *Do this in remembrance of Me*.

(to be continued)

Columbus, Nebr.

Fr. Martin Wolter, O.S.A.



Where there is fear of the Lord to guard the house the enemy cannot find a way to enter.

Admonitions of St. Francis

THE GENERAL ABSOLUTION FOR RELIGIOUS AND TERTIARIES

General absolution is a highly valued adjunct to the sources of spiritual help that are needed in the lives of religious and tertiaries. This article is an attempt to present some basic ideas on the nature of general absolution and an outline of practical rules gathered from various authors and from papal documents. The arrangement and order will follow for the most part that of an article recently published by Father Joseph Sirna O.F.M. Conv.¹

1. HISTORICAL ORIGIN

General absolution is a benefit conceded by the Roman Pontiffs to religious with the intention of assisting them in the way of perfection, by removing obstacles and difficulties which arise from the past life or from the religious life itself.

The first appearance of this absolution cannot be determined easily. Historically, the origin seems to rest in a gradual development of the idea, and to some extent a separate development of various parts. The Constitution *Virtute conspicuos* of Clement IV, July 21, 1265, granted the Franciscans a faculty quite similar to general absolution. This Constitution speaks of absolution and dispensation being given to those who need it for cases that occurred before or after their entrance into the Order. There is some doubt whether the faculty given in this Constitution could be used outside the sacrament of Penance or not.

Gregory XIV in his Constitution, *Illius, qui gregis Domini*, September 21, 1591, granted to the General Prefect of the *Clerics Regular for the Care of the Sick* the faculty of absolving their subjects in a manner and to an extent that closely resembles the modern general absolution. An important difference from the modern idea is found in the clause: "the faculty of absolving . . . in the forum of conscience only", without the additional phrase: "and of the penitential [forum]." During this period the general absolution was restricted to absolution in the sacrament only when the full clause "the faculty of absolving in the forum of conscience and the penitential forum only" was used. Hence at this stage, the absolution could also be given outside the sacrament of Penance.

The limitation of the imparting of this absolution to certain feasts of the year was apparently first determined by Clement VIII in his Constitution

¹*Miscellanea Francescana*, Vol. 50 (1950, Apr.-Jun.), pp. 213-230.

Infirma aevi conditio, April 20, 1592, to the Brethren of the Blessed Mary of Mercy. This Constitution notes that the Brethren give the absolution on days when other religious organizations usually do it, advises that based only on a tradition in the Order, and confirms and re-grants the absolution. Apparently other Orders had this same faculty either by direct grant or communication of privileges.

2. THE NATURE OF GENERAL ABSOLUTION

General absolution is given to religious only on stated days. It is not in the form of a sacrament, since there are many points lacking in it which are required for absolution in the sacrament of Penance. General absolution can be classified as a blessing, i. e., as one of the *sacramentals*. This blessing, granted by the Holy See, is endowed with the specific benefits of a plenary indulgence and an absolution from censures and from transgressions of the Rule.

In the formula *Ne reminiscaris* there are two essential parts: 1) the absolution from censures; 2) the plenary indulgence.

1) *The absolution from censures*

The formula for this absolution consists in: a) the prayer of petition to Christ, that He absolve those present; b) the general declaration of power by the one granting the absolution, who acts, not in his own name, but in the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Apostles, etc.; c) the effect of granting of the absolution follows: *ab omni vinculo excommunicationis, suspensionis et interdicti*, i. e., "from every bond of excommunication, suspension and interdict." A secondary effect of this absolution is the reconciliation with the Church, which the person may have lost through censures.

The days on which the general absolution may be imparted must be determined from the lists as found in the Rituals of the various Orders.

It is not very clear just how far this absolution from censures extends. However, we may safely consider it as a precautionary absolution, to remit censures that were contracted with some ignorance or that were forgotten. In any rate, considering the present regulations of the Code of Canon Law, the censures that can be remitted by the general absolution are few in number. They can be remitted by other methods that are more available and expedient.

Hence the important part of the general absolution is the plenary indulgence, which will now be considered.

2) *The plenary indulgence*

The last section of the absolution formula deals with the plenary indulgence. It goes into some detail, which we might consider here in passing.

First of all there is an absolution from the punishment due to violations of the religious life. These violations can be "of the vows and the rule, of the constitutions, ordinations and admonitions of our superiors." Then follows the absolution from "forgotten or even neglected penances"; and since this is a plenary indulgence, the absolution must pertain not only to penances inflicted by religious superiors as such, but also by confessors in the sacrament of Penance. Finally, there is a "remission and indulgence of all sins . . . already confessed." The traditional interpretation of this phraseology is that the punishment due to sin is fully remitted, that is, a plenary indulgence is granted. Mortal sin cannot be remitted by this absolution, but only by the sacrament of Penance, or, outside of the sacrament, by perfect contrition with the intention of confessing sacramentally. With regard to venial sin, the sacramentals, of which general absolution is one, remit venial sins at least indirectly, by exciting a sense of contrition and charity in the soul. But after the remission of any sin, there is frequently some temporal punishment due to sin that must be atoned for either in this life or the next. The Church offers a means of making the due satisfaction in this life through the general absolution. Of course, the dispositions of the recipient will determine whether the remission is plenary or not; if the recipient still has some unremitted venial sins, or has some attachment to sin, the indulgence can be only partial.

By a grant of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, on June 7, 1919, when religious of the First or Second Order cannot conveniently receive general absolution in the formula *Ne reminiscaris* (intended for them), but receive the absolution in a church or oratory where it is publicly given to tertiary seculars in the formula *Intret*, they receive not only the plenary indulgence, as do the tertiaries, but also the absolution from censures.

Question A: Is the absolution from censures valid for both the internal and external forum, or only for the internal?

The solution of this question is important, since, if the absolution is valid for the internal forum only, the censure can be urged in the external forum if

it is notorious; on the contrary, if the absolution is extended to the external forum, the censured person is completely absolved, and all juridical effects of punishment cease. But, as mentioned already in this article, the absolution is more precautionary in nature, and for the purpose of remitting censures were contracted with some ignorance or forgotten. For various reasons it is difficult to maintain that general absolution goes beyond this. The two cases mentioned, forgotten censures, or those contracted in ignorance, must appear to be limited to those only that have not gone beyond the internal forum. The conclusion here offered is that the general absolution applies only to the internal forum.

Question B: Is the general absolution a sacramental or an authoritative absolution?

All references in the general absolution are to be taken as referring to punishment due to sin. This is apparently common usage in Papal Bulls and Jubilees. The absolution for such punishment can be given without sacramental confession, and when so done is an authoritative absolution. This is no other than the granting of an indulgence, through the proper use of a sacramental absolution formula, which is the case in the general absolution.

3. THE ACTIVE SUBJECT

The one imparting the absolution must be a priest. The faculty of granting the general absolution is committed mediately to the superiors, to be imparted on the days assigned, subject to particular privileges and indulgences. The superior, even local superiors, can, in places where they have jurisdiction, delegate the faculty to priests.

The following points should be noted:

1) For nuns (i. e., in communities with solemn vows) subject to him, the local Ordinary may appoint a suitable priest, even though he is not appointed for hearing their confessions.

2) The confessor of sick nuns of the Poor Clares can impart the absolution within the octave of the feast to which it is assigned, when he enters the cloister under conditions laid down in law for the confessions of sick nuns.

3) General absolution may be imparted to tertiaries by either the Minister General or the Provincial or the local superior of a convent of the First or Third Order Regular, or by someone delegated or subdelegated by the same.

4) The Director of tertiaries can impart this absolution to tertiaries. It seems that he can also delegate this faculty to others by reason of his office.

These distinctions should be kept in mind: a) if the general absolution is imparted to tertiaries in their own churches, only a priest of the Order can be delegated, though he might not be approved for confessions; b) if the absolution is to be imparted in a church not pertaining to the tertiaries, only priests approved for confessions can be delegated. If a priest satisfying these conditions cannot be had, any confessor whether regular or secular can, by indult, be delegated.

Can chaplains of religious women impart the absolution without delegation? In practice they do give it, though they often are neither superiors nor confessors of religious women, nor religious, nor simple confessors of the faithful. It seems that they are entitled to impart the absolution in virtue of their acting as chaplains of religious women, by considering their functions as parallel to those of Rectors of churches, who are prohibited by Canon Law from carrying out only parochial functions. General absolution is not a parochial function.

One could object that delegation for these chaplains is lacking inasmuch as the faculty is reserved to the superiors of the Order, and delegation is required. However the contrary custom is common and has never been objected to by authorities. Such a practice, which is so common, can be explained only by some privilege or a custom beyond the law. The practice is also reasonable, in the meaning of canon 27, especially since the cessation of that practice would deprive many religious women of the absolution.

The formula of absolution is now the same for all Regulars, and is the only valid formula, by a Constitution of Leo XIII, July 7, 1882. For nuns and for tertiaries living in common and professing simple vows, the formula is *Ne reminiscaris*, omitting the word, *suspensionis*. In order to bring this formula into agreement with the penal code in Canon law, the words, *majoris, vel minoris*, have been omitted from this formula, as will be seen from examining the Roman Ritual as published after the promulgation of the new Code of Canon law in 1917.² For the rest, the word of the post-Code formula is identical with the pre-Code formula. In the confessional a shorter form, which is given in the Roman

²The Capuchins received a reply from the Sacred Congregation for Religious, dated June 7, 1919, that the words *majoris, vel minoris* should no longer be kept in the formula. Cf. *Acta O.F.M.*, 38 (1919), 230.

Ritual, may be used not only for secular tertiaries, but also for religious tertiaries. This was granted from the Sacred Congregation of Rites, March 22, 1905.

An unusual aspect of the plenary indulgence acquired in the sacrament of confession is that it is applicable not only to the dead but also to the living.

4. THE ABSOLUTION GIVEN IN CHAPTERS

The absolution applies only to those present at the Chapter. A limitation previously mentioned should be kept in mind, that the absolution does not apply at least to censures contracted with some ignorance or that have been forgotten. The absolution would not apply to simony, because this crime is completed essentially after the election, and as such could not be affected by the absolution which is given before the election.

The absolution is relative rather than absolute. That is, the absolution is only valid for the censures as noted above, only in reference to the election, for the purpose of removing disqualifications of the voters and candidates. The safer opinion holds that the censures will revive, once the election has been completed. If a member of the chapter recalls, after the election, that he is under some censure or irregularity, he should consider himself as still under that censure or irregularity, and apply for absolution or dispensation, respectively, through the normal canonical channels.

5. GENERAL ABSOLUTION OF SECULAR TERTIARIES

The general absolution given to secular tertiaries (also termed lay tertiaries) differs in several respects from that for Regulars. The chief difference is in the effect. For tertiaries, the absolution contains a blessing with the annexed plenary indulgence; for those in religious Orders, there is the added absolution from all censures.

The formulae are also different. For regulars and tertiaries living a community life, it is the *Ne reminiscaris* formula. For secular tertiaries it is the *Intret oratio mea* formula. It is to be noted that if the absolution is given by the confessor, though confession at that time is not required, the absolution may be given in the place destined for hearing confessions, or immediately after confession. In the confessional, the short formula is to be used, whether for tertiaries or regulars receive the absolution.

An important privilege was granted to tertiaries (Sacred Congregation of Rites, June 7, 1919), by which secular tertiaries, when present in choir or in church or oratory where members of the First or Second Order are publicly imparted the absolution under the formula *Ne reminiscaris*, also acquire the plenary indulgence, and (by extraordinary grant for this case) an absolution from all censures.

Whether the general absolution is given in or outside the sacrament of confession, the priest imparting it gains the benefit of the same absolution, provided he is qualified in law to receive it. If the priest is a religious, qualified in law to receive absolution from censures under the formula *Ne reminiscaris*, he cannot at the time conveniently receive it under that formula, he receives an added benefit when he imparts the absolution to secular tertiaries under the formula *Intret oratio mea*.

By papal indult, tertiaries of various branches of the Franciscan Order can receive both the papal blessing and general absolution from a Director of a branch of the Order not their own.

The list of assigned days for general absolution for secular tertiaries is omitted here, because of variations in the different grants.

Tertiaries can receive general absolution publicly or privately on the day assigned, from midnight to midnight, or on any day within the octave connected with the assigned day. If the sacramental confession has already been made, it can be given privately to an individual on the day preceding, even in the morning. In this case it is required that 1) the penitent be in the state of grace; 2) the absolution be imparted in the confessional, or a place properly designated for the hearing of confessions. However, it may be imparted at a place distinct from that of the confession.

When a legitimately assigned priest is not available, all tertiaries, both regular and secular, male and female members of any branch of the Franciscans, can receive general absolution in common (not individually) from any priest who has been approved for hearing confessions. This priest, as was stated above, receives himself the general absolution in this case also, if he is qualified by law to receive it.

6. CONDITIONS FOR ACQUIRING THE INDULGENCE

The conditions are confession, communion and prayer according to the

intention of the Holy Father. But it is not necessary that these conditions be fulfilled immediately before or on the day of reception of the general absolution. It suffices to meet these conditions within the eight-day periods prior to or following the day to which the absolution is annexed. The prayer accompanying the intention of the Holy Father has not been determined; but it is vocal, not mental. In general when, for the acquiring of indulgences, prayer is required, it suffices to say one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory. In some cases, a specified prayer has been determined for an indulgence, but such is not the case here. It is more in conformity with the mind of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences that the required Prayer be said on the day of reception of the sacraments of Confession and Communion.

For communities receiving the general absolution as a group, the required prayers are, by a fairly prevalent custom, taken care of by the priest in common with the community at the end of the absolution. Rituals and Manuals of Prayer for religious indicate, at the end of the formula, that this is to be done.

The effect of the general absolution takes place only when all the conditions have been fulfilled, and not necessarily when the word *impertior* in the formula is pronounced by the priest. Of course, if the prescribed conditions have been fulfilled before the pronouncing of the formula, the effect would be the same as with the pronouncing of that formula.

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Roch Knopke O.S.A.



Because we have once come to the Heart of the sweetest Lord Jesus, *it is good for us to be here*, let us not easily be torn away from Him of Whom it is written that *the men who swerve from Thee will be names written in the earth*. What then will be the fate of those who approach Thee? It is written that those who shall draw near to Thee and *be glad and rejoice in Thee, remembering Thy Heart. Behold how good and how pleasant it is to dwell in this Heart!* A treasure, a priceless pearl, is Thy Heart, good Jesus, which we find in the unploughed field of Thy Body. Who is there who would cast this pearl as a worthless thing? Nay, rather, I shall give all pearls, barter all my thoughts and loves, and accept for myself that one pearl, *casting the burden of my thoughts into the Heart of the good Jesus, and it will without deceit sustain me.*

Saint Bonaventure

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According to Saint Bonaventure

If reading and meditation nourish us with spiritual food and prayer, they make us live in the refreshing atmosphere of union with God, our spiritual growth develops with the grace of God in the performance of good works. Through good works Christ, Who lives in us, will manifest Himself, will appear as He did in Palestine, *bona faciendo*. Hence, to neglect good works would not only retard our spiritual growth; it would mean that Christ is no longer manifest in us, and that we are practically dead in consequence. Our Lord had no use for a barren tree; we know how He cursed the fig tree that bore no fruit. Let us then examine ourselves in

NEGLIGENCE IN DOING GOOD WORKS.

At first sight this subject appears too vast to be restricted to a single point in our examination of conscience. After all, everything that a religious person must do is in one sense a good work. However there seems little doubt that what the Seraphic Doctor means by good works are those deeds in which our dear Savior excelled, the positive works of charity. As Saint Paul informs us, it is by such works that we grow in Christ. *Rather are we to practice the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in Him Who is the head, Christ. For from Him the whole body . . . derives its increase to the building up of itself in love; for in this way we shall attain to the perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ* (Eph. 4, 15-16 and 13). In this examination therefore we shall not ask ourselves about negligence in our daily duties as commanded by God and by our Rule and constitutions, but restrict ourselves to the positive works of charity. Their practice is diametrically opposed to our selfishness. Through good works we shall eradicate from our souls the worst obstacle to religious perfection, inordinate self-love.

One way of conducting such an examination would be to follow the sequence of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy. For the benefit of those who wish to follow this procedure we can list the corporal works according to the time-honored Latin verse:

Visito, poto, cibo, redimo, tego, colligo, condo.

A similar verse expresses the sequence of the spiritual works of mercy:

Consule, carpe, doce, solare, remitte, fer, ora.

Let us present the same commands in another form. First, let us ask whether

we are negligent in doing good in our own community. This question is first, for unfortunately it sometimes happens that religious reserve the almost exclusively for outsiders while the members of their own community suffer. If one will pardon the cliché, charity begins at home even if one should not stay there. Consequently, let us ask, Do I try to be of help to my fellow religious count on me as far as the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are concerned? Am I alert to their needs? Is it self-love or pride that determines my willingness to help? Superiors, in particular, should examine themselves on this.

Am I sympathetic to the suffering of others? Can Saint Paul's charity be applied to my community, that when one member suffers all others share in his sympathy? Do I show consideration and understanding toward those who suffer? Or don't I care to be bothered? In general it is not difficult to be sympathetic with others. At times an understanding silence or a few considerate words suffice to bring about great consolation especially if it is in a spiritual suffering or one in which the individual has been involved in a

Do I rejoice with others? Do I make their happiness my own? This is much more difficult than sympathetic charity. How do I react to the suffering of others in my community? Am I genuinely pleased? Are my congratulations sincere? Do I try to make recreation pleasant for all? I must remember that joy is an outstanding feature of the sons and daughters of Saint Francis and sadness is infectious, so too is joy.

Have I practiced the charity of *bearing with others*? Here we strike a severe blow to self-love. To bear in patience is one of the highest works of charity. It is in this sense, as Saint Paul puts it, that *charity bears with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things*. How do I put up with the peculiarities of others? How do I bear with those who really do get on my nerves? Does my charity go so far as to trust their good will, or am I full of suspicion? Do I hope for them even against hope, even when everything seems to the opposite? Superiors will have a vast field for self-examination concerning this patient charity, which is trusting and full of hope. They must imitate the good work of their Father in heaven, Who lets His sun shine upon the just and unjust alike. What wonders can be done by the patience and understanding and trust of superiors in particular.

The second part of our examination should be directed toward those tasks which have been assigned to us. If they are performed out of obedience

Do I have the blessing of the superiors, they are good works in any case. Was I faithful to the specific tasks assigned to me? Do I have the zeal that should be expected from me? In the care of souls? In teaching and nursing? In working for the good of the community in various ways? Or must I blame myself for negligence? Have my activities in these fields really been *good works*?

The third part of our examination should be concerned with those outside our community. To radiate charity, especially joy in the Lord—to bring joy to others—this is a distinguishing mark of the Franciscan family. How have I fulfilled my Franciscan vocation? Have I been good to everyone? Saint Francis could not stand for it when one of his brethren refused to do good to a robber, for after all, argued Francis, was he not a *brother robber*? In my good works am I guided more by human prudence and caution than by the desire to share in the radiance of the love and goodness of God Himself? Are our convent doors really a refuge for people in bodily and spiritual misery? How much good can be done by a brother or a sister who attends the poor. What beautiful example do we have in the Saint, Brother Conrad of Parzham. Even if we cannot help materially, do we give spiritual help at least? Do we bring a little sunshine into the lives of these unfortunates? And what about the alms of good example? We Franciscans should certainly not remain aloof from the ordinary people; at the same time we should not demean ourselves. We spring from a noble race, children of the Great King. Was I kind and patient and understanding and condescending with everyone? In regard to this Saint Francis admonishes us:

I counsel, admonish and exhort my Friars in the Lord Jesus Christ that when they go through the world they neither quarrel nor contend in words, nor judge others; but let them be gentle, peaceful and modest, meek and humble, speaking uprightly to all, as it becometh.

And the new Third Order Rule:

Let the conduct of the Brothers and Sisters be such that they may edify all by word and example, remembering that our Lord said, So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven (Matt. 5, 16). Let them approach everybody with the humble and pious greeting of peace, and bear peace with them not only on their lips but also in their hearts.

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

Among its summer courses, the Franciscan Institute also offers scientific studies in Franciscan Spirituality. These courses are part of a series that cover the nature of the Franciscan way of life as well as the social development and influence of Franciscanism upon the intellectual and devotional life of the Church. Special attention is also given to Catholic Action and to the social interests and tasks of the Third Order Secular. Teachers, preachers, missionaries, directors of souls, novice masters and mistresses and all who are charged with the education and spiritual formation of young religious or of the faithful in general should find these courses a great help in understanding more fully the richness of their Franciscan heritage and in imparting the Franciscan message to others.

The attention of those interested in Franciscan Spirituality is called especially to the following courses

Sources of Franciscan Spirituality
The *Itinerarium* of Saint Bonaventure
Readings from David of Augsburg
History of the Franciscan Order
Third Order Workshop



These courses may be audited or taken for graduate credit leading to the degree of Master of Arts. The complete schedule of the Franciscan Institute Summer Session, beginning July 3 and ending August 9, is as follows:

725	History of Franciscan Theology. Part III: Duns Scotus.	2 credits
	Eligius Buytaert, O.F.M.	
630	Franciscan Spirituality. Part II: Sources of Franciscan Spirituality. Life and writings of St. Francis	2 credits
	Ignatius Donaghue, O.F.M.	
630a	Readings from David of Augsburg	1 credit
	Ignatius Donaghue, O.F.M.	
605	History of Franciscan Philosophy. Part II: Duns Scotus	2 credits
	Allan Wolter, O.F.M.	
605a	Readings from Duns Scotus	1 credit
	Allan Wolter, O.F.M.	
540	History of the Franciscan Order. Part 1	2 credits
535	Third Order Workshop. Nature, aim and importance of the Third Order Secular, spirit and activities of the Tertiary apostolate, mutual relations of the Third Order and other Catholic organizations; international coordination of Tertiary forces	2 credits
	Gerard Fitzsimmons, O.F.M.	
518a and b	Latin Palaeography of the 13th to 15th centuries	2 credits
	Gaudens Mohan, O.F.M.	
505a	The <i>Itinerarium</i> of Saint Bonaventure	2 credits
	Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.	

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OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Is it not strange that, while heaven and earth cannot contain the Almighty Who holds the universe in the palm of His hand, the earthly life of the same Eternal God should be completed in thirty-three short years, and that the course of this life should be contained within a few chapters written down by the four Evangelists? Written down, we might add, in a simple, plain-spoken, popular manner. But there is the Finger of God, which knows how to draw greatness out of smallness, grandeur and glory out of simplicity. For these nineteen hundred years Mother Church has pondered over these unadorned and unpretentious pages of the Holy Gospel, and, behold, what an overwhelming array of festivals, rites and devotions she has set up for the entire course of the ecclesiastical year. We are made to think of a small basket filled with greens and flowers, and lo, late in the day, busy and skilful hands have emptied the basket and made the altar look like an object of entrancing beauty. The basket is the Gospel; the altar, the calendar of the Church.

Being written for human beings, this ecclesiastical calendar concentrates primarily on those events and objects in the life of the God-Man that offer a special appeal to the human mind and heart. The Christmas cycle dwells lovingly on His birth of Mary the Virgin. Eastertide shows forth the struggle between death and life. Calvary recalls His bitter death. Pentecost, His life's work, the Church. His authority is featured in the Feast of Christ's Kingship. Our daily bread, the chief means of human subsistence, plays its part in the Holy Eucharist. Motherhood, so close to man's life and love, is revered in the numerous feasts of the Mother of God. The heart, the source of human weal and woe alike, comes to the fore in the devotion to our Saviour's Sacred Heart. And last of all, there is the blood in our veins, the life-spring, as it were, of our existence. No wonder that Mother Church throughout the ages should have instilled into the hearts of her children a fond love and devotion to the Precious Blood of our Lord, and that the beautiful Month of July should have been dedicated to this Devotion.

Blood is indeed an outstanding factor not only in the physical and moral life of the individual, but in all the history of the human race as well, from the most ancient monuments of primitive human script to the mountains of journals and literature that day after day fill our streets and homes. And since from the earliest dawn of human history blood has been looked upon as the fountain and sign of life, as the visible test of the noblest in man when he possesses it, even as his greatest calamity when he loses it, therefore, blood has