MANCIPIA

THE REPORT OF THE CRUSADE OF SAINT BENEDICT CENTER

JULY/AUGUST 2015





Br. André Marie, M.I.C.M., Prior

PRIOR'S COLUMN
LESSONS FROM THE CHARTERHOUSE*

Due to the kindness of a benefactor, the Brothers recently came into possession of the book, *The Prayer of Love and Silence,* which Father David Phillipson had recommended from our pulpit some weeks previously. Its author is "A Carthusian," so named due to a custom of the Carthusian Order that guards the monks' hiddenness and silence.

The volume is a translation of two works that originally appeared in 1948 and 1951 respectively. Its subjects are varied, but all pertain to the interior life. Two parts of the book, "An Introduction to the Interior Life" and "The Blessed Trinity and the Spiritual Life,"are systematic in their approach. A third section — in the middle of the work — is a series of "Sermons in Chapter" given by the Abbot to his monks in their chapter meeting on feast days.

It would be difficult to do such a work justice in a review. My intention herein is to give the reader a taste of a work at once so simple and so deep that it defies summary.

With the exception of the section entitled "The Blessed Trinity and the Spiritual Life," which is the last one third of the book, reading it was easy. It was like drinking good water: nothing to prevent the effortless imbibing of the material — and refreshing! After a few draughts, though, I realized that I was drinking strong stuff, so I had to slow down and read sections over again — even though the words and the syntax were quite simple. The thought occurred to me that the life of the Carthusians is productive of such an experience. In their slow, silent, hidden existence, they distill the complexities of the ancient liturgy, the great spiritual writers they read, and the manual labor they carry out, all into a life of great simplicity.

This makes their writing itself highly distilled, rather like the liquor they make. Yes, this strong stuff is spiritual Chartreuse!

After some pages of intense and lofty language, the author says: "When we contemplate the mysteries of divine Providence and Love, let our gaze be simple. The simpler our concepts, the deeper and truer they will be. For it is in the measure of their simplicity that they will approach the Mind of God." (pp. 117-118) That is an illustration of the Carthusian distillation process present throughout the work.

The interior life is not merely a series of *exercises* or repetitions of various *acts;* there is a totality with which it must be lived if it is to be lived well:

"But we must not rest content with a few devotional exercises at the beginning and in the course of the day: that does not constitute a *life.* The word *life* denotes a constant, persevering activity: and Our Lord wants to be our life. He said: *I am the Life.* And so we must not only follow in his steps but continue to do so. It is not just this or that particular devotion that he asks of us, but our whole life, or whole strength, and our whole soul; so that we may with his help begin, even now, our eternal life. In a word, we must respond to the call of Christ, if we would breathe the pure radiant air of eternal truth and love." (p. 4)

There is mention throughout the work of the abandonment we need to practice, the abnegation and mortification necessary to live a devout life. Among other aspects of this, we must declare a war on our self-love and pride, and such is soberly stated in the book. It is made abundantly clear, however, that the concept of "virtue for virtue's sake" is *pagan;* we empty ourselves of vice and impurity so that we may be filled with the love of God. If we do not fill our souls with the love of God, asceticism becomes egotistical stoicism, a vile simulacrum of sanctity. Here are some representative passages on asceticism:

"Any kind of asceticism which has for its sole object the perfecting of self — an asceticism which is egocentric — is utterly worthless. Such a way of life pays very poor dividends, and the profits it yields are very disappointing. He who sows human seed can only expect to reap a human harvest." (p. 8)

"He asks of us a total sacrifice that no merely human wisdom would dare to impose: *Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish* [Luke xiii, 3]. And: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me* [Luke ix, 23]. *He that hateth not his father and mother… yea, and his own life also, cannot be my disciple* [Luke xiv, 26]. The most rigorous maxims of the ascetical life are merely repetitions of these truths, though rarely do they dare to reproduce the severity of Our Lord's words. Yet, if we would follow Christ, we must immolate our whole self, keeping back absolutely nothing not even in thought." (p. 40)

"If we could keep our heart still, the devil would be baffled, and temptations would find nothing in us to take hold of."(p. 89)

"When Our Lord asks us to empty our hearts, it is because he wants to fill them with his own love. And it is only when he does fill our hearts that the work of our purification has achieved its object." (p. 43)

"The first phase in our spiritual life is to empty ourselves of ourselves by a ceaseless and merciless war against every form of self-love. For sin, in sundering the bond between the Creator and the creature, has destroyed the interior harmonies of the latter. Our life, separated from its Source, is utterly disoriented and disturbed. We are in revolt against God, and hence our senses are in revolt against reason." (p. 125)

Very great weight is given to the living of the theological virtues from the very beginning of our conversion. Some spiritual books advance the error that, since Charity is the *summit* of the interior life, it is a peak that we must arrive at by climbing up the way of the moral virtues first. In her life and writings, Saint Thérèse goes a long way in correcting this, by putting theological charity at the very beginning of the spiritual life. Her "Little Way" is a way of divine Charity from its very beginnings. Love of God made her scale to the peak, which is itself an intense union with the Beloved. The same spirit imbues the pages of *The Prayer of Love and Silence,* which calls us to live in the divine presence by the theological virtues and to cultivate a close friendship with God at the beginning of our efforts to live a more intense spiritual life.

Jesus Christ is the basis of that life, for no spiritual life is possible without Him:

"He [Jesus] has not only made it possible for us to share in the life of the Father, but he has *desired with desire* [Luke xxii, 15] to remain among us, and this he accomplished in the Holy Eucharist, and it is in Holy Communion that the divine life in us is increased. *No man cometh to the Father but by me* [John xiv, 23]. Jesus is the Way — the only way. To want to seek the divine life by any other way is both presumptuous and illusory. The more we are fed with his sacred humanity's love; the more we reflect on the example he has set us, the more will the divine life grow in us. *I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly".* [John x, 10]. (p. 16)

There is a Trinitarian basis of our spiritual life. The Father generates His only-begotten Son in eternity — a procession of knowledge due to which the Son is properly called the "Word," the "Image," and the "Wisdom" of the Father. He has all the Father has except that Father's Paternity, i.e., that personal property by which the First Person is exclusively *Father.* These Two Persons behold One Another and a second procession takes place — the Spiration of the Third Person. This is a breath of love between the Father and the Son. It is a procession of *willing* and *loving.* The Three Persons are coequal, subsistent personal relations. We cannot consider the divine nature and the Trinity as if they are separate realities. To be God is to be in Three Persons." (For more on this, read the papers, "Trinitarian Processions" and "The 'Relations' in the Blessed Trinity" on our website.)



Carthusian Monks

As the Holy Ghost closes the circle of Trinitarian Processions, no further processions take place in God. All that remains is an "external procession" (in the words of Saint Thomas, cited by our author), and this we call creation. *The procession of the Trinitarian persons is the principle of creation.*

"A Carthusian" follows the Platonic pattern of *exitus-reditus* (emanation and return), in order to explain this. Simply speaking, this means that we came from God and will return to Him, but there is a rather grand cosmology and anthropology that accompanies the notion. The Eastern Fathers used this schema heavily (e.g., Saint Maximus the Confessor), and Saint Thomas employed it, with some nuancing, in the very structure of his *Summa Theologiae.*

The creature we call man is a microcosm of creation, having something in common with angels, animals, plants, and minerals — and even God. For this reason, man is called the *nexus Dei et mundi,* the connecting point of God and the world. This creature, who somehow embodies all of creation, returns to the God whence he came in what we might call an inverse Trinitarian order. On this point, our author quotes Saint Thomas, from his *Commentaries on the Sentences:* "And just as the procession of Persons is the reason for creation, so it is also the cause of our return to the End. It is by the Son and the Holy Spirit that we have been created, and it is by them that we shall rejoin him who has made us [the Father]." (p. 119)

Our way to the Father is *in* the Holy Ghost, and *through* Christ. Consider Saint Paul's words: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9), which indicate that the Holy Ghost forms us into Christ's Body. The Third Person is, after all, the "Soul of the Church." We may put this idea together with Our Lord's words: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The resulting conclusion is that the Holy Ghost forms Christ's Body (the Church), and, as members of that Body we are led to the Father. What is true of the Church as a whole is true of the spiritual life of each member. We go to the Father in the Spirit and through Christ. In the words of the "minor elevation," which conclude the Canon of the Mass:

Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso,
est tibi Deo Patri omnipoténti,
in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, omnis honor, et glória.

Through Him and with Him, and in Him,
is unto Thee, God the Father Almighty,
in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory.

In my opinion, the chapter that represents the high point of the book is entitled "The Work of Christ," which spans pages 121 to 124. It shows how the Incarnation of the Word had as its purpose the divinization of man; that is to say: Christ, in assuming human nature, effects it that we "may be made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). Jesus not only redeemed us from sin and Hell, but made it possible for us to be sons of God and heirs of Heaven. "Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with him *plentiful redemption"* (Ps. 129:7).

In His High Priestly Prayer (John 17:4-6), Jesus tells the Father that the work Father gave Him is now complete — namely, that He has revealed the Father's *name.* Our Carthusian explains this:

"What is this mysterious Name? According to St. Hilary and St. Cyril, it is the very name of *Father.* 'The greatest work of the Son has been to make known to us the Father' [St. Hilary]. The whole meaning of revelation and of redemption is comprised in this: to open to men the divine circle of the personal relations [in God: among the Three Persons], and to draw men's souls into the stream of God's own life. Not only to make good the fault of our first parents, as one would pardon a slave a moment of revolt, but much more — to make of this unfaithful servant a child of adoption. Such is the amplitude and depth of the gesture of mercy on the part of divine Love." (p. 121)

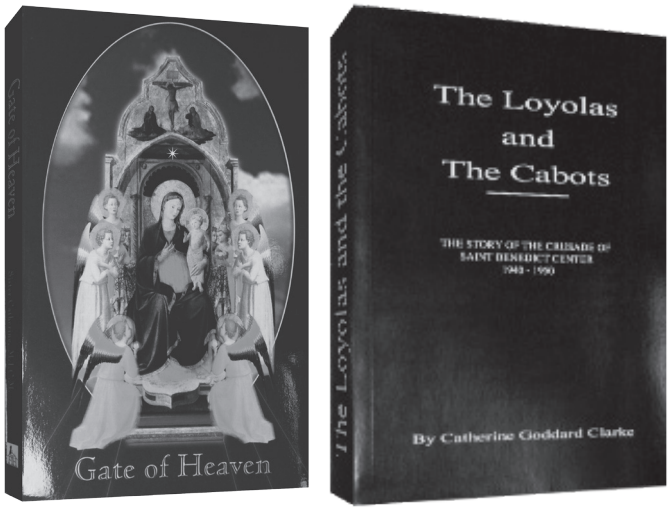
"By the sacred humanity of the incarnate Word, the soul is raised up even to the divinity. Then will it feel crushed by the divine justice; yet drawn by his mercy it will plunge into the divine love, where it will contemplate for ever the eternal beauty, goodness and truth. Reconciled by Christ and in him, we have access to the Father in the Holy Spirit. … Here we have in a word the economy of all the divine mysteries revealed in time. Creation, incarnation, redemption, glorification — these miracles of love serve but to make known the mystery of infinite Love, one in three Persons: *the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but now is manifested to his saints"* [Col. i, 26]. (pg. 124)

What the author says in that same chapter concerning the Blessed Eucharist and Our Lady is also very rich, lucid, and beautifully connected to these other thoughts. With all of its loftiness and intensity, this is a mysticism firmly rooted in God's incarnational and sacramental economy. Among the sure signs of false mysticism are a minimizing of the Blessed Virgin, a downplaying of the sacraments and liturgy, and a disregard for dogma. Here in this masterful volume, these aspects of orthodoxy are heightened; the integral faith is intensified, not blurred by a false cloud of pious nonsense.

We can all use a lot more sanctity — and a lot less nonsense. ▪

Email Brother André Marie at bam@catholicism.org

*A Charterhouse is a Carthusian monastery.



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Sr. Marie Thérèse, M.I.C.M., Prioress

CONVENT CORNER
SINGLES ONLY

Dear Reader, imagine you are at the foot of the altar, glowing with love, making vows. Ah! What a beautiful day! You have longed for this day and have struggled to keep down the impatience and depression that have come upon you in the days of your waiting to know God's will. And from this day forth — from the day of your making vows to God — you will know God's will and you will do it joyfully and with all of your heart.

Ah, beautiful day! Day of resurrection from the paralysis of anxiety about the future! Blessed day of certainty in the knowledge of God's will! What would you give to have that day be today?

It is true that the day a person makes his or her vows to God is a day of great joy. Truly it is a romantic day. It is a memorable day. It is a day of love — a festival of love — and this love-fest should last and become more intense every day of our lives.

Saint Rita was blessed with more than one such day in her lifetime. Yes, she approached the altar with a young man and lovingly pledged to be his best friend and help him and their children get to heaven. When the usual occurrence occurred at an unusual time, she let him go to God in death and continued as a young mother, only widowed. Her two sons soon followed their father into eternity. Then the love of God drew Saint Rita still closer to Himself. She again approached the altar with a greater love than before. And now as a religious, a bride of Christ, she did what she had done before — she lovingly pledged to be His best friend and help their children get to heaven. And so from her cloister the glow of love permeated the convent walls and warmed hearts all over the world. This continued until what usually happens happened at a ripe old age, and on that day, her love being perhaps as great as it could be in this life, she was carried by her Spouse over the threshold into their eternal home. And she is observing us and anxious to help us, her children, even now.



St. Rita of Cascia

But we haven't yet spoken of the day Saint Rita made her most glorious vows. This glorious day preceded the day she first approached the altar with her young man. This glorious day was the day on which the fire of love was lit in her heart. This glorious day was the day which influenced every day of the rest of her life. Moreover, this glorious day was the day of her *first* vows. Can you guess what vows they were? She took them very seriously — so much so that she never languished in an unprofitable way for the making of more vows to God. From that glorious day Saint Rita's entire heart was God's and every waking minute was spent in serving Him through her vows with all her heart and making more vows as He called her to do so in various vocations. If Saint Rita had died before she approached the altar to make vows as the spouse of Ferdinando, her death would have been the death of a saint. She would not have died weeping and pining away because she didn't know her vocation; but rather, she would have died burning with love for the God she was knowing, loving, and serving through her baptismal vows. Yes! She took those baptismal vows so much to heart that she placed them as the bright light at the very end of her life's journey — a daily focal point. She so focused on this light that every other event, including future vows, was simply part of that bright pathway, at the end of which was her ravishing God. The various states in life that she found herself in were merely different phases in the same journey.

And now, Dear Reader, back to earth. Take your left foot and plant it firmly on the ground. Take your right foot and plant it firmly next to your left foot. Take your hands and join them together to pray. And lift your mind to think about God. If you want to know God's will for you, consider the vows you have already made on that most glorious day of your own baptism. Your current state in life, a holy and sanctifying state, is known as "single in the world". This state will continue until the day you leave this world in death, or the day on which you approach the altar and make further vows to God (putting you in another state in life), whichever comes first. Your current vocation, Dear Reader, is none other than living up to your baptismal vows. Yes, doing your daily duty out of love for God and your neighbor is your current vocation. If you do this faithfully you will be doing the most powerful thing you could do to discern and prepare for your future vocation.

A renewal of your Total Consecration is a great way to renew your holy Baptismal vows daily through Our Blessed Mother's hands. She will certainly help you to appreciate and live these vows.

Think again, Dear Reader, of the question you were asked above: What would you give to have that day (the day of certainty of doing God's will) be today? It is a sign of maturity to recognize the holiness of the state you are currently in. ▪

Email Sister Marie Thérèse, at convent@catholicism.org



Fr. Leonard Feeney, M.I.C.M.

FOUNDERS' COLUMN
A DEATHBED REQUEST

(Taken from, Not Made for This World, *a collection of stories and anecdotes from Father Feeney. Published by the Sisters of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Still River, Massachusetts)*

I have told you many times, I think, how traumatic death can be in any priest's life. I don't know any priest who can't tell you astounding things that have happened. He doesn't have to be holy — the thing itself is sacred.

I was in a hospital in Los Angeles with some little sickness. I wasn't very, very sick, had some trouble with my nose for which later I had to have an operation. So I went to the hospital for a few days. I was sitting up and reading, and I felt quite well.

I was sitting there in the hospital — Queen of Angels Hospital — and a knock came at the door and a young priest came in, a Jesuit priest, Father Collins.

"Are you Father Feeney," he said, "Father Leonard Feeney? My name is Father Collins. I come from a Juniorate in Almen, and my mother is downstairs. She is dying. I have just anointed her. She would very much like to see you. Are you able to come down? Would you come down to see her? She is dying of cancer of the thyroid gland."

"Sure, I'll come down to see her," I said.

She was *in articulo mortis.* We have two phrases: *in periculo mortis,* which means "in danger of death," and *in articulo mortis,* "in the moment of death."

So I went down into the room. It is funny how you remember it, not every detail, but very vividly. Your senses become very alive when you face death. It is not a prosaic thing. The room is packed with God, to use a childlike expression. The angel is there. The battle is going on.

If it is a bad person, the good angel is trying to get him back. It is a good person, the devil is trying to pull him down for the last time. Don't tell me the room isn't tense where angels are fighting! There is something tenser than air in there. You sense that. Nobody can joke — even an unbeliever would have to have reverence there.

"Pray for us sinners now and at the hour by death." This is the "hour of our death" in the Hail Mary. This is the fullness of time for this entity. "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." That does not mean literally sixty minutes, or the second of our death. Death does not always happen instantaneously. "Hour" is a nice word for it, even if it is a minute or a second.

I remember very distinctly. There was her brother there and a young Jesuit scholastic, and Father Collins, a nurse, and myself.

So I said, "How do you do?" Not knowing whether she was delirious or semi-conscious or what — and prepared for anything. You make great allowances at the deathbed, because you are not the major interest. They are the center of all interest. Everybody wants to give in to their slightest wish.

> "This is the 'hour of our death' in the Hail Mary."

She said, "I'm so glad you came." I said, "I'm glad I came, too." I could see it was hard for her to breathe. Her poor neck was swollen.

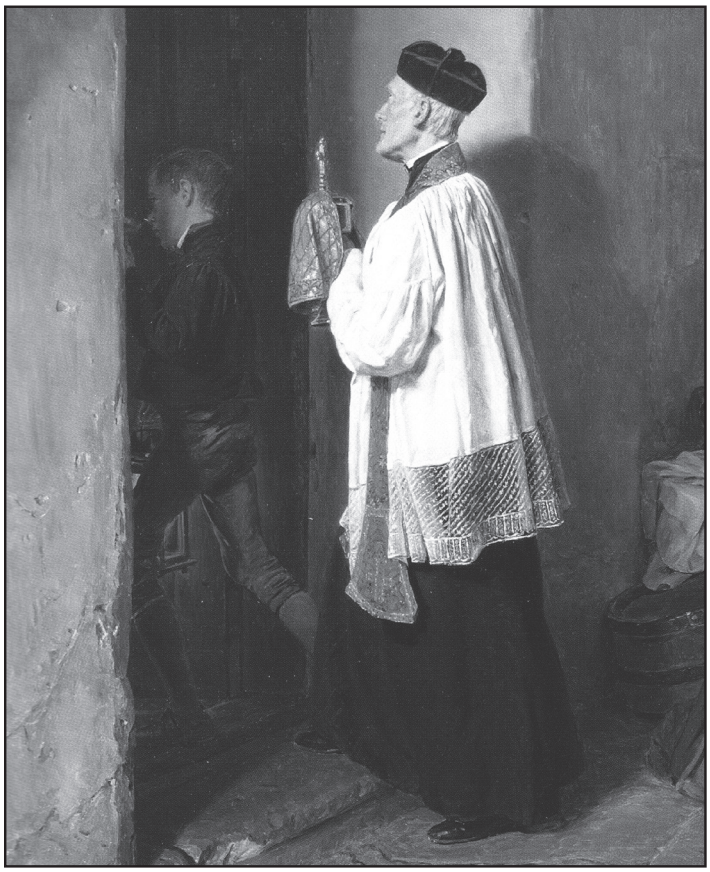
She said, "I prayed for years that you would be with me when I died, and here you are." I said, "Yes, here I am."

I didn't know whether she had me mixed up with Father Brown of Santa Fe, or what. I didn't know she knew who I was, but I was willing to be anyone for the moment to comfort her while she was going over the great bridge from time to eternity.

Just as I was having this suspicious and skeptical thought, she said, "You are Father Leonard Feeney, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am," I said, a little more tense.

Didn't you write a poem years ago that began, "Angela died today and went to Heaven?"



Extreme Unction

"Yes, I did."

"Well, that is my favorite poem, and I always prayed to little Jesus that when I was dying, you would be here to say it for me. Will you say it for me?"

Well, the son bowed his head; the scholastic choked; the nurse was in tears. But I felt I had a job to do, like a priest at a black Mass*. I knew that if I thought about what I was doing, my heart would break, so I recited it.

Angela died today and went to Heaven;
We counted her summers up and they were seven.
But why does that trouble you, unloosened shutter,
That flaps at my window in the wind's wild flutter!

Angela's eyes tonight are cold and dim,
Off in the land of song and Seraphim.
But what does that mean to you, O creaking stair,
And mice in the wall that gnaw the plaster there!

Angela's little hands are folded white,
Deep in the meadow, under the starry night.
But why should an ugly gnat keep finely whining
Around the candle-flame beside me shining!

And never again — and never again will she
Come running across the field to welcome me.
But, little sheep-bells, out on the distant hill,
Why, at this hour, do you wake and tinkle still!

And not any more—alas!— and not any more,
Will she climb the stairs and knock at my lonely door.
But, moaning owl in the hayloft overhead,
How did *you* come to know that she was dead!

She didn't dramatically die that instant, but she closed her eyes. That is the last I ever said to her, and that was the last day, or two days, that she lived. Isn't that wonderful? ▪

*Catholic priests sometimes use the informal "Black Mass" to mean the *Requiem Mass* or the Mass for the Dead in which the sacred ministers wear black vestments, hence a Mass in black vestments or "Black Mass".



Please Help the Sisters...

In addition to Saint Benedict Center's regular expenses, we've had a little curve ball thrown at us.

The Sisters' current automobile is in need of repairs too costly to undertake.

They are trying to raise funds for reliable transportation.

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The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered according to the traditional Roman Rite ("Extraordinary Form") during the conference, as it always is offered at SBC.

There is a limited number of Saint Benedict Center community members who are willing to host conference attendees on a first-come, first-served basis.

There are several hotels in the Keene vicinity, but reservations should be made early because of tourism during the foliage season. Some include: Best Western Hotel & Suites (603) 357-3038; Holiday Inn Express Keene (603) 352-7616; Days Inn (603) 352-9780; and Super 8 Keene (603) 352-9780.

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Mr. Brian Kelly

KELLY FORUM

BLUEGRASS MISSIONARY DYNAMO, FATHER CHARLES NERINCKX

"Mitte Belgas" (send Belgians), implored Saint Francis Xavier in a letter written from India to his Father General, Saint Ignatius Loyola. The Indian mission of the East required religious who were not only proven in virtue but strong in physical constitution. Belgian priests almost always fit the bill. In later centuries, especially the nineteenth, this one country, no bigger than the state of Maryland, was supplying missionaries to every corner of the globe.

Vocation

Charles Nerinckx was born in Herffelingen, Belgium, on October 2, 1761. He was the eldest of fourteen children born to a well-respected physician, Sebastian Nerinckx, and his wife Petronilla. Firm believers in a good education, they sent him at an early age to grammar school, then to college at Gheel, and lastly to Louvain to study philosophy. When he completed his courses, he informed his parents of his desire to become a priest.

Suffer the Children to Come Unto Me

In 1785, after completing his theology courses at the Belgian seminary in the archiepiscopal city Mechlin, Charles was ordained and appointed vicar of the cathedral in the same city. During this tenure there he distinguished himself mainly by his zeal in laboring among the working classes and by his personal holiness. Eight years later he was appointed pastor of the parish of Everberg-Meerbeke, which was near Louvain. The parish church in this city was in shambles and so was the spiritual condition of the parishioners. Building with one hand he instructed his flock with the other. To win more easily the parents back to faithful Catholic observance, he began holding catechism classes for the children. It was the same grand strategy of Saint Francis Xavier, and it proved very fruitful for Father Nerinckx. In a short time he had the both younger and older children attending classes regularly every Sunday evening. With the success of the classes came longer lines for confession, and the penitents were not just children but parents, too, who were much edified by the zeal of their new priest.

Persecution

Belgium, at this time, in 1797, was under the power of the oligarchs of The French Directorate, successors to the Revolution of 1789. These freethinkers resented Father Charles' activity and ordered his arrest, but he eluded the *gens d'armes* by hiding at the hospital of Dendermonde, which was run by a nun who was a relative of his. For seven years he covertly continued his ministry at the hospital, offering Mass at two in the morning, and hearing confessions in lay attire for the sick, for those maimed in battle, and for the dying. At any moment his identity could have been compromised. So, after seven years dodging the anti-clerical police he decided that he would do better laboring as a missionary in America. Boarding a ship in Amsterdam he set out for western shores in 1804.

Mission America

Father Nerinckx reported to Bishop Carroll in Baltimore who sent him to Kentucky to assist Sulpician Father Stephen Badin, the pioneer missionary in the Bluegrass state. Father Badin had been laboring alone for eleven years. When the forty-six year-old Belgian arrived at Saint Stephen's Church in Pottinger's Creek, the thirty-eight year-old Father Badin must have had some initial reservations on account of the newcomer's age. In any event, French was their native language, and clear communication had huge advantages. For seven years the two priests worked from the same mission base, each going about separately on tours to distant outposts and villages across the state. When the two priests divided their territory in 1812, the portion given to Father Nerinckx's charge was over two hundred miles in length and covered nearly half the state. In fulfilling his pastoral duties, the Belgian spent more time in the saddle than he did in bed. Every year of his eighteen-

"[The] freethinkers resented Father Charles' activity and ordered his arrest."

year frontier apostolate was marked by the organization of a new congregation, which usually included the building of a church. A skilled carpenter, Father Nerinckx helped to build churches with his own hands. People remembered his "herculean" strength, felling trees, and carrying three times the weight of lumber that ordinary frontiersmen were accustomed to carry. Before his death, he had built ten churches, two of brick and the others of hewn logs. He chose Hardin's Creek for a home base.

Father Nerinckx entered upon his new field of labor with the zeal of a newly-ordained twenty-four year-old. Often he would ride all night to say Mass at some distant settlement, and having arrived, he would refuse any refreshment until he had finished holy Mass. Rather than be of any trouble to the settlers he would park his horse outside the village, catch a few winks, then say his Divine Office before anyone knew he was in town. He would only stay as long

as necessary, hearing confessions, ministering to the sick and dying, healing enmities, instructing neophytes, and training catechists. He was a man of few words, never laughed, rarely smiled, and was very serious and to the point in conversation. For those who did not know him better, his rather stolid demeanor was misunderstood. What he lacked in social graces, however, he made up for by his priestly charity, especially his tenderness with penitents in the confessional.

Fortes in Fide et Corpore

Such was the fortitude of the Belgian priest that people called him "fearless." Once, in going to give the sacraments to a sick person, he came to a rapid flowing stream, which had swollen such as to be utterly un-crossable. A friend, who was accompanying him to the person's cabin, refused to take the risk and attempt the crossing. And wisely so. But Father Nerinckx was not in the mood for natural prudence when a sick man's salvation may be at stake. So, what did he do? He took the saddle from his friend's horse and placed it on his own saddle; then remounting the horse, he placed himself on his knees on the top of the two saddles, and thusly he crossed the waters, which flowed over the horse's back. There are many similar stories wherein he manifested his redoubtable pluck.

A somewhat humorous event made for popular over-the-table tale-telling in many a Kentucky home. It appears that Father Nerinckx was not the most eloquent of preachers, but his presence in town, nevertheless, drew even non-Catholics to his Masses. Many of these Protestants were just curious to see what Catholics do in church and what kind of sermons this strongly built foreigner would give. On one occasion a young tough guy came to Mass and, misunderstanding the words of the priest on account of his accent, imagined that he had personally been insulted. Fully intent upon giving the priest a beating, he waylaid him on his way to a sick call, and forced him to dismount his steed by cutting the stirrup straps from his saddle. Father tried to explain to the dolt, who was provoking *mano y mano,* that his profession as a priest forbade him to engage in fisticuffs, except in self-defense. That, apparently, was not what the brawler wanted to hear as he prepared to launch a clenched fist. But before he could throw it, he had to first get off the ground and get the priest's knee out of his back. News about the incident spread around town, not by Father Nerinckx's doing, but from the mouth of the bully who was telling everyone that the priest had superhuman powers. Father Nerinckx couldn't resist commenting when a friend asked him what happened, "these young buckskins cannot handle a Dutchman!"

Teacher by Word and Example

But just as in his parish in Belgium, the children and poor laborers were the main focus of his zeal. He loved to instruct them and prepare them for their first communion. For this purpose, he usually remained a week at each of the parishes he had established and at the smaller outpost stations. Every day he would assemble the children and servants and go over the catechism and devotional prayers, instilling a deep love in all for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

After Mass, Father Nerinckx would have all the children gather around him in the center of whichever church he was visiting. He would then extend his arms in the form of a cross — the children also raising their little arms in the same manner — and recite prayers in honor of the five blessed wounds of the crucified Savior. The parents often joined in this touching devotion. After the prayers they would all process to the adjoining graveyard where they would pray over the graves of their deceased relatives and friends.

Sisters of Loretto

Perhaps Father Nerinckx's greatest accomplishment was the establishment of a religious congregation, the Sisters of Loretto, also known as "The Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross." Young girls raised in the rough atmosphere of frontier life often became easy victims to unprincipled men. To rectify the problem the missioner began organizing female sodalities. When some of these young women manifested a desire for a higher state of life, Father Nerinckx began to consider founding his own congregation of sisters. It did not take long before he built a convent for these aspirants close to St. Charles' church. The Sisters of Loretto were so blessed that, by 1823, they had one hundred religious, six schools, and five convents.

Father Nerinckx twice crossed the ocean to obtain financial help, books, statues, vestments, and, most important of all, laborers for the American missions; he thus became instrumental in bringing from Belgium the first band of Jesuits who settled in the West, notable among whom were Father Pierre De Smet and Bishop Van de Velde.

At sixty-three years of age the intrepid missioner would not, could not, slow down. He decided that he would take the journey that would be his last. Having sent a colony of Lorettine sisters to Missouri, and hearing of their success, he decided to visit them and give them personal counsel in their fledgling establishment. Too, he intended to meet with certain Indian tribes, who were more numerous in Missouri than Kentucky. His main hope was to persuade them to send their daughters to the sisters' schools where they could learn English and also learn about the true religion. It was during the course of this mission tour that the mortality of this workhorse caught up with him. It was in the heat of August 1824.

Kelly Forum continued on page 15



Brother John Marie Vianney, M.I.C.M., Tert., Prefect

PREFECT'S COLUMN
WHAT IS THIS BLOOD?

July is the month of the Precious Blood. During this month I ask you to ponder what this Blood is. Whenever you encounter the term Precious Blood, by a phrase in your missal, prayers, readings, whenever you visit the Blessed Sacrament, when you receive Holy Communion, etc., meditate on just what this Blood is. For example, when receiving the Eucharist, keep in mind that you receive the glorified Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus under either species of bread or wine.

Consider: What is this Blood? The blood of every man must have similar qualities. *Dictionary.com* defines blood as "the fluid that circulates in the principal vascular system of human beings and other vertebrates, in humans consisting of plasma in which the red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets are suspended." It adds, "the vital principle; life".

Wouldn't Jesus' Blood have those qualities? What else might His Blood, in a natural sense, possess? The Shroud of Turin, piously believed to be the burial cloth of the Body of Jesus, has been tested many times. Scientists have concluded in, *Blood on the Shroud of Turin: An Immunological Review* by Kelly P. Kearse (2012), that the linen cloth, "bears the image of a man that has been beaten, scourged, and crucified . . . the scientific evidence for the presence of human blood on the Shroud [was] evaluated, with particular emphasis on the methodology used to support various conclusions, including blood typing and species classification. The data are specifically considered within the context of immunology as many of the experimental techniques used to study the bloodstains on the Shroud utilize products of the immune system as experimental tools in their design. Moreover, the bloodstains themselves represent cellular and fluid components of a once functioning immune system and provide clues to their origin."

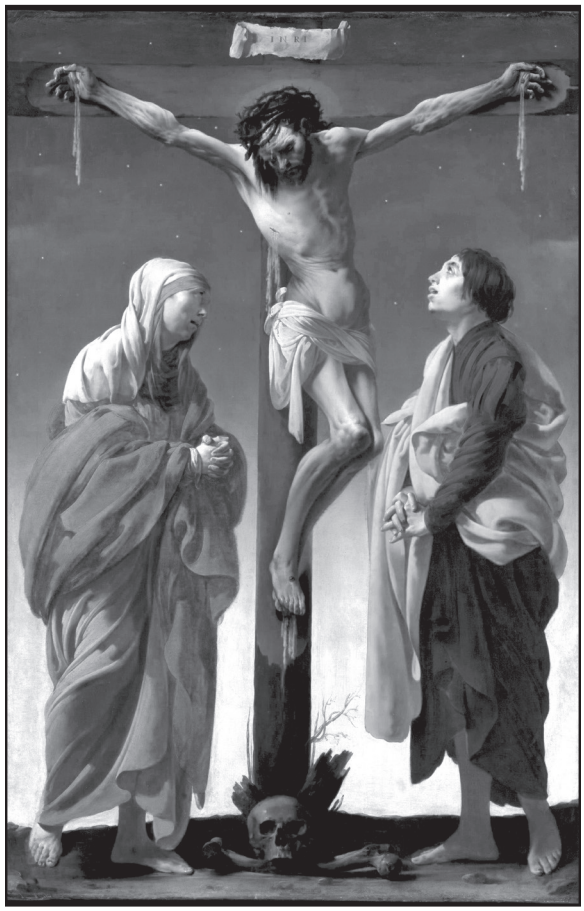
Commenting on a 1981 report, involving more than twenty scientists examining the Shroud, the monograph goes on to say, "The bloodstains are composed of hemoglobin and also give a positive test for serum albumin." While blood typing is sometimes complex, it appears the blood type/group on the Shroud is AB. Putting aside the Rh factor, AB is the universal recipient. It is generally believed, at least for the U.S. population, that people with AB (positive and negative) make up the smallest number in the population; it seems rare. It would make sense that Jesus' Blood might be rare, and still considered the universal recipient.

If the Shroud is of Jesus, with His Blood stains, the rarity of the Blood should give us a clue to Its value. It may also lead us to consider, "its nutritive strength and the adoring homage with which it is due" (from the *Liturgical Year* by Dom Gueranger).

Where do we read of Jesus' Blood in Scripture, or in the traditions of the Church? We commemorate the Most Precious Blood of Jesus on January 1, the Circumcision (when He first shed His Blood) and on July 1, the feast of the Most Precious Blood.

In Scripture we can point back as far as Exodus 24:8 for, "This is the blood of the covenant . . ." referring to God's promise to the people of Israel, but pre-figuring the Blood of the Lamb, Our Lord.

In Luke Ch. 22 v. 44, we read, "And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." Recall this Gospel was written by a physician.



This Scriptural phrase cannot be considered merely a figurative reference: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6:54-56).

In the *Summa,* Saint Thomas Aquinas writes, "Christ's blood is in this sacrament in a hidden manner."

The prayer Our Lord gave Saint Gertrude begins, "Eternal Father, we offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus." In the Mass, there are numerous references to this Holy Libation, a Divine Drink that will satiate your spiritual thirst forever, if you accept Him without impediment. It is the merits of

this Blood, from the Beloved Son, which will save us.

His Heart pumps the Blood of Life. That same Blood is what we may receive daily in Holy Communion, the same Blood that was shed for us physically on Calvary. This is the same Blood shed mystically at the very first Mass in the Cenacle on the night He was betrayed. What did Our Lord tell His Apostles to do (and through them their successors in the priesthood) at that time: Do this in memory of Me. Without His Blood, we have no life.

In a way, the mere reception of His Most Sacred Blood is such a tremendous act, i.e., the partaking of His Body, His Blood, His Soul and His Divinity that we should be full of awe, fear, gratitude, love, hope, faith, and wonder that we can hardly contain the fact that He is within us! We, miserable, sinful creatures contain Him within us at that very moment.



Sacred Heart of Jesus with Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Saint Aloysius Gonzaga

And where did this Most Wonderful Blood come from? It is obvious that no man can live without a body, and blood flowing through his arteries and veins. Now contemplate the beating Sacred Heart, pumping His Precious Blood throughout His human Body. Not only was this Heart doing that, it also provides the Living Life Blood for us to receive in the Holy Sacrament. That Sacred Blood came to man through the Immaculate Heart of Mary in His Incarnation.

The Preciousness of this Blood cannot be overestimated. Think of the scene in *The Passion of the Christ* when His Mother took cloths, and on Her hands and knees, wiped up His most cherished Blood after the Scourging at the Pillar. Think of Saint Longinus, who pierced His side and saw the last drops of His Blood spill out from His punctured Heart followed by the water and proving that the Savior had given up every drop of His Blood for us.

In a sense, when we receive the Eucharist, we have received a Holy Transfusion. We are being assimilated into Him, corporeally joined to our Holy Blood Brother. Each and every time we receive, we obtain the curing Blood of the most Sacred Physician who ever lived. As the priest prays before his Communion: "May the reception of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which I though unworthy presume to receive, not become for me a judgment unto condemnation, but through Thy mercy may it be a healing remedy of my soul and body."

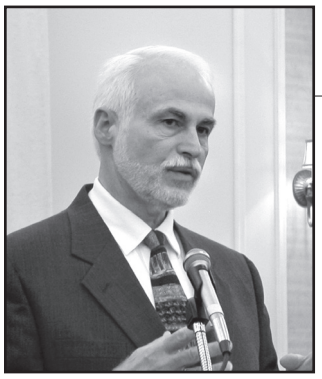
It cures our venial sins, heals our imperfections and faults, gives us the graces to avoid mortal and venial sins, and to join ourselves to God's Holy Will. It provides a Holy Antidote for the poison sin has visited upon us.

During this month of the Precious Blood, let us ponder each and every mention of It, the Blood that flows from the Divine Redeemer, available to us every day at His Holy Sacrifice, the Mass. ▪

Email Brother John Marie Vianney, at BrotherJohnMarieVianney@gmail.com

What is the Saint Augustine Institute?

The Syllabus has long been a great starting point for the continuing education of today's Catholic. Whether you are new to the Faith or a life long believer, the SAI Syllabus has something for you. You, too, can learn more about the "School of Thought" started by Father Feeney and Brother Francis. Download it online at: catholicism.org/sai-syllabus.html or contact Sister Maria Philomena at (603)239-6485 smph@catholicism.org



Brother Lawrence Mary, M.I.C.M., Tert.

GUEST COLUMN
WHY PHILOSOPHY?

Part III: Why Brother Francis? — A Unique Teacher with an Enlightened Approach

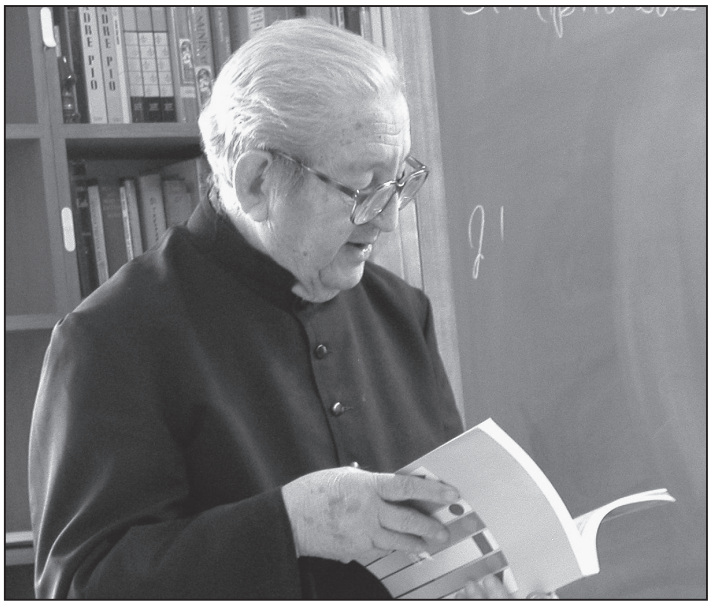
Soon after Brother Francis arrived at Saint Benedict Center, Father Feeney assigned him to teach philosophy on Tuesday evenings. Brother Francis fulfilled that assignment every week until a few years before he died. More than once, Brother said that, in the area of philosophy, he hoped he would never have a single original thought.

Though he eschewed originality as a thinker, Brother Francis was entirely unique as a teacher of philosophy. Brother Francis was a master of his topic and fully capable of giving detailed, thorough lectures that might have been abstruse, dry and boring given by one less enthusiastic. Instead, he wanted to reach Catholics who had neither the time nor inclination to become professional philosophers. He had the uncanny ability to present the most complicated topics in a way that could be understood by any average person of good will. This author has read most of the sources Brother refers to during his lectures and it's amazing how he is able to capture the essence of deep and difficult matters and make them appear simple.

As mentioned in my previous article on this topic, Brother's arrangement of the courses of philosophy was distinctive in that general metaphysics was saved to the end of the series of courses rather than presented first as was the traditional way. But that didn't mean Brother ignored the deep and abstract concepts until the end. He carefully inserted them into his lectures from the very beginning. He explained that it was important to get used to hearing the words and allow the context of the lectures to give meaning to them before trying to learn a formal definition. To the surprise and delight of the students, when they finally arrived at the last courses, they discovered they already had a reasonable understanding of metaphysics — the deepest of all philosophical studies.

> "Appreciation is one of the major values stressed by Brother Francis."

Throughout the lectures, Brother reminds us that we have two ultimate standards for the concepts that are presented — common sense and Divine Revelation. If an idea does not conform to these standards, it is immediately suspect and may possibly be rejected outright. For example, Brother discusses



Brother Francis Teaching

the "fact of knowledge" in relation to the writings of Kant, Hegel, and other modern philosophers who try to convince us that we cannot really know the world outside ourselves. He reminds us to compare their assertions to our everyday experience. Immediately, we see their errors and we're not taken in by their sophistries.

Brother Francis does something else that I believe is entirely unique in our age. Throughout the entire eight courses in philosophy he incorporates meditations into his lectures. He uses the concepts he teaches as a means to appreciate not only the world around us but the spiritual world, the ultimate Source of everything and, finally our Catholic Faith. He never leaves concepts in the realm of natural philosophy alone but he uses each as a stepping-stone towards appreciating the higher values.

In fact, "appreciation" is one of the major values stressed by Brother Francis. Growth in sanctity, he often said, is really a growth in appreciation or gratitude.

Brother Francis provides a definition of "wisdom" that is the most comprehensive of any I've ever found. He frequently demonstrates how the newly introduced concepts support the overall goal of wisdom. Through the course of the lectures, he leads the students from natural wisdom to Wisdom as a Divine Person.

Finally, the goal of the entire series of courses is to help the students to understand that "happiness is contemplation." Brother Francis tries to help us use what we have been taught in his classes as the basis for meditation, which will, in turn, lead to contemplation — the highest activity that a human being is capable of and the only thing that will make him happy in this world. It will also be our occupation in eternity

if we make it to Heaven. Beatitude is the contemplation of the Beatific Vision. Again, I know of no other course in philosophy that continually directs and encourages the students to think beyond the mere natural order and to direct their thoughts towards the ultimate goal — their eternal salvation.

I've encountered two groups of people who seem not to benefit much from these courses. The first consists of those who are intimidated by the mere idea of studying philosophy, apparently not realizing that they already use many of the tools of philosophy. They believe that it is too difficult for them, so they either never try it at all or, shortly after they begin, they drop out. They simply do not believe Brother Francis when he says that even a young person who has reached the age of reason can understand the concepts presented in his lectures. They forget that we are all philosophers by nature, because we all ask the deep questions.

The second group is comprised of those very bright people, who may have even studied philosophy previously; they plow through the courses as if they were classes given at the local technical college. Once they're done, they feel that they've gotten them out of the way so they can move on to something else — something more exciting or important. Often they have missed the very reasons for taking the courses under the direction of Brother Francis — to think meditatively and to "dig into" the ideas deeply. They fail to develop a heartfelt and abiding appreciation of philosophy, of the spiritual order as "order," of wisdom, of the Catholic Faith, and of the crusade of Saint Benedict Center.

If you have not already begun listening to the lectures, I encourage you to begin. An entire world of amazing ideas will open up before you. If you are listening to the lectures right now but struggling to fit them into an overcrowded schedule, I encourage you to make the effort to continue because the benefits of completing the courses will live with you forever. You'll sharpen your discernment, improve your meditation, grow in appreciation, and deepen your Faith — a combination of wonderful advantages that is hard to beat for a science that the proud call "useless." ▪

"Wisdom is the most perfect knowledge, of the most important truths, in the right order of emphasis, accompanied by a total and permanent disposition to live accordingly."
-Brother Francis

Kelly Forum continued from page 11

The account given by Bishop Flaget of Bardstown of Father Charles Nerinckx's last days is worth quoting directly:

"After the arrival of [Father] Nerinckx at the residence of the Sisters, in Missouri, he wrote to me a most affecting letter, describing the good they had accomplished in that diocese, and the hopes which he entertained of their being one day useful to the Indians. Thence he went to visit an establishment of Flemish Jesuits about ninety miles distant from the monastery. After spending some days of edifying fervor in the midst of those holy and beloved countrymen of his, he set out on his return . . . Near St. Louis, he had an interview with an Indian chief, who promised to send him a great number of the young females of his tribe, to be educated by the Sisters. He made haste to carry this news to the monastery.

"On his road, however, was a path to a settlement of eight or ten Catholic families, who had not seen a priest during more than two years. Desirous of doing all the good in his power, he assembled them, heard their confessions, gave them instructions, and celebrated for them the holy sacrifice of the Mass. He was thus occupied, from a little after daybreak, until towards three o'clock in the evening.

"After all this exertion, in such broiling weather, he felt feverish symptoms. These continued the next day, but apparently much diminished. He wished to go to St. Genevieve, which was only fifteen or eighteen miles distant; and though the journey was short, still the exertion and the burning sun greatly increased the fever. The pastor of St. Genevieve received him with great kindness and affection. He was obliged to betake himself immediately to bed; the physicians came promptly, and paid him every attention; but to no purpose.

"[Father] Nerinckx was, I trust, in the eye of God, ripe for heaven; and his Lord saw that it was time to bestow upon his faithful servant the recompense of his labors. . . . On the ninth day of his sickness, about nine in the morning, he received the holy viaticum and extreme unction, after having made his confession; and about five in the evening, he breathed out his pure soul to return to its Creator. . . . It was the twelfth of August, 1824. His mortal remains were later brought back to the Loretto motherhouse on Hardin's Creek.

Father Nerinckx's life was one of continual sacrifice. He carried his cross silently. No one knew what he suffered except God and the Church Triumphant. And the fruit of his labors exceeded any measure. He was the Apostle of Kentucky. ▪

Email Brian Kelly at bdk@catholicism.org

OUR CRUSADE:

The propagation and defense of Catholic dogma — especially *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* — and the conversion of America to the one, true Church.

A PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

O Mary, Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, we beseech thee, be pleased to look with pitiful eyes upon poor heretics and schismatics. Thou who art the Seat of Wisdom, enlighten the minds that are miserably enfolded in the darkness of ignorance and sin, that they may clearly know that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church is the one true Church of Jesus Christ, outside of which neither holiness nor salvation can be found. Finish the work of their conversion by obtaining for them the grace to accept all the truths of our Holy Faith, and to submit themselves to the supreme Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; that so, being united with us in the sweet chains of divine charity, there may soon be only one fold under the same one shepherd; and may we all, O glorious Virgin, sing forever with exultation: Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, thou only hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world. Amen.
Hail Mary, three times (Pius IX, Raccolta No. 579).

EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS

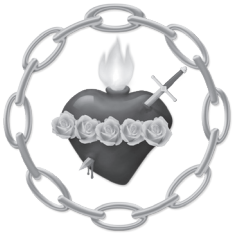
Ex Cathedra: "We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." (Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam,* 1302).

- Cover art: *Heart of Mary* by artist Leopold Kupelwieser, photographed by Diana Ringo. The painting resides in Vienna, Austria.

Notes:

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