# the CORD

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CONTENTS <sup>VOL</sup> VII. NO. 5. MAY, 195*7* 

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION OF POPE PIUS XII

THE LITURGY OF R MASS
Fr. Martin Wolfe, O.F.M.

THE MARIAN DEVOTION OF EXPLATION
Fr. Leonard Perms O.F.M.

OUR LADY OF A HAPPY DEATH.

FATHER SERRA'S PINUTENTIAL PRACTICES

Fr. Eric O'Brien, 0 F.M.

### POEMS:

# Apostolic Constitution 'Sedes Sapientiae' of Pope Pius XII

PIUS THE BISHOP SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

FOR A PERPETUAL MEMORIAL

The most holy Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, Mother of the God and Lord of all knowledge, and Queen of the Apostles, in whose honor We have dedicated an entire holy year, is rightly considered the special Mother and Teacher of all who, embracing the religious state, strive also to carry on the apostolic warfare of Christ the High Priest. For to apply themselves effectively to a preparation and formation for so great and exalted a vocation—religious, and at the same time priestly and apostolic,—they will have special need of her leadership and hely. For she is the appointed Mediatrix of all graces pertaining to sanctification, and is rightly called the Mother and Queen of the Catholic priesthood and apostolate. Accordingly We earnestly implore her help, that she who has been a Counselor of heavenly light to Us in prescribing these norms, may assist those who have the duty of putting them into effect.

In this Apostolic Constitution. Pope Pius XII promulgates certain principles and approxis sems general norms, which should govern the ranging of religious clerics. Although the Constitution is concerned primitify with Religious who ar studying the stud

Ι

# RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS ALWAYS FLOURISHED IN THE CHURCH

By the greatest kindness of the Provident God, it has always pened through the course of time that Christ the Redeemer spired specially loved souls with an interior and somewhat voice, inviting them as He invited the young man who aske about eternal life: "come, follow me." And many of these have this call from God and immediately made their own the pub claration of the holy Apostle: "behold we have left all things a lowed you," and these our Lord has made "fishers of men," are ected them His "workers" sending them "into his harvest."

### Religious and Priestly Vocation

And this happens today just as in ages past, for every da witness a more frequent and more intense association of the reli state with the priestly dignity and apostolic office. For the mon old were usually not ordained priests; however, a few of them were pelled almost out of necessity to receive the priesthood, so the pe would be converted to the Christian religion, but these monks tically withdrew from religious observance. And afterwards not all Mendicant Friars were obliged by their Rule to become priests. though they were imbued with a wonderful apostolic spirit. Ind the holy Father of Assisi himself was not ordained a priest. On other hand the Canons Regular and especially the Clerics Regular accepted from God the special vocation of receiving and exercise the sacred Orders. And from that time on, innumerable clerical Congations and Societies have imitated their example, living in comm And now, by the providence of God which provides for the need every age, there are added to these Societies several secular and c ical Institutes.

Furthermore, at present, even among the more ancient Orders the Latin Church which are not formally designated as lay commutities, all the members, excepting those who are called lay brothe or coadjutors, are destined for the priesthood, and it is absolutely quired that those who undertake the government of these Orders I priests.

### Diocesan and Religious Clergy

hereupon in our times the Church enjoys a large multitude of ters, who strive to acquire perfection by observing the gospel els, and at the same time undertake the priestly ministry. The tude of these men constitutes the religious clergy, which stands by side with the secular or diocesan clergy, and between them is, in a brotherly way, a holy rivalry, and mutual friendly help. his takes place under the one and same supreme authority of the an Pontiff, while always preserving intact the authority of the bps.

#### Need of Norms

Nevertheless it is evident to everyone that if this religious clergy attain its twofold end properly and securely, it needs the most norms to regulate and promote the religious, clerical and apostolic truction and formation of its members. The Constitutions or States of the individual communities, which regulated the course of indies and the instruction of the young men, took care of this necessity up to now. And in addition, there were prescriptions and recommendations on this matter given by the Holy See. Nevertheless for a long time now there have not been any general ordinations, properly coordinated and complete, supported by the Apostolic Authority, to be observed everywhere by everyone. But such an important work, which is of the highest importance for the good of souls requires these Ordinations, if the training of religious clerics is to be safely provided for, and happily brought to perfection by the proper effort.

### Vigilance of Apostolic See

For such an important work requires the constant vigilance of this postolic See; and just as the clerical diocesan schools, as public stitutions in the Church, are under the active care and constant control of the Holy See through the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries Universities, in the same way and for the same reason, schools of states of perfection, recognized and protected by the Church, are ablic, and are subject to the authority of the Sacred Congregation of eligious.

### Establishment of Special Commission

Because of these many reasons, in the year 1944 We ratified, withthis same Sacred Congregation, "the erection and establishment. . . a special Body or Commission of chosen men, to deal with all quesms and matters pertaining in any way to the religious and clerical 132

education of candidates, novices, and junior members of all reli congregations and societies living in common without vows, as to their training in letters, science and the ministry."10

This Commission of skilled men, from various Religious Ca gation and nations, inspected all the pertinent documents then in and everywhere gathered information, in accord with the circular addressed to all Superiors General. 11 This Commission had alread complished outstanding work when the Congress on the States of fection was summoned in 1950. The opportune suggestions made Congress were later used in re-examining and revising the draft they had already prepared. This was then submitted for Our appr

Now, therefore, We are publishing a number of Statutes, pre by some fundamental norms and principles regarding the reli clerical and apostolic formation of students. From now on, these ciples and norms are to be observed by all.

### TWOFOLD ELEMENT IN VOCATIONS

First of all we wish everyone to know that the foundations of entire religious, priestly and apostolic life, which is called vocation, consists of a twofold essential element, one divine, the ecclesiastical. The first element, God's call to enter the religiou priestly state, is so necessary, that if it is lacking, we must say that very foundation upon which the whole edifice depends is absent

### Call by God

He whom God does not call, is not moved or aided by His gr For a true vocation to any state in life must be called, in a certain se divine, inasmuch as God himself is the principal Author of all states, and of all natural and supernatural dispositions and gifts. all the more must the religious and priestly vocation be called, actually he, a vocation given by God, for this vocation shines forth such brilliant eminence, and is gifted with so many and so great hor as could come only from the "Father of lights,,' from Whom "is en good fift and every perfect gift."12

### Call by Church

Now let us consider the second element of a religious and price vocation, which the Roman catechism describes in these words: "t are said to be called by God, who are called by the lawful ministers the Church."13

This does not contradict what We have said about divine vocation, Lether it is very closely connected with it. For the divine vocation to he religious and clerical state, inasmuch as it is something by which member of the Church, which is a visible and hierarchical society, is estined to lead a life of sanctification publicly, and to exercise the hierarchical ministry, this vocation must be guided and accepted by the hierarchical rulers to whom God has committed the government of his Church, and confirmed by their authority.

### **Duties of Vocational Directors**

Therefore all should note how much is incumbent upon those selecting and testing vocations of this kind. They must never in any manner force anyone to the priestly or religious state,14 nor entice or admit anyone who does not show true signs of a divine vocation; likewise they must promote on one to the clerical ministry, who shows that he has received from God only a religious vocation, nor should they confine to or direct to the secular clergy those who have also a religious vocation from God; and finally they should turn no one from the priesthood who by definite signs gives evidence of being called by God to that state.15

For it is manifest that those Religious who aspire to carry on their apostolate in the ranks of the clergy, and for whom these norms are laid down, must possess everything which is required to establish firmly this many-sided vocation-religious, priestly and apostolic. Therefore all gifts and qualities, which are considered necessary for fulfilling these exalted offices, must show themselves in the aspirants.

III

### **VOCATION REQUIRES DEVELOPMENT**

Furthermore it is clear to everyone that the beginnings of a divine vocation and the qualities needed for it, when they are present, require education and formation, if they are to develop and mature. For nothing appears perfect at the instant of birth but acquires perfection by advancing gradually. In supervising this development, all circumstances, both of the one divinely called and those of places and times must be considered, so that the determined purpose may be effectively attained. And thus the education and formation of the younger members must be secure in every way, prominent, solid, entire, wisely and courageously accommodated to the needs of the day, be they internal or exh vigilance. This is expedient not only for the perfection of religious but also for a priestly and apostolic life.

### Qualities Required in Superiors

As we know from experience, these things can be accomplished approved and carefully chosen men, outstanding for their less prudence, discernment of spirits, and other human qualities. The spirits of the had varied experience with man and events, be truly fing with the Holy Spirit, and they must give the young men an example ever cition, are influenced more by virtues and good deeds, than wor

### Teaching of Council of Trent

In carrying out this most serious duty, let the educators' first ru he one given by our Lord in the Gospel: "I am the good shepher good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. . . I am the god herd, and I know mine and mine know me."17 St. Bernard express thought in these words: "learn that you should be mothers of su ject oil of Transit 16: Coursels of Trent itself in its exhortation to Ecclesiastic Superiors "cor side tords and shep as not to domineer them but to love them as Sons and younge Brot hers; they should endeavor to deter them from wrongdoing by exhorting and warning them, lest they be obliged to administer due punishment after faults have been committed. Yet if through human frail by their subjects do wrong, they must observe the precept of the Apo tle, and reprove, entreat, rebuke them in all godliness and pa tien e; for kindness is more effective in correcting than harshness exhortation better than threats of punishment, kindness better than in sister on authority. If in view of the seriousness of the crime there he peed of punishment, then they must combine sternness with mildjudgement with mercy, severity with gentleness, so that discipline, so salutary and essential to public order, be maintained without hars ness and that those who have been punished may amend their wave or, if they refuse to do so, the others may be deterred from wrongdoing by the salutary example of their punishment."19

#### Methods of Instruction

Moreover, all who in any way have the duty of instructing reliious should remember that this type of education and formation must e imparted with organized development and, in as far as possible, nitable methods and means of instruction should be used for all. Intructors should remember that education must include the whole man under all the aspects of his vocation, to form him truly and in every way "a man perfect in Christ."20 Regarding the resources and methods of instruction, it is obvious that the means which nature itself supplies, and what modern human investigation offers, provided it be good, are not to be rejected, but are to be considered as of great importance and wisely adopted. Nonetheless there is no error worse than this, that in the formation of such chosen pupils one should base his efforts solely or too much on the natural methods of this age, and consider of less importance the means and resources of the supernatural order or neglect them in any way whatsoever. For to attain the religious and clerical perfection filled with apostolic fruits, supernatural resources, as the sacraments, prayer, mortification and other like means are not only necessary, but primary and absolutely essential.

#### The Natural Foundation

However, when this order of methods and means is observed, nothing should be neglected which is helpful in any way for the cultivation of all the natural virtues and for the manly formation of the whole human person. For supernatural formation, both religious and priestly, is closely connected with the most solid foundation of natural goodness and a refined human nature.<sup>21</sup> For men's way to Christ is made more easy and more secure, insofar as "the goodness and kindness of God our Savior"<sup>22</sup> is more evident to them in the person of the priest.

### Primacy of the Spiritual

But although all must consider the human and natural instruction of the religious clergy as a matter of great importance, nevertheless in the overall courses of the formation, the supernatural sanctification of the soul has, without doubt, the first place. For if the Apostle's warning is valid for every Christian: "This is the will of God, your sanctification," how much more is he held to this who has not only been raised to the priesthood but has publicly professed that he is to acquire evangelic perfection itself? Indeed he is appointed by his office as an instrument in the sanctification of others in such a way, that the

salvation of souls itself and the increase of God's kingdom greatly pends on his own sanctity.

### Obligations of Religious Profession

Therefore, let all the members of the states of evangelic perfective remember, and frequently consider before God, that for them to charge the duty of their profession it is not enough to avoid measures, or even, with God's help, venial sins, nor is it sufficient to only materially the precepts of their Superiors. Neither does it surfor them to observe their vows or promises which oblige in conscisor their own constitutions, according to which, as the Church help prescribes in the sacred canons, "each and every religious, superior well as subject, is bound. . . to order his life and thus to tend to perfection of his state." But they must do all these things with a plete devotion and burning love, not only because these duties unavoidable, "but also for conscience sake." For if they are to be to climb to the heights of holiness and offer themselves as vital sour of christian charity to all, they must themselves be aflame with a being love for God and neighbor and be equipped with every virtue.

#### IV

### INTELLECTUAL AND PASTORAL FORMATION

When this sanctification of the soul has been provided for, most effective intellectual and pastoral training of the religious clemust be taken care of. And because of the great importance of the matter and the consciousness of Our supreme office, We wish to pose and recommend a bit further some more general principles.

A solid and complete intellectual formation and development all the members of these religious societies is of the greatest necessit. This necessity can be seen clearly in the threefold dignity—religious priestly and apostolic—which shines forth in the Church of God.

### Union with Christ Necessary

Let the religious men to whom this outstanding office has be given remember that, truly seeking God alone and clinging to His they should contemplate the things of God and teach them to other Let them remember also, that they cannot perform this most hold duty correctly and fruitfully and bring about a sublime union with Christ, if they are without that full and profound knowledge of God and His mysteries, which must be perfected without ceasing and must be drawn from the sacred doctrines.<sup>26</sup>

#### Instruction in Ecclesiastical Studies

The priestly dignity which clothes the legate of the Lord of knowledge,<sup>27</sup> and in virtue of which he is called in a special way "the salt of the earth and the light of the world,"<sup>28</sup> demands a full and solid intruction, especially in the ecclesiastical disciplines; for instruction of this kind can nourish and strengthen the spiritual life of the priest himself and keep him immune from every error and devious novelty. This instruction, furthermore, makes him a faithful dispenser of the "mysteries of God"<sup>29</sup> and a perfect man of God "equipped for every good work."<sup>30</sup>

### Training Required for Apostolate

Finally, the members of the states of perfection, each according to his own vocation, exercise in the Church an apostolic office, whether in preaching to the people, or the Christian formation of children and young people, or the administration of the sacraments, especially Penance, or in going to the missions, or in the direction of souls in the spiritual life, or in their ordinary association with people in daily life. This office cannot bear abundant and enduring fruit unless, without ever losing their zeal, they have a clear and fully comprehended knowledge of sacred doctrine.

To attain such a solid and complete formation and development of the natural talents of the young men and the scope of the studies, let the Superiors of religious take special care, using all diligence, that the knowledge of letters and doctrine of the future priests "be at least equal to that of laymen who take similar courses of study. In this way, not only will the seriousness of the intellectual training be assured, but the choice of subjects will be more easily made." And let them take care that these same students be prepared and trained in the auxiliary sciences so that they may obtain a greater knowledge of ecclesiastical discipline.

### Reverence for Teaching Authority of Church

The office of teaching philosophy or theology should be given all to those who are suitable and carefully chosen; to those who will be been most religiously, all that is commanded by the Sacred Canons, y Ourselves and Our Predecessors. Let them, with the greatest fidelity, how reverence always and everywhere for the Teaching Authority of the Church and instill this reverence into the minds and hearts of their tudents. Let them use prudence and caution together with diligence undertaking the very commendable investigation of new questions thich arise in the course of time. And let these teachers hold religiously

to the reasoning, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor we must be followed in the philosophical and theological formation of students.<sup>32</sup>

With Aquinas as leader and teacher, let them teach theology cording to the positive-scholastic method. In this way, using effective means—under the leadership of the Teaching Authority of the Ch -we will be able to search most accurately the fonts of divine retion, clearly explain the treasures of truth drawn from these and efficaciously preserve them. Since the deposit of Revelation been committed solely to the Teaching Authority of the Church authentic interpretation, it must be explained most faithfully acco ing to the sense and mind of that Church and not by merely hu reason and private judgment. Therefore, let the teachers of Chris philosophy and theology understand that they perform their of not in their own right or in their own name, but only in the name and by the authority of the supreme Teaching Authority. Wheret preserving a just liberty of opinion in those matters which are subject to discussion, "they must keep in mind that the power of te ing has been given not to propound their own opinions to the stude in their class, but to teach them the most approved doctrines of Church."33

### (To be continued)

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### The Liturgy of the Mass

Fr. Martin Wolter, O.F.M.

In our series of conferences on the liturgy of the sacraments we come now to the third sacrament of the Church, which is that of the Holy Eucharist. Most of our catechisms as well as books of dogmatic theology and sacred liturgy treat this subject under three headings:

1) the Eucharistic Sacrifice or Holy Mass, 2) the Sacrament of the Eucharist or Holy Communion, 3) the Real Presence or Eucharistic Devotions. In this month's conference we shall discuss only the first of these, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In that great encyclical on the sacred liturgy, Mediator Dei, our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, admonishes us thus: "It is therefore desirable, Venerable Brethren, that all the faithful should be aware that to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is their chief duty and supreme dignity, and that not in an inert and negligent fashion, giving way to distractions and day-dreaming, but with such earnestness and concentration that they may be united as closely as possible with the High Priest, according to the Apostle, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2, 5). And together with Him and through Him let them make their oblation, and in union with Him let them offer up themselves."

If St. Francis of Assisi were alive today he might well cry out: "Let these words of the Lord Pope be written in flaming fire over the skies above, that all the faithful may read and observe them!" Perhaps we shall be more likely to observe them if we consider the holy sacrifice of the Mass under the guidance of the Church's teaching and liturgy and in the spirit of St. Francis.

### The Mass as the Sacrifice of Christ

"The august sacrifice of the altar," says our Holy Father in Mediator Dei, "is no mere empty commemoration of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, but a true and proper act of sacrifice, whereby the High Priest by an unbloody immolation offers himself a most acceptable Victim to the Eternal Father, as he did upon the Cross... The Priest is the same, Jesus Christ, whose sacred person his minister represents... Likewise the Victim is the same, namely our Divine Redeemer in his human nature with his true body and blood." This

teaching of our present Holy Father is in conformity with what the Council of Trent declared in 1562: "In the divine sacrifice that offered in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in bloody manner on the altar of the cross is present and is offered an unbloody manner."

That Christ is the suppleme Priest and Victim of the Holy Safice is also clear from the ery liturgy of the Mass itself. Just before the consecration the Church prays that the offering presented—"a blood of thy most beloved Son our Lafter the consecration the Church as calls attention to the fact that we have Christ as our most holy Victim, a pure Victim, a holy Victim, a spotless Victim, the Bread eternal life, and the Chalic e of everlasting salvation." At the mine elevation the priest makes the sign of the cross with the particle the Host over the chalice will ile saying: "Through Him and with I and in Him is to Thee God Holy Spirit, all honor and grown."

The fact that the Mass is the sacrifice of Christ Himself is not so thing unknown to us. But it is a truth on which we can never medit enough, for it is so very basic to an understanding and appreciation the Mass. The ancient saying: "It is the Mass that matters," is rooted this truth that Christ the Sort of God is the chief Priest and Victim every holy Mass. It is this truth that brings our well-instructed, low Catholics thronging to Mass on Sundays and even week days, while p haps the bulk of Protestants remain in their homes. It is this truth—the Mass is the sacrifice of Christ—which St. Francis would have us a only believe intellectually, but also realize keenly and embrace it we all our hearts.

"I entreat you all, brothers," writes the Seraph of Assisi in Letter to All the Friars,"...to bring all the reverence and all the resp you ever can to bear on the most all body and blood of our Lord Je Christ, through whom whatever there is in heaven and on earth been appeased and reconciled to God Almighty. I likewise beg in Lord, all my brothers who now are and will be and wish to be pries of the Most High, that when they wish to celebrate Mass, they show the most holy body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ with a cleand holy intention, and not for any earthly return or out of fear or leand man, as if to please men. But let all their will, so far as the great of the Almighty favors, be directed toward him, in the desire to please

ith it the sovereign Lord alone, because in it he alone acts, as it leases him." For, now that he says, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' anybody acts otherwise, he becomes a Judas the traitor, and makes imself guilty of the body and blood of our Lord."

The Poverello in these words emphasizes that the chief priest upon whom the whole efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass depends is Christ timself. When St. Francis says, "he alone acts, as it pleases him," he loes not wish to imply that we members of Christ have no part in the acrifice of him who is our head. Plainly enough he says that priests perform the sacrifice" and that their "intention" and "their will" are art of the sacrifice. The priests and faithful have indeed their role o play in the holy Sacrifice, but it must always be in union with and ependent upon Christ. Only Christ, the chief priest, "alone acts, as t pleases him." All the rest of us must see to it that our activity in the Mass "be directed toward Him" for "if anybody acts otherwise" he acts the part of the traitor. Pope Pius XII echoes this thought when he says we should be "united as closely as possible with the High Priest."

Thus we see that the official teaching of the Church, the words and ceremonies of the liturgy, and finally the instruction of our holy father St. Francis all seek to impress upon our minds this important fundamental truth about the Eucharistic Sacrifice—it is the sacrifice of Christ himself, the Son of God. Now what are the consequences of this tremendous truth?

First of all it means that in the sight of God nothing more important takes place on earth than the offering of he Holy Sacrifice. The liturgy of the Mass itself has phrases that describe its value in the syes of God. "The holy Victim" is the "beloved Son" who offers to God all honor and glory." The heavenly Father looks down and speaks ain as it were the benevolent words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom am well pleased" (Mt. 17, 5). Yes, this is a most pleasing, a most refect, an infinitely precious sacrifice offered to God. The praise and doration offered by Christ are most sublime—"I praise Thee, Father, ord of heaven and earth" (Lk. 10, 21). The expressions of gratitude infinitely tender—"Father, I give thee thanks" (Jo. 11, 41). The paration and satisfaction for sin are most thorough—"Father, forge them" (Lk. 23, 34). The petitions for graces and favors are most licacious—"I pray for them" (Jo. 17, 9).

Secondly, in the sight of man there should be nothing more preus or more important than the Mass. But this implies a deep faith in truth that Christ is really present and acting in the Holy Sacrifice. St. Louis IX of France was once informed that Jesus in the form of Infant was appearing in the hands of a priest during the elevation the Mass. But the holy king refused to go to the church where the acle was reportedly seen, saying: "I believe that Christ is really pre in the holy Mass. I do not wish to deprive myself of the merit of by seeing."

THE LITURGY OF THE A

This same Saint Louis would try to attend as many holy M in the morning as possible. When his courtiers complained the spent too much time on religious exercises, the wise king replied I would spend these same hours on hunting and games and dances would say nothing. But because I give them to God you begrudge them." Here was indeed a Christian who realized that it was his " duty and supreme dignity. . . to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrif Here was a Franciscan who took to heart the words of his Sera Father: "It is a great pity and a pitiable weakness that you shi have him thus present and still be interested in anything else in whole world. Let everything in man halt in awe, let all the quake, and let Heaven exult when Christ, the Son of the living is there on the altar in the hands of the priest." (Letter to A Friars).

### The Mass as the sacrifice of the Church

In Mediator Dei our Holy Father goes on to explain that the is also the sacrifice of the faithful collectively, that is of the Church. "It must also be said that the faithful do offer the D Victim, though in a different sense. . . . We are happy to recall of St. Robert Bellarmine's many statements on this subject. 'The Sacra he says, 'is offered in the person of Christ. Thus the oblation follows the Consecration, is a sort of attestation that the whole Chi consents in the oblation made by Christ, and offers it along with Hi

The Holy Father then goes on to show how the sacred litur self teaches us that the Mass is the sacrifice of the Church. "Mor the rites and prayers of the Eucharistic Sacrifice," he says, "signify" show no less clearly that the oblation of the Victim is made by priests in company with the people. For not only does the sacred ister, after the oblation of the bread and wine when he turns to people say the significant prayer: "Pray, brethren, that my sack and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty; but, the prayers by which the divine Victim is offered to God are general expressed in the plural number; and in these it is indicated more once that the people also participate in this august Sacrifice inast as they offer the same. The following words, for example are u For whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee. . . We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord to be appeased and to receive this offering of our bounden duty, as also of thy whole housewhold. . . We thy servants, as also thy whole people. . .do offer unto thy most excellent majesty, of thine own gifts bestowed upon us, a pure victim, a holy victim, a spotless victim."

The Council of Florence (1438-1445) finds also in the liturgy the same truth that the Mass is the sacrifice of the whole Church in union with Christ. This Council quotes Julius, the second Pope after blessed Sylvester as saying: "According to the command of the canons, the Lord's chalice should be offered with wine mixed with water. For we see that the water stands for the people, the wine for the blood of Christ. Thus when wine and water are mixed in the chalice, the people are united with Christ, and the faithful are closely joined to Him in whom they believe."

In Mediator Dei our Holy Father explains the manner in which the whole Church joins in the Holy Sacrifice. "Now it is clear that the faithful offer the Sacrifice by the hands of the priest from the fact that the minister at the altar, in offering a Sacrifice in the name of all His members, represents Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body. Hence the whole Church can rightly be said to offer up the Victim through Christ. But the conclusion that the people offer the Sacrifice with the priest himself is not based on the fact that, being members of the Church no less than the priest himself, they perform a visible liturgical rite; for this is the privilege only of the minister who has been divinely apcointed for this office: rather, it is based on the fact that the people Inite their hearts in praise, impetration, expiation and thanksgiving with the prayers or intention of the priest, even of the High Priest imself, so that in one and the same offering of the Victim and accordig to a visible sacerdotal rite, they may be presented to God the Faier."

St. Francis, too, insists on the truth that the ordained priest is e one divinely appointed to perform the sacrifice. "We must be reectful to the clergy," he writes in his Letter to All the Faithful, "for eir charge and ministry of the most holy body and blood of our Lord sus Christ, which they sacrifice on the altar and receive and distritte to others." But like Pope Pius XII the Poverello wishes all the thful to realize that the Mass is their sacrifice, too, and he advoes also that they participate by uniting their prayers and praises th that of the celebrant. Thus he writes in his Letter to All the Custodes, "When the most holy body and blood of our Lord is sacrif on the altar by the priest... let all the people on bended knees re praise, glory and honor to the true and living Lord God."

These words may be taken as typical of St. Francis' apost and that of his Order. He wished everyone to join with him in shipping God through the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Francis of Assisi have been the world's greatest individual, but he certainly was anti-social. To Francis, all men, all creatures even, were brothers sisters. God is the Father in heaven whom all should praise and the Christ is the one Mediator through whom this worship must his complished. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the proper mean which all men should carry out this sublime purpose. Thus we Francis begin his religious life by taking his first follower, Bro Bernard, with him to early Mass, after which they consulted the Go Ever since Francisca as have been zealous in attending Mass and seeking to bring along others with them.

The "Orate Frate's" was introduced into our present Roman sal largely through Franciscan influence. Its words: "Pray, breth that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father mighty," well express the Franciscan spirit of brotherhood in Ch How sorely that spirit is needed in the world today! Men are ind closely bound together now by communications, by economic ties by other material interests, but they are so separated from one and in the things of the spirit. Nation wars against nation, class is estran from class, homes are broken up, and even within the family cir parents often fail to understand their own children and husbands wives remain a mystery to one another. Within convent walls fell religious often live in a psychological and spiritual world of their of Surely we all need to broaden our mental outlook and open wide hearts to include others in our thoughts and affections. But we sh never really get together unless we learn to come together in God. it is our heavenly Father who has made each one of us and in Him learn to know all and to love all. St. Francis would have us all co together at Holy Mass, which is the sacrifice of the entire Chur and there learn again the meaning of our Lord's words: "One is ve Father. . . all you are brothers" (Mt. 23, 9).

### The Mass as the sacrifice of the individual

In Mediator Dei Pope Pius XII points out that the Mass is all the sacrifice of the individual. "Each one's faith ought to become more ready to work through charity, his piety more real and fervent, and

ach should consecrate himself to the furthering of the divine glory." It. Francis, too, tried in his day to make each individual realize his personal relationship to the Mass. "Look, brothers," he writes in his Letter to All the Friars, "at the humility of God and pour out your hearts before him. Be humbled yourselves, so you can be exalted by him. Do not keep anything back for yourselves, so that he may have you altogether as his own, who puts himself altogether at your disposal."

There are a number of prayers in the liturgy of the Mass—mostly written in the first person—which call our attention to the fact that the Mass is also our personal sacrifice. Concerning these prayers a modern Benedictine author, Dom Bede Lebbe, has this to say: "The Franciscans made final the insertion of certain prayers already in use in certain places—these were private prayers of the priest which reflected the devotion of the youthful Order, such as the priest's prayers before ascending the altar and the three prayers before Communion; and the rapid spread of the Order made this simplified Mass rite general in the entire West. So that we may classify as Romano-Franciscan the liturgy we practice in the Mass of today."

Where formerly in the Roman Missal there were merely silent ceremonies or private prayer the Franciscans placed in their Missal these vocal and beautiful prayers of devotion. Perhaps the friars were afraid of saying Mass or hearing Mass as our own Pope Pius describes it—"in an inert and negligent fashion, giving way to distractions and day-dreaming." Certainly the use of these prayers at the foot of the altar, at the Offertory and at Communion time help one to say or hear Mass with "earnestness and concentration" as our holy Father desires.

The prayers which are generally conceded to have been brought into our present Missal through Franciscan influence are as follows: The Psalm (42) "Judica" and the Confiteor. The prayers at the Offertory: "Suscipe, sancte Pater. . .Deus, qui. . .Offerimus tibi. . . In spiritu humilitatis. . .Veni, sanctificator. . .Suscipe sancta Trinitas . .Orate Fratres." Lastly the prayers before and during Communion: "Domine, Jesus Christe, qui dixisti. . .Domine, Jesu Christe, Fili Dei . . .Perceptio corporis tui. . .Panem coelestem. . .Domine, non sum dignus. . .Quid retribuam. . .Sanguis Domini nostri. . .Quod ore sumpsimus. . .Corpus tuum." Each one of these prayers could provide a meditation in itself. Even though they may not have been composed by Franciscans they certainly breathe the Franciscan spirit of warm

Dom Bede Lebbe, O.S.B.: The Mass. Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1949, p. 48.

personal devotion to God and our Savior. Let us always endeavenuse them in the same spirit as did the early Franciscans who brothem into general use on our Latin rite Mass.

We have carefully studied the words of the Holy Father. We reflected on the liturgy of the Mass. We have given heed to the and example of St. Francis. With God's grace may we now realize than ever that "to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is chief duty and supreme dignity. . . (and may we) be united as class possible with the High Priest" our Lord and Savior Jesus Christian

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#### REFLECTIONS

Saint Francis loved the wind and rain And all the animals that ran, The birds that flew, the sun and moon, And, most of all, his fellow man. Ah, Francis, I, too, love the kiss Of wind upon my cheek, the clean, Silk wash of rain, four-footed friends, And winged ones, the coralline, The amber glow of God's great globes-I see His peace in their good cheer; But contemplating fellow men, Sometimes I find them less than dear. And so, Good Saint, with all respect, I pray you teach me how to see More likeness of the Lord in men And less a mirroring of me.

Mary Margaret Milbrath

## The Marian Devotion of Expiation

Fr. Leonard Perotti, O.F.M.

On February 2, 1947, Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Purification, the Order of Friars Minor accepted the direction and propagation of the *Pia Praxis Expiatoria Mariana* (The Pious Practice of Expiation to Mary), and thereby added another work to its glorious list of various apostolates. On that date, by a decree of the most Reverend Pacificus M. Perantoni, Minister Generel of the Friars Minor, the *Pious Practice* was officially aggregated to the Seraphic Order, and headquarters were set up at St. Francis Della Vigna, Venice, in the Province of St. Anthony.

If the Pious Practice is rather new to us in the United States as a manner of honoring the Mother of God, this is not true of Europe; there it has flourished for the past twenty-five years, especially in Italy where it originated and where it has been introduced into almost every diocese. Besides, eighty religious Orders have adopted it, as have also many Vicariates and Prefectures Apostolic all over the world. A short sketch of the history of this practice is in order before explaining its nature and the place it has in the field of devotion to Mary.

The Pious Practice owes its origin to Doctor Luigi Picchini, a fervent Franciscan Tertiary. Doctor Picchini was present at the closing May devotion in the church of St. Mary Formosa, Venice, in 1932. This was a solemn function in honor of our Lady, taking the form of expiation for all the blasphemy and scurrilous speech by which her Immaculate Heart is so offended. Very much inspired by this Marian practice, Dr. Picchini pondered the question, why not propagate over the whole world the reservation of a day during May to express to Mary our deep grief at what she suffers from so many of her children; from their unbelief and denial of her privileges, from their distrust of her intercessory powers, but above all, from blasphemies levelled at her.

Cardinal La Fontaine, the Patriarch of Venice, encouraged Professor Picchini to pursue this objective; and so, in June of 1933, he approached the Bishops of Italy as well as the heads of religious Orders. His plea was that by the following May this Marian devotion of expiation would be practiced in every diocese, and in all the churches of religious institutes. The response was most heartening. The month of May, 1934, witnessed a marvelous propagation of this form of love for the Mother of God. Previous to this, in September of 1933, the

Founder of the *Pious Practice* enjoyed the favor of a private audiwith Pope Pius XI. The Holy Father warmly encouraged Dr. Pic in this spiritual enterprise and a few months later spoke public particular approbation of this practice. Then, at the request of dinal La Fontaine the Holy Father, through his Secretary of State dinal Pacelli, issued a document which was to become the M Carta of the *Pious Practice*. The same warm approval has been by Pope Pius XII to the present Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Pi and also to the new Director of the *Pious Practice*, Father M Micheluzzi, in 1941 and 1952 respectively. In letters to the amentioned, the Holy Father shows great delight at knowing how this devotion has spread. He is lavish in his praise and encourage of expiation to the Mother of God and of a special day of reparaduring May.

World War II had the sad effect of interrupting and retar the growth of Dr. Picchini's spiritual enterprise. Still, at the war's he very patiently brought together the loose ends once more. But his advanced age and failing health were against very much act (he was 91 years of age when he started looking for someone to on his work!). His one great desire was that after his death the suc of the Pious Practice would be assured. With this in mind he con ered entrusting it to the Order of Friars Minor. He went to the Mi ter General of the Franciscans, not only because he was a Terti but because the Seraphic Order had been among the first to rece the Pious Practice with enthusiasm, as far back as 1933. The most I erend Pacificus M. Perantoni, O.F.M., wholeheartedly accepted the rection of this devotional practice; and in a letter of April 8, 1948, Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Piazza, in whose diocese this Mar practice had originated, gladly consented that its propagation be given over to the Franciscan Order "whose traditions of special devotion the most holy Virgin," as he wrote, "are so old and brilliant." Each y this expiatory practice attracts ever greater numbers of priests, ligious and faithful.

The Pious Practice has been called "the most beautiful flow of the month of May that can be offered to the Virgin most hole Father Gabriel Roschini, of the Servants of Mary, one of the great Mariologists of our times, has written: "To me the Pious Practice Expiation to Mary is a flower surpassing all others in the luxuring field of Catholic piety by the delicacy of its perfume." The attraction ness of this devotion is explained by Pope Pius XI in its being inspire with the purpose and the spirit of Fatimas's message—reparation

Immaculate Heart of Mary. The *Pious Practice* has no other pron or scope than this: to repair the injuries and the offences which den the Heart of our heavenly Mother. Love and reparation, these in the genuine character of this new devotion.

The filial duty of reparation to our Mother's Immaculate Heart ings from faith and love. The fervent child of Mary believes that the which repeat the Passion of Jesus also renew the painful sword ich pierced the Heart of Mary. These sins form a frightful picture: steadily advancing materialism, lapses from the faith, profanation of Sacraments, the impiety of the baptised, the desecration of marge by sins preceding and following it,—and others. The affectionate ild of Mary desires to repair as much as possible the offense and trow these sins cause the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and in a partular manner to console the Sorrowful Heart of God's Mother for the blasphemies hurled against her, and for the scornful denial of her blime prerogatives, especially her Immaculate Conception.

In holding a Marian day of expiation during the month of May, the reatest liberty is allowed Pastors and Superiors of religious groups. The faithful also are completely free in doing what their piety sugests. There are no prescribed prayers or set functions. It is suggested, however, that this day of expiation be held on the last Sunday of May, however, that this day of expiation be held on the last Sunday of May, and this can be noted in the parish bulletin on the preceding Sunday. In many dioceses this day parish bulletin on the preceding Sunday. In many dioceses this day assumes a definite solemnity: In the morning holy Mass and a general Communion of the people in a spirit of reparation; in the afternoon a Holy Hour of reparation with an appropriate sermon and prayers. Chaplains of hospitals and similar institutions should ask the sick to offer their sufferings and prayers according to the intentions of the Pious Practice.

In promoting this day of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in May, the *Pious Practice* is by no means content to rest there, so though the goal has been reached. This is a beginning; this is the east that Mary may ask of those who love her. The spirit of this holy east that Mary may ask of those who love her. The spirit of this holy enterprise goes far beyond any passing act of one day; it instills into oving souls an attitude, a need, a desire of frequent, even daily reparation as something demanded in return for Mary's sacrificial love of us.

Our Mother Mary is greatly consoled when her children offer her oving reparation. We will not limit our love for our Mother—and so either our acts of reparation—to any month or week or day. The larian day of expiation in the fairest of months will serve as a rallying point for many deeds of reparation to Mary during the entire year.

Opportunities for this are innumerable: Frequent acts of six row for one's sins; willing acceptance of the hardships and iences that life brings; devout recitation of the Litany of frequently as possible, alternately with the Litany of the In Heart of Mary composed by St. John Eudes; attentive saying Divine Praises, especially at Benediction; the observance of First Saturdays; and, above all, fidelity to the daily Rosary.

Sincere and persevering reparation to Mary's Immaculis the best means of insuring genuine expiation to the Sacred Jesus. In this, as in all, we go most safely to Jesus when we safely.

#### A BOON, KING CHRIST!

Because all power is Thine, whether it be To spin like tops in space the painted planets Or build a prop of stem beneath a flower, I challenge Thee to braver ventures yet! The trobbing engines in my heart sing: power! Power is Thine, is Thine, all heartbeats tell it. Thy fan stirs all the breezes of my breath, Thy patient might still lowers and lifts my breast. But where is the term of power to purl my motored Life, when the grey coals smoulder in my soul? Come like a King! I sue Thee by Thy valor, My martyred God, to fire the slow, cold furnace Deep in my love until I blaze my story Of careful manufacture beneath Thy hands. I'll raise my eyes' fringed canopy above Thee In heat. In cold, the secret of my face Shall fold Thee, hid Thee, warm Thee. See what arm Of conquering psalms I'll send against Thy foes! Stoke the slow furnaces in me. Only this boon I sue from Thee, and then I'll smite the hates And greeds of generations down before Thee. All power is mine once power of me is Thine.

Sister Mary Francis, P.C.

### Our Lady of a Happy Death

Fr. Titus Cranny, S.A.

To the worldly-minded and the foolish, death is an inconvenient undesirable thought; it must be dispelled at any cost. At one time eteries were placed in the hearts of cities so that the living might be inded of their destiny and to pray for the faithful departed, but g property values and the sentiment of the people made them unrable in a city. The silent and profound lesson was often too elocat and disturbing, so the city of the dead was exiled to the outskirts towns. Or as Blaise Pascal sagely observed: "Unable to remedy th, people decided to make themselves happy by not thinking about

As Catholics we should not fear death or worry unduly about it. our remedy against unnecessary anxiety is not a stoical acceptance what happens, nor a pagan disregard of the future; nor is it a vain sumption that death is no concern of ours. Rather our attitude and death springs from a deep trust in God and a complete trust in help of the Mother of God.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is our Advocate and Mother during life earth. Daily we can upon her with the rosary, the Litany of Loretto, Angelus and with other prayers. We know that all the graces of even come to us through her pure hands and from her loving heart. In love for us never diminishes or grows cold, but continues to guide inspire us all the days of our life. In the second part of the Hail ry we ask her to be with us at the present moment: "Holy Mary, ther of God, pray for us sinners now" and we have prayed that yer daily since we were children. Very likely the Hail Mary was first prayer that we learned from a devoted mother.

As we pray to Our Lady during life, so we turn to her at the time death. In the Hail Mary we do not ask precisely for health of body peace of soul, though these are implied and should be sought; we not ask to remain good Catholics, or to receive the sacraments often, receive the grace of final perseverance. But we do pray specifically at Our Lady will aid us "now and at the hour of our death."

The striking example of Our Lady's love for those in their last ony is illustrated by the following story which took place in a large y a few years ago. A priest was called to minister to a dying woman the basement of a tenement house. Dirty-faced urchins met him at

the door and led him to the most abject place. There in the furoom amid the welter of soiled laundry, empty beer bottles an arette stubs, a woman lay, dying. She was wrapped in a man's coat upon a rusty bed. She groaned in intense pain.

The eldest child, a girl of eleven, led the way and called woman: "Here's a priest to see you!" The woman turned and at him. "Get out of here!" she screamed.

Someone dragged over an empty beer case and the priest it beside the cot. He spoke kindly to the woman, reminding he she was dying and that the time had come to make her peace with Her only reply was to call him the foulest names. Then the priest and began the rosary.

At first it was an odd combination of prayer and obscenity, the Hail Marys continued the woman became silent. Tears fille bloodshot eyes. And she later said, when the priest began this p the memories of her youth came back to her. She thought of her in the midwest when her mother and father, her brothers and a and she herself knelt around the dining room table saying the before the little May shrine of Our Lady with a white candle bu hefore it.

She had been so good then; she was so evil now. At the last d she answered the priest in words that were so dramatically true: "Mary, Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of death." The dying woman went to confession, received Holy Comion, and died peacefully.

Thus Our Lady won another soul for her Divine Son.

Our Lady is not a stranger to death. She is its special patro There is a special society in the Church known as the Sodality of Lady of a Happy Death to whom Pope Benedict XV addressed a significant address some years ago. "The choice and invocation cisely of the Sorrowful Virgin as the Patron of a happy death is a twhich marvelously corresponds to Catholic doctrine and to the patron of the Church, and is happily based on sound hope."

The Holy Father went on to show how intimately Mary share the mystery of Calvary. "For she so suffered and almost died toge with her suffering and dying Son, she so renounced her maternal r over her Son, for the salvation of men, and as far as in her power together with Christ redeemed the human race."

Then the Pope continued: "But, if clearly for this reason, all varied graces. . . of the Redemption are distributed by the hands, it were, of the Sorrowful Virgin, no one can fail to see that from

the Redemption is definitely and eternally completed in each of us. is likewise clear that since she, having been constituted by Jesus hrist is the Mother of all men, received them as bequeathed to her a testament of infinite charity, and since with motherly tenderness he fulfills her office of protecting their spiritual life, the Sorrowful firgin cannot but assist, more zealously then ever, her most dear sons adoption at that moment when their eternal salvation is at stake."

The name of Mary is a source of consolation and peace, both in fe and at the moment of death. A Franciscan father from France tells this account in the last war. In June, 1940 he assisted at the agony a young soldier. The youth was mortally wounded and the anguish what awaited him tortured his soul. "Mother, Mother!" he kept repeating over and over. The priest bent over and murmured into the boy's ear: "Your mother on earth is thinking of you and praying for you. There is another Mother, even more beautiful and more loving than your own, standing near you, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is waiting for you, looking down at you. Courage, my son!" The priest kept reciting the Hail Mary softly into his ear. A joyful smile lit up the dying countenance. He died, murmuring: "Mother, Mother Mary."

Mary will be near to us in death in proportion to our love for her in life. When the shadows lengthen and the busy world about us is hushed, then she will come to lead us safely to our place of rest and peace, in the next world. She is often called by theologians the companion of Christ (socia Christi) because of her intimate role in the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption by which she became the world's Co-Redemptrix. But Mary is our companion as well. She is constantly with us, praying for us. Closely united with Jesus in His suffering upon the Cross, she will be near to us as well when death comes to bring us to God.

In her ritual for the dying the Church places this prayer upon the lips of the priest: "May the most tender Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the kindest comforter of those that mourn, commend the soul of N. her servent to her Son that through her motherly intervention to (she) may not fear the terrors of death, but may with her help, in ladness reach the desire of the heart, a dwelling-place in our heavencountry. Amen."

When we pass from this vale of tears into eternal life surely one of the secondary joys will be to see Our Lady. A description attributed to Epiphanius gives us this: "She was of middle stature; her face val, her eyes brilliant and of an olive tint; her eyebrows arched and

black; her hair was of a pale brown; her complexion as fair as She spoke little but freely and affably; she was not troubled speech but grave, courteous, tranquil. Her dress was without ment, and in her deportment there was nothing lax or feeble."

At any rate we should look forward with a joyful expectal seeing Our Lady in heaven; we should welcome death, whom St. It could call Sister, with sentiments of courage and peace. The tof death will be dispelled and its fears taken away, because Our is present at that hour.

There is another point to be remembered. Our Lady is not the patroness of our death, but of others as well. We should pre those who die daily, asking Our Lady to guide them, to interced them and lead them to paradise. At Fatima she told the children many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray for How terrifying it is to realize that souls are lost because of our nand coldness; how consoling to know that souls are saved through charity and our prayers to Our Lady. We should be more consoft the value and importance of prayer to Our Lady for the soul men that pass into eternity every day.

Death opens to us a new life. "Life is changed but not to away" the holy liturgy reminds us. When we pass from the poof this existence we expect to see not only Our Blessed Lord, but Lady as well. A Mother's smile will grace her lips, a Mother's will fill her heart, a Mother's welcome awaits us. What joy will four souls when we experience for the first time the voice of a speaking to us: "Welcome, my son.". my daughter. This is your hor

We may conclude by referring to the provocative words of Fate Faber about Our Lady and death. "There are two things," he wrote his Spiritual Conferences, "which are still more special in the way preparation for death. The first is an habitual looking to the Mi Holy Mother of God as having a very peculiar and distinct jurise tion over death-beds. The Church points this out again and again, hymns and antiphons, as well as in the Hail Mary. The revelations the saints, the teaching of devotional writers, and the universal set of the faithful, unite in proclaiming the power which God has give her in this particular respect. Some have spoken of it as the reway which Jesus has bestowed upon her for her heroic presence with heroken heart on Calvary. Others have said it belonged to her as Quee of Mercy, because the hour of death is so wonderfully mercy's hour All agree that death-beds form a department of the Church—if we mas speak so familiarly—which belongs to her officially."

Devotion to Mary in life is a guarantee of her help at the time of the theorem. It is an assurance that she will assist us when we need her most to quote Father Faber again: "As the rest of our devotion grows, also must our dependence on her aid in our last hour grow within r hearts. We shall pray to her more fervently about it. We shall make impacts with her, to which we shall assume by her consent, that either herself or by her angles she will fortify us by her presence at that read moment. We shall entrust our fears to her and leave to the mangement of her maternal solicitude every one of those circumstances of eath, the very least detail of which is to us of such surpassing interest."

Our Lady of a Happy Death, pray for us!

### Father Serra's Penitential Practic

Fr. Eric O'Brien,

Crossing the Atlantic nowadays is almost commonplace. It is ly impossible for us to imagine how difficult that crossing was short time ago, when the New World was still brand-new. On luxury-liners make it regularly in five or six days. Two centurical a group of missionary priests who sailed from Cadiz had nined days at sea. The disease of scurvy, which then often cost the line half the passengers on long voyages, did not attack them. But lost miles to adverse winds, and through other days of windless they waited—to a poet's eye—in "a painted ship upon a painted of And they began to live those other lines of Coleridge, "Water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink." During the last two weeks was strictly rationed.

Still, one of them had never a word of complaint. When whether he was not thirsty, he smilingly replied, "I have for remedy for thirst: eat little, talk less, and save your saliva." He hadeed so great a thirst, for holiness, that he welcomed this Go opportunity to pracice penance inconspicuously. —The ship was and crowded. There was no exquisite cuisine, no after-dinner no deck-games for amusement. Still, boredom could be fled in at night; but this one priest often stayed awake, to hear the cosions of the crew off-duty.

They stopped at San Juan, Puerto Rico. And while the crew busy with the freight, a passenger might reasonably have wished to his land-legs on again and take a look at this new world. But P Serra proposed that a mission be preached to the townspeople. The port, through which so many priests passed on route to convert pagan Indians of the mainland, had not itself been the object of sionary zeal for many years. Padre Serra took the major burden of sermons which, in Spanish style, were strenuous enough. And, on night for those two weeks, he sat in the confessional, hearing the ed of his sermons from the depths of contrite hearts.

Their crossing of the Atlantic had been tedious. Their volume through the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico was fraught with stot that caused the crew to mutiny, but they landed at last in Vera Caribere, Hernando Cortez had started his conquest of pagan Mexico Spain. And there this knight of the true Cross began his own peace.

ampaign for Christ the King. Such conquests must always begin within he heart of the priest himself.

Even today by automobile the road up to Mexico City is long and wearisome. The other priests naturally took advantage of the carriages provided for them. But Padre Serra chose to walk those three hundred miles. The rich and charming countryside has also its swamps and deserts, its rivers and high mountain-passes. Fortunately, they had landed in December, during the dry season for Mexico, but it grows very cold in that region during winter, and violent storms sweep in unexpectedly from the Gulf. Nevertheless he started off with no provisions, carrying only his breviary, and that childlike trust in Providence was never disappointed.

How many people, in their 30's, receive some injury or contract some disease that they must bear through life. And so often the divine sense of humor gives us a cross that we think is not exactly suited to us. Now this priest, who was so much a Hound of Heaven, forever pursuing the fugitives from God's grace, received a wound in his leg that made his walking difficult, and sometimes downright impossible. For the second half of his life, he was to have it always, and his patience with it was one of many things that made him holy.

At Mexico City, Franciscan volunteers for missionary work were given special training in the College of San Fernando. To condition them for the future frontier hardships of soul and body, they were kept to a strict routine. The change of food, and the city's location a mile and a half above sea-level, make it difficult for the newcomers to have lasting energy. But Padre Serra kept the fasts as though he were a native son and spent long hours at night in prayer or in the confessional.

In that same monastery were also novices, youngsters who still faced years of study before reaching the priesthood. Padre Serra had been a novice when they were born. But he remembered the words of the dying Saint Francis, "Let us begin, for as yet we have done nothing." So he wished to make his novice-year again, and match the generosity of these far younger and stronger men. When this was, of course, denied him, he still conformed his life to theirs, adding their special acts of devotion and self-denial to his own duties as a member of the professed community. And this learned university professor who had come not to be served, but to serve, would often eat more sparingly, in order to replace the student whose turn it was to read to the community. Or he would humbly carry trays, and wait on table with the lay-brothers. Under his clothing he wore a hair-shirt, and a

belt fitted with sharp hooks and, despite his humble precautions, was sometimes seen when he scourged himself to blood.

His first missionary appointment came in June of 1750. Off went, limping gladly along the stone-paved road to Queretaro, and t followed the rocky trails that zigzag up the steep mountains of Sierra Gorda. Even today that region is little visited because of rugged terrain, its wild animals, snakes and troublesome insects. times its rushing rivers can be crossed only on a cable slung betweetall trees. Several of his predessors there had died or failed in he because of the bad climate.

Padre Serra's new charges were Indians who still paid secret addition to the goddess of the sun. A church of the Son of God was need to surpass their secret shrine. He was intensely active in the womixing mortar and carrying hod, and running errands for the skill workmen, to set example to his lazy Indians. To save money for house of God, he was content with very little food, and that of half-rotten. Time and again he did not know where his next per meal was coming from, except the hands of Providence. And of court always came.

After eight years in the Sierra Gorda, he was recalled to Mex City. For the next nine years he was sent out on missions to the fair ful all over central and southern Mexico.<sup>2</sup> Before joining the Freiscan Order, Blessed Sebastian of Aparicio (1502-1600) had been to engineer that built some of the most important roads in Mexico. Alot them all, and through many places that the skilled Sebastian wou have found impossible, Padre Serra plodded. He always wore che hempen sandals, denying those poor feet of his even the protection the sturdy leather soles the other Padres wore. And despite the rocand thorns, the changing weather and the ever-irritating insects, I never used shoes or even stockings to shield his feet.

To break the hard shell of long, sinful living for his listener when he preached on repentance he would often beat his breast wi a stone, or lash his back with a chain. The fires of hell he made moreal to them by holding a lighted candle against his bare arm. An when the mission, perhaps a month long, was ended, he would hurr back to the College of San Fernando and take up that strict routin again. Men resting from such assignments were not required to confort to it, but Padre Serra never took the easy way.

He was returned to Indian work, this time in Baja California. If meant learning new languages, managing his own mission, and co-ordinating the work of his conferences. In that peninsula of desert heat and pic languor, he travelled hundreds of miles to face new problems at ch mission that he visited. After a year he was ordered north to start New California. With his usual disregard of self, he started on that 00 mile trip with no more provisions than some bread and cheese.<sup>3</sup> Then his ulcerated leg grew so bad that he could not even stand up, e asked one of his muleteers to give him the same remedy that he sed on the sore leg of a mule. That was literally applying the example f Saint Francis, who called his own body Brother Ass!

New California then was an unglamorous wilderness. Every mile brought a new set of problems, and often every mile was a problem in tself. But in founding and supervising the first nine missions, he ravelled more than 4,000 miles. His last grand tour from San Diego to San Francisco was completed when he was seventy.<sup>4</sup> Even the friend-ship of the Indians, who would embrace him and call him fondly "El Viejo" ("The Old One") had its penalties, for they were vermin-infested creatures.

On those many trips, he slept on the ground. At Carmel Mission the room where he died has been restored. The pilgrim today can see his bed of planks, covered with a single blanket. Four days before his death, Padre Serra cut his own blanket in two, to share it with an Indian. At Carmel the night winds are very cold, but while his Mission was being built of adobe bricks, for months he lived in a brushwood shelter. The sentinels around the mission compound, who always heard him praying through the night, said they did not know he ever. Lept. But sunrise found him reading his breviary before saying Mass. On trips or at home, he ate meat very rarely, and fasted almost the whole year 'round, and nobody ever heard him comment whether food was good or bad.

The monks and friars are often represented as roly-poly creatures, and some of them were, and are, indeed. And so were some of the saints! Girth and worth are not contradictory, nor are they synonymous. Padre Serra was a lean man who ate just enough to keep his energies always at their maximum. Beyond that, he mortified his sense of taste to honor God for whom his whole heart hungered.

Sleep, like all of God's creation, is a thing of beauty, and can be meritorious. Padre Serra used just enough to work for seventy years. And hours of sleep that he could do without, he spent in prayer, a fore-taste of the endless Day when we shall never need to close our eyes upon the beauty of our God.

Holiness is not a question of miles travelled, or else Saint Therese

of Lisieux was wrongly cloistered. Padre Serra's zealous miles nearly equalled the distance around the world. They say the longest was 'round is the shortest way home, for those in love. Padre Serra's love made him search the world over for spiritual treasures to take home to God.

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