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Volume XI

### *The Sacramental System* *“Channels of Spiritual Life”*

The Sacraments are the veins of the Mystical Body of Christ, that is, they are the channels through which the cells receive that wonderful life which makes them sharers in the nature and life of God. We must now discuss these “veins” more fully; because, obviously, as the official channels of supernatural life, they are most important.

The word “sacrament” in its widest sense means simply a sign of something sacred or hidden. The whole world can thus be said to be sacramental because material things are to men signs of spiritual and sacred things. St. Paul emphasized that idea: “From the foundations of the world men have caught sight of His invisible nature, His eternal power and His divineness, as they are known through His creatures.” (Rom. 1:20). “See how the skies proclaim God’s glory, how the vault of heaven betrays His craftsmanship.”(Ps.18: 2).

As we have already seen, man is a creature consisting of body and soul. He is not a disembodied spirit, nor is he wholly material. We have seen, too, how religion binds him to God and urges him to seek God. But he must seek God according to his own nature, that is, by outward expression of his sentiments and aspirations. He does this in other affairs of his life; if he loves a girl he feels impelled to show his love by kissing her; if he is angry he strikes his fist on the table or stamps his foot to demonstrate his anger; if he is pleased he smiles; and so on. Therefore, in his relationship to God, in the practice of religion, he will act also according to his nature, as being composed of both body and soul.

God, of course, recognizes this. He could give His grace to men in a purely spiritual way—and, of course, does. But much of what we have already said in these instructions shows how God has, so to speak, bent Himself to the level of the nature of man. Our redemption was accomplished in a visible manner, through a living Person whom folks could see, touch, and hear, Our



Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man. Throughout His life, the Incarnate God constantly used visible and material things to signify what He was doing. He put clay on the eyes to which He restored sight; He touched with His fingers the ears whose deafness was to be cured; and the tongue to which the power of speech was to return. Moreover, the Church established by Him was a visible organization as well as a spiritual organism.

When He had ascended into heaven, He left His Church to be the channels of grace to men. The fruits of His death had to be applied to souls. As we saw, men had to attain the fullness of Christ. All this, of course, could have been done in a purely spiritual way, but that would not have been in accordance with man's nature or with God's traditional way of dealing with man. So God decreed that certain signs perceptible by men's senses, and signifying grace, should actually be the means by which the soul would receive grace through the Church. These signs are seven in number and are called, in a special way, Sacraments.

*“Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Pray for us”*

*(Taken from Raccolta)*

*“What makes a Sacrament ”*

The Catechism of the Council of Trent defines a Sacrament as something perceptible by the senses, which possesses by divine institution the power not only of signifying, but also of accomplishing, holiness and righteousness.

In every Sacrament there are three elements: the outward sign; the inward grace; and the institution by Jesus Christ.

a). The outward sign. Some things are of their very nature signs. Smoke is always the sign of a fire. Other signs are conventional, instituted by men. The red and white stripes pole is the sign of a barbershop; various trumpet tunes have a special military significance. But there are some signs specially appointed by God. In the Old Testament, for instance, there was unleavened bread; in the New Testament, there are the Sacraments. These differ from other signs especially in that they have in themselves the power of producing the sacred effects of which they are the signs. Thus a crucifix, although it is the sign of our redemption, is not a sacrament.

b). The Inward or Interior grace. We shall have more to say about this when we consider each sacrament separately. For the present we must point out that the Sacraments give grace independently of anything human, but solely by God's will as expressed by Christ's institution and promise. Technically, this is expressed by a Latin phrase for which there is no exact English translation, “ex opera operato.” It is contrasted with “ex opera operantis,” which would mean that the efficacy or otherwise of a Sacrament would depend on the worthiness of the minister or of the recipient. It is not that we believe that no dispositions are required on the part of the recipient of the Sacrament or that they work like infallible charms. What we do say is that there must be no obstacle to grace on the part of the recipient, who must receive them worthily and rightly. Dispositions are required as conditions for the conferring of grace, but not as causes of the grace conferred.

This Issue

1. The Sacramental System-----pg. 1.
2. Fr. Martin's Sermon-----pg. 6
3. Baptism: The Gate of Heaven-----pg. 8
4. The Following of Christ---pg.10



The Catechism of the Council of Trent explains this rather difficult point as follows: “ Since the ministers of the Sacraments represents in the discharge of their sacred functions, not their own, but the Person of Jesus Christ, be they good or be they bad, they validly perform and confer the Sacraments, provided they make use of the proper matter and form which is always observed in the Catholic Church according to the institution of Christ, and provided they do what the Church does in their administration. Hence, unless the recipients wish to deprive themselves of so great a good and resist the Holy Ghost, nothing can prevent them from receiving (through the Sacraments) the fruit of grace.

Just as a closed tap is an obstacle to the flow of gas or water from a pipe, or oil on paper is an obstacle to the flow of ink from a pen, so unrepented mortal sin is an obstacle to the flow of grace from the Sacraments of the living. Just as in each of these cases it is not the gas or the water or the ink that prevents the required effect, but an obstacle outside of them, so it is not in the Sacraments that the reason for their possible inefficacy is to be found, but in an obstacle in the recipient.

c). Instituted by Christ. The Council of Trent defines that, the seven Sacraments of the New Law were instituted by Jesus Christ. Such an infallible decision settles the matter as far as Catholics are concerned, but in this as in other cases, they know that the defined doctrine is supported by weighty arguments from Scripture, Tradition, and right reason. If the Sacraments are the signs of grace, and if grace is a sharing in the divine nature, then obviously the Sacraments must come from God. That is the way Catholics have regarded the matter for twenty centuries. “ The Sacraments give grace,” they said. “But grace is only given by God through the merits of Jesus Christ. Therefore, if the gift of grace is so annexed to the Sacraments as to make them its principal and even only (as in the case of Baptism), channels, they must have been instituted by God. But everything essential to the Church was given to Her by Christ during His life on earth; therefore, He, the God-Man made the Sacraments.” This does not mean that Christ gave the Apostles every detail about the method of administering the Sacraments. He determined what special graces were to be conferred through the external rites; the latter He defined specifically in the case of some of the Sacraments but in others, He determined it only in a general way.

“ The power has ever been in the Church,” said the Council of Trent, “ that, in the dispensation of the Sacraments, their substance being untouched, it may ordain what things soever it may judge most expedient for the profit of those who receive or for the veneration of said Sacrament.”

The Council of Trent defined that there are seven Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ. They are: Baptism by which the soul receives eternal life; Confirmation by which that life is strengthened as growth brings it added difficulties and responsibilities; Holy Eucharist by which life is nourished; Penance or Confession which destroys the disease of sin; Extreme Unction which gives consolation and courage at the approach of death; Matrimony

*“O  
Mary,  
Bless  
this  
House,  
where  
Thy  
Name is  
Always  
Blessed”  
(taken from  
Raccolta)*



which sanctifies marriage relationships; Holy Orders which confers the Priesthood of Christ and enables the Church to carry on His work in the world.

### *“Christ Instituted Seven Sacraments”*

There is no list of seven Sacraments in the New Testament; it is not necessary that there should be. Nor do we find the early Christian writers making lists of the seven Sacraments. In fact, the first statement that there are seven Sacraments was probably not made until the 12<sup>th</sup>.century but that does not mean that the Church had not always professed her belief in the seven Sacraments by using them. It is not until the 12<sup>th</sup>.century that medical experts have established many conclusions about food values, vitamins, calories, balanced diets, and the rest, but that does not mean that those things were not understood and used in a general way throughout the history of the human race. So for centuries the Church used the Sacraments, but it was only at the beginning of the era of the great scholastic philosophers that a scientific study of them developed.

But the really important fact is that until the Reformation, when the fact of the seven Sacraments, was first challenged by the reformers, all Christians everywhere in the world believed that there were seven Sacraments. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the fact of the seven Sacraments was believed not only in True Roman Catholic Church, but also by the schismatical Greeks, the Nestorians, and the Monophysites. Remember that there had never been any agreement with Rome among these Greek bodies since the schism in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and they never would have adapted their doctrine of seven Sacraments merely from Rome. Moreover, the other two heretical sects, Nestorians and Monophysites, left the Church about the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Hence it is clear that at that time the whole Church accepted the fact of seven Sacraments.

It is universally agreed also that the bishops in the early Church were extremely conservative in regard to the introduction of innovations. It would have been impossible for any one or for any group of them to have introduced a new sacrament without a protest from the rest. But there is not the slightest bit of evidence of such a protest ever being made. Thus, there is no evidence that the universal Christian tradition in possession in the 16<sup>th</sup> century did not come from Christ Himself. Those who now disagree with it, have the duty to produce positive proof of their viewpoint. This they cannot do.

### *“Why Seven”*

But why did Christ institute just seven Sacraments? He instituted seven because seven were necessary to provide for the perfection of the individual Christian and for the government and multiplication of the Church.

Through His death on the Cross Christ made it possible for each individual to receive a marvelous supernatural life, which would enable him to share in the life of God Himself. This life is conferred in Baptism. It would grow and

*“O Heart  
Most  
Pure of  
the  
Blessed  
Virgin  
Mary,  
obtain for  
me from  
Jesus a  
Pure and  
Humble  
Heart”*

*(taken  
from  
(Raccolta)*



need strengthening, and that is the purpose of Confirmation. Its regular nourishment is the Holy Eucharist. From time to time it may fall ill through sin; it is cured through Penance. When death draws near, it is in need of special strength, which it receives through Extreme Unction. But man is not only an individual he lives in society. As a being with supernatural life, he belongs to a supernatural society, the Church. So for the government of the Church Christ appointed the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The Church would grow through marriage, and it's the Sacrament of Matrimony, which sanctifies the union of husband and wife.

### *“Matter and Form”*

Catholics speak of matter and form of the Sacraments. This is because a Sacrament is a sign, an external rite. This rite consists of the performing of an action and the saying of specific words. The former is called the “matter” of the Sacrament, the latter is called the “form”. Thus up the, in Baptism, the water and the action of pouring it makes the matter; the words said while that is being done are the form.

### *“Character”*

Three of the sacraments are said to confer a character on the soul and our catechism defines this character as “a mark or seal on the soul which cannot be effaced.” One may think of it as a real quality, which perfects and adorns the soul, giving it a new dignity. The Sacrament of Baptism confers the character of a Christian, a child of God. The Sacrament of Confirmation confers the character of a soldier of Christ. The Sacrament of Holy Orders confers the character of the priest of God. Once conferred these characters remain forever and so these three sacraments may not be received more than once.

### *“Sacraments of the Living and the Dead”*

Two of the Sacraments, Baptism and Penance (Confession), are called the Sacraments of the dead because they may be received by those who are dead in sin. Baptism gives the life of grace to those who have not yet received it; Penance restores it to those who have lost it by mortal sin.

By contrast, the other five Sacraments are called the Sacraments of the Living, because, they can only be received by people who are living the life of grace. The Sacraments are the official channels of grace to the souls of men. We should therefore be very grateful to God who has given them to us through His love, and we should prove our gratitude by making use of them. The supernatural life is our most precious treasure. Every time we receive a sacrament, we nourish that life. In addition, each of the Sacraments confers its own grace, in accordance with its purpose. It would be wicked pride to say that we do not need these graces; it is criminal carelessness to try to live without them; it is black ingratitude to refuse to use these priceless gifts from the burning Heart of Jesus Christ.

*“Immaculate Virgin, who being conceived without sin, didst direct every movement of Thy Most Pure Heart toward God, and was always submissive to His Divine Will; obtain for me the grace to hate sin with all my heart and to learn from Thee to live in perfect resignation to the Will of God”*

*(taken from Raccolta)*



(Taken from *This is the Faith* by Francis J. Ripley; published by *Catechetical Guild Educational Society*; St. Paul, Minn. *Nihil Obstat & Imprimatur* given January 25, 1951)

*Sermon by Fr. Martin Stepanich O.F.M.;*  
*“Feast of the Most Holy Rosary”*

“Almighty  
and  
Merciful  
God, who  
in Blessed  
Mary ever  
Virgin has  
set up a  
refuge and  
a help for  
sinners,  
grant that  
we, under  
Her  
protection,  
may be  
absolved  
from all  
our sins  
and may  
obtain the  
blessed  
effects of  
Thy mercy.  
Through  
Christ Our  
Lord.  
Amen.  
(Roman  
Missal)

When Our Lady of Fatima appeared to the three shepherd children for the last time, on October 13, 1917, she told them who she was. “I am the Lady of the Rosary,” she said. Before that, she had repeatedly urged the children to recite the rosary every day.

Yesterday was the first Saturday of this month. It gave you another opportunity to make the devotion of the Five First Saturdays, which Our Lady of Fatima recommended so highly. One of the requirements of this devotion is the recitation of the rosary, as well as a 15 minute meditation on the mysteries of the rosary. Confession and Communion are also required as a part of the devotion, but, judging from the number of Communions on every First Saturday of the month, we would say that not many people are making the devotion of the Five First Saturdays. We are sure that more people have the opportunity to make the devotion.

Next Tuesday, October 7, is the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary. This feast is almost 400 years old now. It was established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Pope St. Pius V in thanksgiving for a great naval victory, which the Christian forces won over the infidel Turks at the famous battle of Lepanto, in the gulf of Corinth, Greece. The Christians were the decided underdog. They were far outnumbered in ship and men. Their defeat seemed a sure thing.

But the continuous recitation of the rosary by Christians everywhere brought help from above. The Turks were badly beaten by the Christians, thanks to the rosary. It was a victory for Our Lady of the Rosary.

And during all these centuries Mary has never ceased to use the rosary as a means of obtaining graces for us. Most of these graces are secret, known perhaps only to ourselves, or not even to us. But many favors have been extraordinary. Mary has also used the rosary to bring about conversions, sometimes under very unlikely circumstances.

Fr. John O’Brien, nationally known convert-maker, has written several books about converts. In one of them, entitled *The Way to Emmaus*, he gives the brief account of the conversion of a certain Leon Williams. As a boy, Mr. Williams used to go along with his mother when she went to various homes to do housework. In one house the boy spotted a rosary, without knowing what it was. It offered quite a temptation to the boy. So, while his mother wasn’t looking, he sneaked the rosary into his pocket. That night, as he lay in bed, the boy looked over his stolen prize very carefully, wondering what it was supposed to be. He knew enough about religion to recognize the figure of Our Lord hanging on the cross. He couldn’t sleep that night. He couldn’t get his mind off the crucified Christ.



The next day, he pretended to be sick, because he didn't want to go back to that same house with his mother. But his mother insisted, so he went. He took the rosary with him and at the first opportunity he slipped it under the pillow of the bed where he had first found it. He looked around the room with great curiosity. On a table near the bed he found a book of devotions, which included the rosary also. He looked through the book and then put it back.

From then on, he was very curious about the rosary and about the Catholic Church. Some time later, without his mother knowing it, he went back to that house and told the people about stealing the rosary and then putting it back. He also told the Catholic people there that he would like to know more about the rosary and about Catholic doctrine.

Presuming that they are still alive, both he and his mother are Catholics today—all because he once stole a rosary. (O'Brien's book was published in 1953).

Here again, we have another victory for Our Lady of the Rosary. Our Lady has probably done more for us through the Rosary than we realize, all because we have been faithful to the recitation of the rosary every day, or at least frequently.

The rosary is her means of keeping us close to herself and to her Divine Son. It is her way of constantly reminding us of the great events of her life and especially Christ's life. By the rosary she desires to keep before our minds the story of the Incarnation and Redemption, which is so important for our salvation. In the rosary, we have this story in prayer form.

Always remain faithful to the daily recitation of the rosary. And when you lie in the coffin, that rosary wrapped around your hands will mean something. People will be able to say truthfully that another soul has been saved with the aid of the rosary. (given in Chicago on October 4, 1959)

### *Baptism: The Gate of Heaven*

Baptism is the greatest thing that ever happened to anyone, and yet we view it almost with nonchalance. The trouble goes back, perhaps, to our childhood days. We learned that Baptism makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. But that didn't mean much to us. "It takes away Original Sin," That was the fact to remember. And so all through our later years we have been handicapped by this negative idea of Baptism.

When we read of Christ's command to the Widow's son, "Young man, I say to thee arise," it would be rather silly to say that death then disappeared from the young man. Death did disappear, but only because life was given. Death is simply the absence of life; when life comes, death must go.

And so in Baptism the shadow of death, which we call Original Sin, disappears from the soul, because a New Life has been given. "New Life" is written in capital letters, because it is God's own Life in which we begin to share. The Divine Life consists in the prodigious activity of the divine Mind,

*“O Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, Thou glory of the Christian people, joy of the Universal Church, salvation of the whole world, pray for us, and awaken in all believers a lively devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist, that so they may be made worthy to partake of the same daily”*  
*(taken from Raccolta)*



as God the Father and God the Son contemplate exhaustively the infinite perfections of each other; and of the divine Will, as Father and Son love each other with such infinite intensity that their Love is a Living Love, a distinct Person, whom we call the Holy Ghost.

The soul's transformation in Baptism is like the world's transformation at sunrise. The ugliness and cold sterility of darkness disappear, because the sun has come. Sin is a "nothing", an absence of love, even as darkness is a "nothing", an absence of light. As the earth becomes beautiful and fruitful under the light of the sun, so does the soul become beautiful and fruitful as it is bathed in the Love, which flows from the Holy Ghost. More than that, the soul becomes vibrantly alive, on a new level of existence, with powers which it never possessed before. The sun only bathes the earth in light. The Holy Ghost more than bathes us in His Love; He permeates us with His Love, so that His Love, His Life, flows through the soul like blood flows through a body. We are infused with the Holy Ghost. We receive powers that are divine, powers that belong only to God. Ours is the power to know God now, as He knows Himself; power to love God, as He loves Himself; powers that we exercise but imperfectly in this life, but which will have their full flowering in heaven. They are not powers that belong to us, as humans. And so we call this New Life a supernatural life. And it is the supernatural life that we are talking about when we speak of "Sanctifying Grace."

*" Mother  
of  
Perpetual  
Help,  
pray for  
us"*

*(Taken  
from the  
Raccolta)*

It is a heavy cross that parents bear, to whom is born a severely retarded child. The malformed brain cells frustrate the imprisoned soul, like a sculptor made helpless by a broken chisel. I suppose that no one can know what must be in the heart of a father as he looks upon such an offspring. There will be love in his heart, certainly, as he contemplates the vacant eyes and the slack lips in which he can see no resemblance to himself. But his love will be a pitying sort of love, made painful by the knowledge that it can never be returned, that the most he can look for from this offspring is a basic attachment.

"Ah!" he will say to himself, "If I could but work a miracle, and repair those underdeveloped or damaged brain cells, so that the soul might shine through, and I might see the living image of myself, and be loved even as I love!" But such a miracle seldom happens.

However, God the Father, upon His children, works such a miracle every day. We come into this world from His creative hand; and, because we are the fruit of His creative love, we are in that sense His children from the very beginning.

Yet, as He gazes upon us, He can see in us no image of Himself. We are His, and yet we are not His. Original Sin has cut us off from the Holy Ghost, the Principle of Divine Life, by whom alone we can share in Our Father's very nature of grace. God gazes upon us, and we return, as it were, an unrecognizing stare. His love envelops us, and finds in us no response.



Then the miracle happens. What cannot be done for the very severely retarded child, is done for our very severely retarded souls. We are born again. We are born to complete life, the divine Life, which God originally planned sharing with us, and which was lost for us in Eden. It is through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, that we are born in the Sacrament of Baptism.

First of all, through Christ. If there had been no Incarnation, if Christ had not united us to Himself by himself becoming a human being, then there would be no Baptism. There would be no new birth. Christ, by His perfect obedience to the Father's will, made an act of infinite love which cancelled the infinite malice of Adam's disobedience, Adam's refusal of love.

We are born with Christ. With Christ our Brother we died upon the Cross. With Christ, our "alter ego", we rose from the dead. We rose to a new life, so far above what we are entitled to, that we can only call it supernatural life.

And finally, we are born in Christ. His Spirit, the Holy Ghost, has become our Spirit, too. We have become one with Him now, in a very real and most intimate way. We have identified ourselves with Christ. We have become, as the theologians say, "incorporated in Christ." We have become members of His Mystical Body. Now, when the Father looks upon us, He can see His image mirrored, because it is Christ whom the Father sees, His own and only begotten Son. And now, when the Father's love pours itself out upon us, His love is adequately returned, because it is Christ who loves the Father, in and through us.

Baptism makes us children of God. A miracle has been worked upon us, far greater than our physical birth. We were spiritually retarded and helpless, because of Original Sin. Now, we know the Father, and we love Him, because of Christ and Baptism.

The baptismal character is not a physical mark of any kind, since there can be no such mark upon a spirit. It is a very special quality that has been added to the soul, a quality so permanent that even mortal sin cannot destroy it.

The character is not merely a sign of God's ownership. It is not merely an identification, by which angels and saints (and the devil, too) can distinguish me from those less favored. It is not merely something to add to my glory in heaven, nor to my shame in hell.

The character is the source and root of a tremendous power: the power to share in the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ. There will be a fuller sharing in that power in Confirmation, and there will be another character then. There will be the fullest sharing of that power—for those who are called—in Holy Orders, with a special character in which that power will be rooted. These are the three sacraments whose effects are permanent. These are the three Sacraments whose powers may be aborted, but never lost. These are the three Sacraments whose responsibilities can never be escaped.

The power of Baptism is the power to receive the other six Sacraments, which would be empty and meaningless gestures if given to one who is not Baptized. The power of Baptism is the power to offer sacrifice to God in

*“ Most High  
Queen of the  
universe,  
Mary, ever  
Virgin, make  
intercession  
for our peace  
and  
salvation,  
thou who  
didst bear  
Christ the  
Lord, the  
Savior of all  
mankind”*

*(Taken from  
Raccolta)*



union with Christ, whose members we have become, and to receive and absorb the graces which flow from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. (The unbaptized person at Mass would be but a passive onlooker, at something in which he can have no personal part; and the graces of the Mass would flow around him and find no entrance.)

The power of Baptism is the power to talk to God the Father in the voice of His Son, with the right to be heard, and to be answered. The power of Baptism is the power to believe, that which is humanly unbelievable. It is the power to hope for that, which by nature is hopeless. It is the power to love with an intensity and a selflessness of which the human will alone, is incapable.

There are some of the things that are contained in the power, which flows from the character of Baptism. It is the deep and searing mark of the Love, which blasted its way into our inmost being, as Christ through His Church, said, “ I baptize thee, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

(Taken from *The Church and Its People*; published by *Catechetical Guild Educational Society*; St. Paul, Minn., *Nihil Obstat & Imprimatur* given August 5, 1952)

### *The Following of Christ* *“Of the Love of Solitude and Silence”*

Seek a convenient time to attend to yourself; and reflect often upon the benefits of God. LET CURIOSITIES ALONE! Read such matters as may produce compunction rather than give occupation. If you will withdraw from superfluous talking, and idle visiting, and from hearing new things and rumors, you will find time sufficient and proper to spend in good meditation. The greatest Saints shunned the company of men when they could, and chose rather to live unto God in secret.

As often as I have been among men, said one, I have returned less a man. This we too often experience when we talk long. It is easier to keep silence altogether than not to fall into excess of speaking. It is easier to keep retired at home than to be enough upon one’s guard abroad. He therefore, who aims at inward and spiritual things, must, with Jesus, turn aside from the crowd. No man can safely appear in public but he who loves seclusion. No man can safely speak but he who loves silence. No man can safely be a superior but he who loves to live in subjection. No man can rejoice securely but he who has the testimony of a good conscience within. Yet even the security of the Saints was always full of the fear of God. Neither were they the less careful and humble in themselves, because they shone with great virtues and grace. But the security of the wicked arises from their pride and presumption, and in the end turns to their own deception. Never promise yourself security in this life, however good a religious or devout a solitary you might seem to be.

*“We fly to  
Thy  
patronage,  
O Holy  
Mother of  
God, despise  
not our  
Petitions in  
our  
necessities,  
but deliver  
us always  
from all  
dangers, O  
Glorious and  
Blessed  
Virgin”*

*(Taken from  
Raccolta)*



Oftentimes the highest in men's estimation have been in the greater danger, by reason of their too much confidence. And hence it is more useful for many not to be wholly without temptations, but to be very often assaulted, lest they be too secure, lest perhaps they be lifted up unto pride, and even turn aside, with too little restraint, after exterior consolations. Oh, how good a conscience would he keep who should never seek transitory joys, and never busy himself about the world! Oh, how great peace and tranquility would he have who should cut off all vain solicitude, and think only of the things of God and his salvation, and place his whole hope on God!

No one is worthy of heavenly consolation who has not diligently exercised himself in holy compunction. If you would feel compunction to your very heart, enter into your chamber and shut out the tumult of the world: as it is written: "*Be sorry in your beds.*" You will find in your room what you will too often lose abroad. The room continually dwelt in, grows sweet; but ill guarded, it begets weariness. If, in the beginning of your religious life, you dwell in it and keep it well, it will be to you afterwards as a dear friend and the most delightful solace.

In silence and quiet the devout soul makes progress, and learns the hidden things of Scripture. There she finds floods of tears, wherein each night she may wash and be cleansed; and so become the more familiar with her Creator, the further she dwells from all the tumult of the world. For who so withdraws himself from acquaintances and friends, to him, will God, and His Holy Angels, draw near. Better is it to lie hid and take diligent care of yourself, than, neglecting yourself, to work miracles. It is praiseworthy for a religious but seldom to go abroad, to shun being seen, and to have no wish to see men.

Why do you wish to see what it is not lawful for you to have? The world passes away and its concupiscence. The longings of the senses draw you to roam abroad; but when the hour has passed away, what do you bring back but a weight upon your conscience, and a dissipated heart? Oftentimes a joyous going abroad begets a sorrowful return home: and a merry evening makes for a sorrowful morning. So all carnal joys enter pleasantly; but at the end they bring remorse and death.

What can you see elsewhere that you do not see here? Behold the heavens, and the earth, and all the elements; for out of these are all things made.

What can you see anywhere that can last long under the sun? You trust that perchance you will be satisfied; but you will never be able to reach it. If you could see all things before you, what would it be but an empty vision? Lift your eyes to God on high, and pray for your sins and negligence's. Leave vain things to vain people; look to those things, which God has commanded. Shut your door upon yourself, and call to Jesus your Beloved. Stay with Him; for nowhere else shall you find so great peace. If you had, never left your room nor hearkened to any rumors you would have remained longer in happy peace. But the moment you delight to give ear to novelty, you must suffer from thence disquietude of heart.

*“ My  
Queen, my  
Mother!  
Remember  
that I am  
thine own,  
Keep me and  
guard me, as  
thy property  
and  
possession”*

*(Taken from  
Raccolta)*



## *Practical Reflections*

Exterior retirement is not sufficient to engage and satisfy a heart, which would really withdraw itself from creatures to be occupied with itself alone; but interior retirement is likewise necessary, which is a spirit of recollection and prayer. A soul, which is separated from all the amusements of the senses, seeks and finds in God that pure satisfaction which it can never meet with in creatures. A respectful and frequent remembrance of the presence of God occupies the mind, and, an ardent desire of pleasing Him and of becoming worthy of His love engages the heart. It is absorbed in Him alone: all things else dwindle into nothing. It buries itself and all things in God: it breathes only His love, it forgets all to remember only Him; penetrated with grief for its infidelities, it mourns incessantly in His presence; it sighs continually for the pleasure of seeing and possessing Him in heaven; it nourishes itself with reading good books, and with the exercise of prayer; it is never tired of treating with God on the affairs of salvation, at least it humbly supports the irksomeness it may experience; and with a view of honoring His sovereign dominion by the complete destruction of sin itself, it renounces all desire of any other satisfaction than that of pleasing Him.

### *Prayer*

O My God, when will silence, retirement, and prayer, become the occupations of my soul, as they are now frequently the object of my desires? How am I wearied with saying so much and yet doing so little for Thee! Come, Jesus, come, Thou, the only object of my love, the center and supreme happiness of my soul! Come, and impress my mind with such a lively conviction of Thy presence that all within me may yield to its influence. Come, Lord, and speak to my heart, communicate to it Thy holy will and to do according to Thy good pleasure. Alas! How long shall the veil be removed which separates us from eternity? When shall I see that which I now believe? When shall I find what I seek? When shall I possess what I love, which is Thyself, O my God! Grant O Jesus, that these holy desires with which Thou now inspire me, may be followed by that eternal happiness which I hope from Thy infinite mercy. Amen.

*“Holy  
Virgin, Mary  
Immaculate,  
Mother of God  
and Our  
Mother, speak  
Thou for us to  
the Heart of  
Jesus, Who is  
Thy Son, and  
Our Brother”*

*(Taken from  
Raccolta)*

## *The Explanation of Our Mission and of Our Logo.*

*Since this is the first year of the “Mystical Rose”, it would seem only prudent that we explain why we call our newsletter, “Mystical Rose”, and why we have designed this Logo at the top of the first page.*

*The title, “Mystical Rose”, is taken from the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

*The Logo of the crown of thorns, with the roses attached, symbolizes Our Lady’s suffering during Our Lord’s Passion and Death. It also symbolizes Her suffering for us, her spiritual children. The seven roses affixed to the crown of thorns represents the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady.*

*We dedicate this work to Our Blessed Mother and we ask Her to help and guide us, so that we may be able to serve God’s people by printing material that will be spiritually edifying: bringing those who read it to a better knowledge of their faith; a better understanding of what God requires of them in order to achieve salvation; and a more sincere desire to serve the Living God to the best of their ability.*

*Information about Catholicism is so very necessary in order to live a good life. The world in which we live today is in dire need of that information, in order to save mankind from its own self-imposed ignorance. We hope, by the grace of God, that our newsletter will help to inform.*

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