

The Teachings of the Saints

In Their Own Words

By a Parish Priest



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TAKEN FROM
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1. FAITH; HOPE; CHARITY

FAITH

We should submit ourselves to the Church so completely, that if we clearly perceived a thing to be white and she were to declare it to be black, we should, with her, declare it black. -----St. Ignatius.

O Holy Mother! O Church of Rome! We poor ignorant creatures, we knew thee not. We knew not thy zeal, nor thy goodness, nor thy labors for our salvation. Thou shewest us the way to Heaven, and the way alone taught by thee is the true way. He who follows it cannot go astray nor stumble against a stone. He, on the contrary, who seeks another way, shall only find eternal perdition. -----B. Giles of Assisi.

Faith is a great virtue; but without charity it can be of no use to us. Keep and preserve, with the utmost care, the precious gift of true faith, pure faith, faith without reproach. Let this burning, fervent, and invincible faith, which obtained an immortal crown for the Holy Confessors, be the immortal ornament of your soul. -----St. Bernard.

Only believe, and you have already found what you seek. In truth, what does Faith not find? It reaches the unapproachable, it discovers the unknown, it comprehends the unsearchable, it has the secret of arriving at the ends of things, and it has but to dilate its bosom to hold even eternity in its embrace. -----St. Bernard.

The soul is elevated to God by means of a lively faith, that secret and private staircase, of which all the steps are hidden under a mystery impenetrable to the senses or the understanding. Therefore the soul renounces their feeble help to attach itself only to faith, which penetrates the deep things of God: hence its disguise. It transforms the principle of its knowledge, hence the safety of its passage; so that it has nothing to fear from temporal things, from reason, or from the devil. -----St. John of the Cross.

Faith is a lamp which gives us spiritual light and warmth. -----St. Thomas

Faith resembles a lamp. As a lamp lights the whole house, so the light of Faith illuminates the whole soul. -----St. Chrysostom.

If we do not believe God, whom shall we believe? God ought to be believed on His Word. -----St. Ambrose.

Reason is the eye of the soul; but like the bodily eye, it needs light in order to see; and how can it see divine things clearly, if deprived of the light of divine revelation? -----St. Augustine.

Faith is an altar; nothing is pleasing to God unless it be offered to Him in a spirit of Faith. -----St. Thomas.

A tree cannot grow without roots; a building cannot be raised without a foundation; every river must flow from a source. So the Christian life and virtues can neither exist nor flourish, nor become a source of life, unless they proceed from Faith. -----St. Augustine.

Your heart is like to a ship. To have Jesus on board is to have Faith in your heart. If your faith slumbers, Jesus slumbers also, and in this case you are in danger of shipwreck. -----St. Augustine.

As a vessel that has no anchor is tossed about by the wind, so our mind, when not anchored to Faith, is continually agitated by the wind of human opinions and doctrines. -----St. Gregory the Great.

A virtuous life is to the soul what food is to the body. For as our body cannot live without food, so Faith cannot subsist without good works. -----St. Chrysostom.

Hold in your hand the lantern of Faith; and let the flame of Charity shine from it, to shew you what you must do, and what you must avoid. -----St. Augustine.

The Church that cannot err, and the Faith that cannot fail, is the Roman Church, and the faith of the Roman Church, whether believed in Rome or in other parts of the world. -----St. Antoninus.

As in the sea there are islands which are fruitful and furnish good harbors for the shelter of mariners, who fly to them and once having reached them are secured from the tossing of the tempest; so God has given to the world a holy Church, in whose safe harbor the lovers of truth seek refuge, as well as all those who desire to be saved, and to escape the dreadful wrath of God. And as there are other islands which want water, and are covered with barren rocks, uninhabitable by man and destructive to sailors, on which their ships are dashed to pieces; so likewise are there erroneous doctrines and heresies which destroy those who are seduced and drawn aside by them. -----St. Theophilus to the learned Antolychus.

HOPE

Wait upon the Lord; be faithful to His commandments; He will elevate your hope, and put you in possession of His Kingdom. Wait upon Him patiently; wait upon Him by avoiding all sin. He will come, doubt it not; and in the approaching day of His visitation, which will be that of your death and His judgment, He will Himself crown your holy hope. Place all your hope in the Heart of Jesus; it is a safe asylum; for he who trusts in God is sheltered and protected by His mercy. To this firm hope, join the practice of virtue, and even in this life you will begin to taste the ineffable joys of Paradise. -----St. Bernard.

Not only think of the road through which thou art travelling, but take care never to lose sight of that blessed country in which thou art shortly to arrive. Thou meetest here with passing sufferings, but wilt soon enjoy everlasting rest. When thou lookest up to the recompense everything thou dost or sufferest will appear light, and no more than a shadow; it bears no proportion with what thou art to receive for it. Thou wilt wonder that so much is given for such trifling pains. -----St. Augustine.

We must have confidence in God, Who is what He always has been, and we must not be disheartened because things turn out contrary to us. -----St. Philip.

When anyone places his whole trust in God, hoping in and serving Him faithfully at the same time, God watches over him, to the extent of his confidence, in every danger. Infinite is the love which God bears to souls who repose in His protection. Diffidence in ourselves and confidence in God are like the scales of a balance; the elevation of the one is necessarily connected with the depression of the other. The more we have of diffidence in ourselves, the greater is our confidence in God; the less we possess of confidence in God, the more presumptuous shall we be of our own powers; but if we have no sort of confidence in our own strength, we may be assured that our hopes center completely in God. -----St. Francis de Sales.

A sinner cannot outrage the Deity more than by despairing of Divine mercy on account of the number and enormity of his crimes; for God's clemency is far greater than the iniquity and guilt of an entire world . . . Of God's mercy never despair. -----Ven. Blosius.

A servant of God should fear nothing, not even Satan, who is soon discomfited when made little account of. If the Lord be mighty, the demons are but His bond-slaves; what evil therefore can they do to the servants of so great a King? -----St. Teresa.

Confidence in God ought to be greater in proportion to the pressing nature of the necessity in which we are placed. When Jesus cried in the anguish of His Passion, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was at that time exhibiting a pattern of the highest perfection in the exact fulfillment of the obedience required from Him by His Eternal Father, with Whom He was wholly united. His intelligent soul enjoyed the most perfect bliss; still, as a man, capable of suffering and mortal, He complains of His abandonment, or rather He gives utterance to His perfect confidence in God, in order to teach us, His children, that the more afflicted we are the more we ought to rely on aid from above. -----St. Catherine of Bologna.

Whenever you find yourself inclined to diffidence, lift up your heart lovingly to God, and be assured that your defects are, in the sight of His infinite goodness, but as a few threads of tow cast into a sea of fire. Figure to yourself a burning surface, as vast as the hemisphere we inhabit; if a piece of tow were thrown into it, would it not be so absorbed in the fire as instantly to disappear? "Our God is a consuming fire," and our imperfections, compared with His goodness, are what a piece of tow is to the furnace. When, therefore, we have fallen, let us humble ourselves sorrowfully in His presence, and then, with an act of unbounded confidence, let us throw ourselves into the ocean of His goodness, where every failing will be cancelled, and anxiety will be turned into love. -----St. Paul of the Cross.

God guards with special protection a confiding client, and such an one may be sure no evil will betide him. -----St. Vincent of Paul.

God is so good and so merciful, that to obtain Heaven it is sufficient to ask it of Him from our hearts. -----St. Benedict Joseph Labre.

God is certainly more desirous of our best welfare than we are ourselves; and He knows the ways and means of promoting it better than we, for they are in His hands as Ruler of the Universe; wherefore, in all the accidents which befall us, most certainly that happens which is the best. -----St. Augustine.

As a mother delights in taking her child on her knees, in caressing and feeding him, so does our God delight in treating with love and tenderness those souls who give themselves entirely to Him, and place all their hopes in His goodness and bounty. -----St. Liguori.

When we have once placed ourselves entirely in the hands of God, we need apprehend no evil; if adversity comes, He knows how to turn it to our advantage, by means which will in time be manifested to us. -----St. Vincent of Paul.

When we find ourselves in some danger, we must not lose courage, but confide much in the Lord; for where danger is great, great also is the assistance of Him Who is called our Helper in tribulation. -----St. Ambrose.

He who serves God with a pure heart, laying aside all human interests and seeking only the Divine honor, may hope to succeed in his affairs even when to others they seem desperate, since the operations of God are beyond the ken of mortal vision, and depend on a loftier than human policy. -----St. Charles Borromeo.

The more a person loves God, the more reason he has to hope in Him. This hope produces in the Saints an unutterable peace, which they preserve even in adversity, because as they love God, and know how beautiful He is to those who love Him, they place all their confidence and find all their repose in Him alone. -----St. Liguori.

That fear is useful which is buoyed up by hope and is not weighed down by despair. ----- St. Isid. Hisp.

True and certain is that Hope which is accompanied by good works. But if it goes alone, it ought to be called presumption. ----- St. Laurence Justinian.

Behold Jesus Christ crucified, Who is the only foundation of our hope; He is our Mediator and Advocate; the victim and sacrifice for our sins. He is goodness and patience itself; His mercy is moved by the tears of sinners, and He never refuses pardon and grace to those who ask it with a truly contrite and humbled heart. -----St. Charles Borromeo.

God wishes us not to rest upon anything but His infinite goodness; do not let us expect anything, hope anything, or desire anything but from Him, and let us put our trust and confidence in Him alone. -----St. Charles Borromeo.

CHARITY

He who does not acquire the love of God will scarcely persevere in the grace of God, for it is very difficult to renounce sin, merely through fear of chastisement. -----St. Liguori.

The heart into which Divine Love enters no longer makes any account of all that the world esteems. St. Francis de Sales says that when the house is on fire, all the goods are thrown out of the window; by which he means, that when the heart is inflamed with Divine Love, man, without sermons, or exhortations from his Spiritual director, of himself seeks to divest himself of all worldly goods, honors, riches, and other earthly things, that he may have nothing but God. -----St. Liguori.

In the royal galley of Divine Love, there is no galley slave; all the rowers are volunteers. -----St. Francis de Sales.

The way which God takes with the souls that love Him, by allowing them to be tempted, and to fall into tribulations, is a true espousal between Himself and them. -----St. Philip Neri.

We must give ourselves to God altogether; God makes all His Own the soul that is wholly given to Him. -----St. Philip Neri.

Charity is a love of friendship, a friendship of choice, a choice of preference, but an incomparable, a sovereign, and supernatural preference which is like a sun in the whole soul, to embellish it with its rays; in all our spiritual faculties to perfect them; in all our powers to moderate them; but in the will, as its seat, to reside there, and to make it cherish and love its God above all things. -----St. Francis de Sales.

Try not to think of yourself when you love; love is ecstatic, it does not leave to themselves those whom it possesses, but delivers them to the One they love. -----St. Dionysius.

Under the influence of fear, we bear the Cross of Christ with patience; under the more inspiring influence of hope, we carry the Cross with a firm and valiant heart; but under the consuming power of love, we embrace the Cross with ardor. -----St. Bernard.

As beholding corporal beauty is the principal cause of sensitive love, so the contemplation of the Divine Goodness is the cause of spiritual love. -----St. Thomas.

The price of Divine Love is not to be appreciated; for it suffices to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven, and the love of Him Who has loved us so much merits the highest degree of our love. -----St. Francis of Assisi.

LOVE OF GOD

God has loved us from all eternity. Children of men, says the Lord, remember that I first loved you. You had not yet been born, the world itself did not exist, and even then I loved you. As long as I am God, I have loved you; I have loved you as long as I have loved Myself. ----- St. Alphonsus Liguori

Is not Jesus worthy of thy heart's warmest affection? If thou feelest no very ardent love, still wish and pray to thy Blessed Saviour that the holy fire may be kindled within thy breast. Think often that thy Redeemer's labors and pains were endured for thee, an ungrateful sinner. For thy sake Jesus shed His Blood and died upon a cross; submitting to a temporal death, that thou mightest attain to life eternal. He took upon Himself thy delinquencies, and canceled thy outstanding debt by fastening it to His Cross. In fine, He parted with all His precious merits to enrich thy poverty-stricken soul. ----- Ven. Blosius

The love of God is never idle. When it really fills a soul, it never fails to operate great things in it. Whenever it does not work, but is inactive, we may be certain there is no true love, but only the appearance of it. ----- St. Gregory

The greatest security we can have in this world that we are in the grace of God, does not consist in the feelings that we have of love to Him, but rather in an irrevocable abandonment of our whole being into His hands, and in a firm resolution never to consent to any sin great or small. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Two loves have made two different cities: self-love hath made a terrestrial city, which rises in contempt of God; and Divine Love hath made a celestial one, which rises in contempt of self. The former glories in itself---the latter in God. ----- St. Augustine

To love God as He ought to be loved, we must be detached from all terrestrial love; we must love nothing but Him, or if we love anything else, we must love it only for His sake. B. Peter Claver

What a weakness it is to love Jesus Christ only when He caresses us, and to be cold immediately He afflicts us. This is not true love. Those who love thus, love themselves too much to love God with all their heart. ----- St. Margaret Alacoque

To love God! oh, how beautiful it is! We must be in Heaven to comprehend love. Prayer helps us a little, because prayer is the elevation of the soul to Heaven. The more we know men, the less we love them. It is the reverse with God; the more we know of Him the more we love Him. This knowledge inflames the soul with such a love that it can no longer love or desire anything but God ... Man was created by love; therefore he is disposed to love. On the other hand, he is so great that nothing on earth can satisfy him. He can be satisfied only when he turns to God. Take a fish out of water, and it will not live ... Well, such is man without God. ----- St. Cure d'Ars

One day, while conversing with St. Bonaventure, Blessed Giles said to him: "My Father, God has shown you great mercy, and loaded you with many graces in giving you that knowledge which helps you to praise Him. But we, poor ignorant creatures, how can we correspond with His goodness and attain to salvation?" The Saint replied: "If God had given man His love alone, that would be enough." "What?" returned Blessed Giles, "can an ignorant man love God as much as the most learned doctor?" "Certainly," answered St. Bonaventure, "an old woman who knows nothing can love God as much and more than a master in theology." At these words, Giles, transported with delight, ran into the garden, and cried out to the passers-by, "Come, simple and unlearned men, Come poor, wretched, ignorant women, come, listen to me. Do you wish to love Our Lord? You can love Him as much and more than Brother Bonaventure and the most learned theologians." ----- B. Giles of Assisi

O my sweet Love, who shall prevent me from loving Thee? Shall it be my body? Rather will I reduce it to dust. Shall it be my past sins? I will immerse them in the sea of Thy Blood, and after that, behold my body and soul, make me suffer whatever it may please Thee in order to annihilate them in such a manner that they may be no obstacle to my loving Thee. ----- St. John Eudes

Blessed Benedict Joseph Labre said that, to love God as we ought, it would be necessary to have three hearts in one. The first, all on fire for God, would cause us to think continually of God, speak habitually of Him, act constantly for Him, and support with patience, during the term of our life, the sorrows and trials which it may please Him to send us. The second heart, all love for our neighbor, should cause us to help him in his temporal wants by our alms, and still more in his spiritual needs by instruction, counsel, example, and prayer. This second heart should be, above all, full of tenderness for sinners; asking continually of God to enlighten and bring them to sorrow for sin; it should also be most compassionate toward the holy Souls in Purgatory. But the third heart should be hard as bronze toward self, shunning every kind of sensuality, resisting constantly all self-love, renouncing one's own will, chastising the body by fasting and abstinence,--- in fine, putting to death all the inclinations of corrupt nature. ----- St. Benedict Joseph Labre

FRATERNAL CHARITY

Let each one love his brother in charity. We have each our faults. He who has to put up with his brother's fault today will have to be borne with himself tomorrow. ----- St. Alphonsus Liguori

How patiently Christ, the King of Heaven and Earth, bore with the Apostles, enduring at their hands many incivilities and unbeliefs, they being but poor and rough fishermen. How much more ought we to bear with our neighbor, if he treats us with unkindness. ----- St. Philip Neri

In order to avoid contention, never contradict anyone, except in case of sin or some danger to a neighbor; and when necessary to contradict others, and to oppose your opinion to theirs, do it with so much mildness and tact, as not to appear to do violence to their mind, for nothing is ever gained by taking up things with excessive warmth and hastiness. ----- St. Louis, King

Our enemy the devil, who fights with us, in order to vanquish us, seeks to disunite us in our houses, and to breed quarrels, contests, and rivalries, because, while we are fighting with each other, he comes and conquers us, and makes us more securely his own. ----- St. Philip Neri

Dismiss all anger, and look a little into yourself. Remember that he of whom you are speaking is your brother, and, as he is in the way of salvation, God can make him a Saint, notwithstanding his present weaknesses. You may fall into the same faults or perhaps into a worse fault. But supposing that you remain upright, to whom are you indebted for it, if not to the pure mercy of God? ----- St. Thomas of Villanova

Oh! could you but see the beauty of a soul in the grace of God, you would be so much enamored of it that you would do nothing else but ask souls of God; and, on the contrary, could a soul in mortal sin be placed before your eyes, you would do nothing but weep, and you would hate sin more than the devil himself, and always pray for the conversion of sinners. ----- St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi

The highest among all Divine works is to co-operate in the salvation of souls. St. Dionysius

Those who attend to the regulation of their own consciences are not much given to form rash judgments; far from wasting their reflections in dissecting the actions and intentions of their neighbors, whose conduct may appear cloudy and obscure, they enter into themselves, and use their utmost endeavors to reform and perfect their own lives, like bees which, in misty and cloudy weather, return to their hive to pursue their home

labors. Rash judgment produces detraction, which is the bane of conversation. Were detraction banished from the world, numberless other sins would be banished together with it. ----- St. Francis de Sales

If a man finds it very hard to forgive injuries, let him look at a crucifix, and think that Christ shed all His Blood for him, and not only forgave His enemies, but even prayed His Heavenly Father to forgive them also. Let him remember that when he says the Pater Noster, every day, instead of asking pardon for his sins, he is calling down vengeance on himself. ----- St. Philip

To leave our prayer when we are called to do some act of charity for our neighbor, is not really a quitting of prayer, but leaving Christ for Christ. Even in the midst of a crowd we can be going on to perfection. ----- St. Philip

We must sometimes bear with little defects in others, as we have, against our will, to bear with natural defects in ourselves. If we wish to keep peace with our neighbor, we should never remind anyone of his natural defects. St. Philip

Everyone ought to yield readily to the opinion of another, and to argue in favor of another, and against himself, and take things in good part. ----- St. Philip

Be as gentle always as possible; and remember that you will catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a hundred barrels of vinegar. Such is the nature of the human mind; it rebels against severity, but gentleness renders it amenable to everything. A soft word appeases anger, as water extinguishes fire. No soul so ungrateful, but kindness can make it bear fruit. To speak truths sweetly is to throw burning coals, or rather roses, into a person's face. How can anyone be angry with another who fights him with pearls and diamonds? ----- St. Francis of Sales

I know well that many of the rich show mercy to the poor, but they do it by the hands of others. They give their gold, but not their personal services, because the sight of misery inspires disgust and makes them ill. I will not find fault with this weakness, nor will I call it unmerciful. But I must be allowed to say that true love and perfect faith raise the mind above such infirmities and make it strong for holy services of love. St. Jerome

Alas! if we consider our neighbor outside the Heart of Our Lord, we run the risk of not loving him fondly, nor constantly, nor impartially. But within It, who would not love him, live with him, tolerate his imperfections, who would find him disagreeable or tiresome? But our neighbor is in the Heart of Our Saviour, and he is so much loved by It, and considered so worthy of love, that the lover dies for love of him. ----- St. Francis de Sales

Why should we not bear with those with whom He has borne, keeping before our eyes the great example of Jesus Christ praying on the Cross for His enemies? For they have not yet crucified us, they have not yet persecuted us to death, we have not yet resisted unto blows. But who will not love this beloved enemy for whom Jesus Christ has prayed and for whom He has died? ----- St. Francis de Sales

There are so many sorts of troubles in this world, and so many people who are afflicted in different ways, that we ought to be very glad when we can help anyone to carry their cross. ----- St. Chantal

Love the worst men, love in them the remains of faith which they still preserve, or, if they have lost it all, love the virtues of which they are bereft, love the sacred image they bear, love the Blood of Christ with which you believe them to have been redeemed. ----- St. Ignatius

3. HUMILITY; MEEKNESS; OBEDIENCE

HUMILITY

The whole life of Christ upon earth was a continual lesson of morality, but He in a special manner proposed to us His humiliation for our imitation. The Son of God says not to us: Learn of Me to make Heaven and earth, to create all visible things, to work miracles, to raise the dead; but learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart, for solid humility is much more powerful and safe than empty grandeur. -----St. Augustine.

Have these three things always present to your mind: what you were, what you are, and what you will be. -----St. Bernard.

When trees are much loaded with fruit, the quantity weighs down, nay, sometimes breaks the branches; whereas, those which are not so laden remain straight; and when the ears of corn are full, they hang down, so that the stalk seems ready to break; but when they stand up, it is a sign there is little in them. Just so it is as to spiritual things. They who bear no fruit continually shoot upward, but they who are laden with the fruit of grace and good works are always hanging down their heads in a humble posture; they make the favors they have received from God a subject of further humiliation and fear. -----St. Dorotheus.

We are only worth the price at which God values us. True merit must be weighed in His scales, for it is His judgment which alone can decide between real and counterfeit virtue. -----St. John Berchmans.

Nothing can tend so much to humble us before the mercy and justice of God as the consideration of His benefits and our own sins. Let us, then, consider what He has done for us, and what we have done against Him; let us call to mind our sins in detail, and His gracious benefits in like manner, remembering that whatever there is of good in us is not ours, but His, and then we need not be afraid of vainglory or of taking complacency in ourselves. If, however, when reflecting on the graces with which God has favored us, we should be assailed with thoughts of vainglory, the consideration of our ingratitude, imperfections, and wretchedness will be an infallible remedy against them. If we consider what we have done when God was not with us, we shall see at once that what we do when He is with us is not our work or production; we shall, indeed, rejoice in the possession of it, but we shall give all the glory to God, Who alone is the author of it, as the Blessed Virgin proclaimed that God had done great things in her behalf, but only to humble herself and glorify God. "My soul," said she, "doth magnify the Lord, because He has done great things for me." -----St. Francis of Sales.

A treasure is secure so long as it remains concealed: but when once disclosed and laid open to every bold invader, it is presently rifled; so virtue is safe as long as secret, but, if rashly exposed, it but too often evaporates into smoke. By humility and contempt of the world, the soul, like an eagle, soars on high, above all transitory things, and tramples on the backs of lions and dragons. -----St. Syncletica.

Believe me, that a little attention to acquire humility, and an act of this virtue, are worth more before God's infinite wisdom than all the learning of the world . . . Humility drew the Son of God from Heaven to the womb of a Virgin, and by the same humility we can draw Him into our souls. The more the flower of humility blossoms in a soul, the greater is the good odor it imparts to her who possesses it, to those who behold her, and to those who are about her. -----St. Teresa.

It is foolish to be puffed up with human favor, or to be proud of earthly honor. For what is great before men is abominable before God, and what a man is in the sight of God, that he is and no more. It cannot be known how much humility or patience a servant of God has, when he has everything according to his own wishes or

necessity. But when the time comes that those who ought to befriend him turn against him, then he has as much humility and patience as he shows, and no more. -----St. Francis of Assisium.

God takes especial delight in the humility of a man who believes that he has not yet begun to do any good. -----St. Philip Neri.

Humility is a Divine shield and veil which conceals our good works and virtues from our own too curious eyes. Penance awakens us; holy sorrow knocks at Heaven's gate; humility opens them. This virtue is the only one no devil can imitate. If pride made demons out of Angels, there is no doubt that humility could make Angels out of demons. -----St. John Climacus.

Humiliation is the road to humility, as meekness in suffering tribulations and injuries produces patience. If you do not exercise humiliations, you cannot attain to humility. -----St. Bernard.

In the order of the virtues, humility holds the first rank,-----in this sense, that it drives from us pride, which sets us at war with God; and that, on the contrary, it renders man submissive and entirely open to the effusions of Divine grace. -----St. Thomas.

As, when the sun is eclipsed, the whole earth is dark, so, if there is a want of humility, all our works are blighted, and are nothing but blemish and corruption. -----St. John Climacus.

No man can attain to the knowledge of God but by humility. The way to mount high is to descend; for all great falls which ever happened in this world were caused by pride, and all spiritual advantages arose from humility. -----Blessed Giles.

By humility a man finds grace before God and peace with men. This is the path to salvation, to rejoice in every advantage, and to grieve for every misfortune of your neighbor, to see and acknowledge your own evils and miseries, and to believe only good of others; to know others and despise yourself. -----Blessed Giles.

MEEKNESS

Who is the meek? Whose imitator is he? He is not the imitator of Angels nor of Archangels, though they are most mild, and full of every virtue, but of the Lord of the universe. Paul would have us to imitate the meekness of God, that by exhibiting to us His dignity, we might be convinced that all who suffer contempt, bear contumely, or endure any other evil with mildness, controlling their anger, are imitators of God. -----St. John Chrysostom.

Though Jesus is the absolute Lord of all hearts, yet what resistance does He not suffer from us against the illuminations of His grace? What rebellions against His holy inspirations? And although He is obliged to withdraw Himself from those who are unwilling to walk according to His way, yet He ceases not to return after a while and to renew His holy inspirations and most loving invitations. -----St. Francis of Sales.

Go and exhort men to penance for the remission of their sins and for peace. You will find some among the faithful, mild and good, who will receive you with pleasure, and willingly listen to you; others, on the contrary, without religion, proud and violent, will censure you, and be very hostile to you; but make up your minds to bear all this with humble patience and let nothing alarm you. Be patient in tribulations, fervent in prayer, and fearless in labor. -----St. Francis of Assisi.

If you desire to labor with fruit for the conversion of souls, it behooves you to mix the balm of gentleness with the strong wine of your zeal, to the end that the latter be not too ardent, but benign, pacific, long-

suffering and full of compassion. For the natural character of men is such that, when treated with harshness, it becomes still more hardened, whereas mildness soon softens it. Moreover we ought to remember that Jesus Christ came to bless men of good will, and if we give up our own will to His guidance, we may be sure that He will render it fruitful. -----St. Francis of Sales.

Let us force ourselves to be affectionate, gentle, and humble in our intercourse with all, especially with those whom God has given us as our companions, such, for instance, as those of our household. And never let us consent to be of the number of those who, out of their own house, appear like Angels, but are more like devils at home. -----St. Francis of Sales.

When we have to reply to anyone who has insulted us, we should be careful to do it always with meekness. A soft answer extinguishes the fire of wrath. If we feel ourselves angry, it is better for us to be silent, because we should speak amiss; when we become tranquil, we shall see that all our words were culpable. -----St. Liguori.

We should also use meekness toward ourselves when we have committed a fault. To be in a passion with ourselves after a fault, is not humility but pride; it is depressing to acknowledge that we are weak and miserable creatures. St. Teresa said, that all humility which disturbs the soul does not proceed from God, but the devil. To be angry with ourselves, after the commission of sin, is a greater fault than the former; a fault which brings many others in its train; such as the omission of our usual devotions, of prayer, of Communion, or the imperfect performance of them. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that the devil fishes in troubled waters. When the soul is in trouble, it has but a weak knowledge of God and its duty. When we have committed a fault, let us address God with humility and confidence and ask His pardon; saying to Him, with St. Catherine of Genoa: "O Lord, these are the fruits of my garden. I love Thee with my whole heart. I have offended Thee; I am sorry for it, and will never do so again. Grant me Thy holy grace." -----St. Liguori.

We must imitate the forbearance of God. Oh, how great is God's forbearance! He endures patiently the temples of the profane men who outrage His Majesty; He endures idols and sacrilegious ceremonies; He makes the sun to shine on the evil and upon the good, and His rain descend upon the just and upon the unjust; He makes the elements serve all men alike, the impious as well as the good; the winds blow, the springs burst forth, the harvests swell with waving corn, the grapes ripen, the trees cover themselves with fruit, the forests put on thick foliage, the meadows adorn themselves with the enamel of flowers. God delays vengeance, and patiently waits, that man may correct himself and return to his Saviour. Such is the forbearance of the Eternal Father, and similar to it was that of the Son, for all the actions of Jesus Christ were characterized by patience and by that Divine evenness of soul of which nothing could disturb the tranquility. -----St. Cyprian.

Mildness is a virtue, in which principally consists nobility of soul. And for this reason it is that lovers of the world often fail in mildness, because they are not possessed of that nobility, or only in a very scanty and imperfect degree. If they are not the first to use insulting and uncourteous terms, at least when they are attacked by others they resent it with the utmost indignation, giving in return language doubly abusive, and thus showing by their vengeance that they have an ignoble disposition. The servants of God, on the other hand, whether provoked by word or work, by keeping themselves tranquil and peaceful, evince a perfect nobleness of soul. -----St. Thomas Aquinas.

Many appear full of mildness and sweetness as long as everything goes their own way; but the moment any contradiction or adversity arises, they are in a flame, and begin to rage like a burning mountain. Such people as these are like red-hot coals hidden under ashes. This is not the mildness which Our Lord undertook to teach us in order to make us like unto Himself.

We ought to be like lilies in the midst of thorns, which, however they be pricked and pierced, never lose their

sweet and gentle fragrance. -----St. Bernard.

Meekness, the greatest of virtues, is reckoned among the beatitudes. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." For that blessed land, the heavenly Jerusalem, is not the spoil of warriors who have conquered, but the hoped-for inheritance of the meek, who patiently endure the evils of this life. -----St. Basil.

It is better not to allow anger, however just and reasonable, to enter at all, than to admit it in ever so slight a degree; once admitted, it will not be easily expelled, for, though at first but a small plant, it will immediately grow into a large tree. -----St. Augustine.

When you feel the assaults of passion and anger, then is the time to be silent. Jesus was silent in the midst of His ignominies and sufferings. O holy silence, rich in great virtues! O holy silence, which is a key of gold, keeping in safety the great treasure of holy virtues! -----St. Paul of the Cross.

In the Christian combat, not the striker, as in the Olympic contests, but he who is struck, wins the crown. This is the law in the celestial theatre, where the Angels are the spectators. -----St. John Chrysostom.

It is better to err by excess of mercy than by excess of severity. . . . Wilt thou become a Saint? Be severe to thyself but kind to others. -----St. John Chrysostom.

Nothing is more powerful than meekness. For as fire is extinguished by water, so a mind inflated by anger is subdued by meekness. By meekness we practice and make known our virtue, and also cause the indignation of our brother to cease, and deliver his mind from perturbation. -----St. John Chrysostom.

Beware not to disturb yourself, nor to be irritated on account of the defects of others, for it would be folly, because you saw a man throw himself into a pit, to throw yourself into another. -----St. Bonaventure.

If, on a rare occasion, it is necessary to speak with some severity in order to make a grievous crime felt, we should always, at the conclusion of the rebuke, add some kind words. We must heal wounds, as the Samaritan did, with wine and oil. But as oil floats above all other liquors, so meekness should predominate in all our actions. -----St. Liguori.

Above all things we should be meek toward our enemies. We must overcome hatred by love, and persecution by meekness. It was thus the Saints acted, and in this manner they conciliated the regard of their bitterest enemies. -----St. Liguori.

It is better to have to give an account to God for too much mercy than for too much severity. -----St. Antoninus.

There are two methods to subdue anger. First, that before a person undertakes to act, he places before his mind the contumelies and sufferings which he will likely encounter, and, by reflecting on the shame borne by our Saviour, prepares himself to bear them patiently. Secondly, that when we behold the excesses of others, we direct our thoughts to our own excesses, by which we offend others. This consideration of our own faults will lead us to excuse those of others. For a person who piously considers that he also has something which others must bear patiently in him will be easily disposed to bear patiently injuries he receives from others. -----St. Gregory.

The morning light shines before the sun, so does meekness precede humility. Meekness is that unalterable condition of the soul in which it remains always the same in praise as in blame, without confusion, without disturbance, and without vexation. Meekness aids obedience, and is a quality of the Angels. A meek soul is

enlightened by the spirit of discernment, and is the seat of simplicity. The simple soul is far removed from all vain, curious, and perverse thoughts; it goes directly and sincerely to God, as a scholar to his master. -----St. John Climacus.

OBEDIENCE

The obedience which we render to a superior is paid to God, Who says, "He that hears you hears Me;" so that whatever he who holds the place of God commands, supposing it is not evidently contrary to God's law, is to be received by us as if it came from God Himself; for it is the same thing to know His Will, either from His Own, from an Angel's, or from a man's mouth.

The truly obedient man does not know what it is to delay and put off the business till tomorrow; he is an enemy to any kind of demur; he prevents the superior, and even gets the start of his commands. His eyes and ears are always open to the least sign that is given him; all his other senses, and every power within him, faithfully waits the motion of his superior. He does what he is bid, goes where he is commanded, and is always ready to receive and execute any order. -----St. Bernard.

Obedience is a virtue of so excellent a nature, that Our Lord was pleased to mark its observance upon the whole course of His life; thus He often says, He did not come to do His Own will, but that of His Heavenly Father.

Naturally we all have an inclination to command, and a great aversion to obey; and yet it is certain that it is more for our good to obey than to command; hence perfect souls have always had a great affection for obedience, and have found all their joy and comfort in it.

Whoever wishes to live happily and to attain perfection, must live conformably to reason, to rule, and to obedience, and not to his natural likes and dislikes; such an one must esteem all rules, must honor them all, must cherish them all, at least in the superior part of the will; for if one rule be despised now, another will be so tomorrow, and on the third day it will be no better. When once the bonds of duty are broken, everything will be out of order, and exhibit a scene of confusion. -----St. Francis of Sales.

St. Paul commands us to obey all superiors, even those who are bad. Our Blessed Saviour, His Virgin Mother, and St. Joseph have taught us this kind of obedience in the journey they took from Nazareth to Bethlehem, when Caesar published an edict that his subjects should repair to the place of their nativity to be enrolled. They complied with this order with the most affectionate obedience, though the Emperor was a pagan and an idolator, so desirous was Our Lord of showing us that we should never regard the persons of those who command, provided they be invested with sufficient authority. -----St. Francis of Sales.

One of the greatest graces for which I feel myself indebted to Our Lord is, that His Divine Majesty has given me the desire to be obedient; for in this virtue I find most consolation and contentment, it being that which Our Lord recommended by His own example more than any other, and on this account I desire to possess it more than anything else in the world.

The more we see that any action springs not from the motive of obedience, the more evident is it that it is a temptation of the enemy; for when God sends an inspiration, the very first effect of it is to infuse a spirit of docility. -----St. Teresa.

Obedience is a short cut to perfection. They who are living under obedience, if they really wish to advance in the ways of God, must give themselves up always and in all things into the hands of their superiors; and they who are not living under obedience must subject themselves to some learned and discreet confessor, whom they may obey in the place of God, disclosing to him, with perfect candor and simplicity, the affairs of their

soul; and they should never come to any resolution without his advice. Nothing gives greater security to our actions, or more effectually cuts the snares the devil lays for us, than to follow another person's will, rather than our own, in doing good. -----St. Philip.

He who always acts under obedience may be assured that he will not have to give an account of his actions to God. -----St. Philip.

By the other virtues, we offer God what we possess; but by obedience, we offer ourselves to Him. They who obey are conquerors, because by submitting themselves to obedience they triumph over the Angels, who fell through disobedience. -----St. Gregory.

Obedience is a penance of reason, and, on that account, a sacrifice more acceptable than all corporal penances and mortifications. God is more pleased to behold the lowest degree of obedience, for His sake, than all other good works which you can possibly offer to Him. -----St. John of the Cross.

A single instant passed under simple obedience is immeasurably more valuable in the sight of God than an entire day spent in the most sublime contemplation. -----St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi.

He who follows his own ideas in opposition to the direction of his superiors needs no devil to tempt him, for he is a devil to himself. -----St. John Climacus.

There are three sorts of obedience; the first, obedience when a strict obligation is imposed upon us, and this is good; the second when the simple word of the superior, without any strict command, suffices for us, and this is better; the third, when a thing is done without waiting for an express command, from a knowledge that it will be pleasing to the superior, and this is the best of all. -----St. Ignatius.

See God in your superiors; so shall you learn to revere their will and follow their commands. Be well assured that obedience is the safest guide and most faithful interpreter of the Divine Will. Pour out your hearts to them as freely as water, mindful that they are charged with the direction of your souls. . . . Above all, do not be your own master, relying on your own prudence, contrary to the caution of the wise man. -----St. Ignatius.

He that is truly obedient does not wait for a command, but as soon as he knows what his superior wishes to have done immediately sets himself to work, without expecting an order. -----Blessed Albert the Great.

It is better to cherish the humble desire of living according to the rule of the community, and to be diligent in its observance, than to entertain exalted desires of performing imaginary wonders, for such imaginations only tend to swell our hearts with pride, lead us to undervalue our brethren, from an impression that we are better than they. -----St. Pacomius.

All that is done by obedience is meritorious . . . It is obedience, which, by the light of Faith, puts self-will to death, and causes the obedient man to despise his own will and throw himself into the arms of his superior . . . Placed in the bark of obedience, he passes happily through the stormy sea of this life, in peace of soul and tranquility of heart. Obedience and faith disperse darkness; he is strong because he has no longer any weakness or fears, for self-will, which is the cause of inordinate fear and weakness, has been destroyed.

Oh! how sweet and glorious is the virtue of obedience, by which all other virtues exist, because it is the offspring of charity! On it is founded the rock of faith; it is a queen, whom he that espouses is rich in every kind of good and whom no evil can assail. -----St. Catherine of Siena.

4. CHASTITY; THE SERVICE OF GOD

CHASTITY

A pure soul is like a fine pearl. As long as it is hidden in the shell, at the bottom of the sea, no one thinks of admiring it. But if you bring it into the sunshine, this pearl will shine and attract all eyes. Thus the pure soul, which is hidden from the eyes of the world, will one day shine before the Angels in the sunshine of eternity.

The pure soul is a beautiful rose, and the Three Divine Persons descend from Heaven to inhale its fragrance. -----St. Cure d'Ars.

Like a beautiful white dove rising from the midst of the waters, and coming to shake her wings over the earth, the Holy Spirit issues from the infinite ocean of the Divine perfections, and hovers over pure souls, to pour into them the balm of love. The Holy Spirit reposes in a pure soul as in a bed of roses. There comes forth from a soul in which the Holy Spirit resides a sweet odor, like that of the vine when it is in flower. -----St. Cure d'Ars.

Chastity is the lily of virtues, and makes men almost equal to Angels. Everything is beautiful in accordance with its purity. Now the purity of man is chastity, which is called honesty, and the observance of it, honor and also integrity; and its contrary is called corruption; in short, it has this peculiar excellence above the other virtues, that it preserves both soul and body fair and unspotted. -----St. Francis of Sales.

What is more comely than chastity, which makes one generated from impure seed pure; an enemy, a friend; and a man, an Angel? There is a difference, indeed, between a chaste man and an Angel, but in happiness, not in virtue; the Angel's chastity is more happy; but man's is more proved. -----St. Bernard.

Chastity, or cleanness of heart, holds a glorious and distinguished place among the virtues, because she, alone, enables man to see God; hence Truth itself said, "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." -----St. Augustine.

There is no remedy so powerful against the heat of concupiscence as the remembrance of our Saviour's Passion. In all my difficulties I never found anything so efficacious as the wounds of Christ: In them I sleep secure; from them I derive new life. -----St. Augustine.

If you desire to be chaste, be retired, be modest, be mortified. -----St. Leonard of Port Maurice.

Humility is the safeguard of chastity. In the matter of purity, there is no greater danger than not fearing the danger. For my part, when I find a man secure of himself and without fear, I give him up for lost. I am less alarmed for one who is tempted and who resists by avoiding the occasions, than for one who is not tempted and is not careful to avoid occasions. When a person puts himself in an occasion, saying, I shall not fall, it is an almost infallible sign that he will fall, and with great injury to his soul. -----St. Philip.

I tremble when I think of so many great men, who after their virtues had placed them among the stars, and almost fixed their habitation in Heaven, have miserably fallen into most grievous sins and died impenitent. We have seen, Lord, the great lights of Thy Church fall from Heaven, being pulled from thence by the infernal dragon; and, on the contrary, some that lay, as it were grovelling on the ground, have been wonderfully elevated all at once by Thy almighty hand. -----St. Augustine.

Your good resolutions must not make you proud, but humble and diffident; you carry a large sum of gold

about you, take care not to meet any highwaymen. In this life there is nothing certain: we are in a continual warfare, and, therefore, ought to be on our guard day and night. We sail in a tempestuous sea that threatens us on every side, and in a poor leaky vessel: the devil, who aims at nothing less than our destruction, never ceases to increase the storm, to overwhelm us thereby, if he can; hence it was that the Apostle gave this precaution, even to the virtuous: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x.12) -----St. Jerome, Epistle to St. Eustochium.

Some complain that mankind will fail if so many are consecrated virgins. I desire to know who ever wanted a wife and could not find one? The killing of an adulterer, the pursuing or waging war against a ravisher, are the consequences of marriage. The number of people is greatest where virginity is most esteemed. Enquire how many virgins are consecrated every year at Alexandria, all over the East and in Africa, where there are more virgins than men in the country. -----St. Ambrose.

ON THE SERVICE OF GOD

When nothing diverts my thoughts from God, my heart swims in an excess of overflowing joy, in so much that I often forget my food and all earthly things; but it is an affliction to live amid the distraction of worldly conversation. -----St. Paul Hermit.

The true way to advance in virtue and give satisfaction is a holy cheerfulness. The cheerful are much easier to guide in the spiritual life than the melancholy. Excessive sadness seldom springs from any other source than pride. -----St. Philip.

Let the whole face wear an air of cheerfulness rather than that of sorrow, or any other disorderly affection; and if anyone be disposed to gloominess and melancholy, he must strive by much virtue and docility to suppress and banish it, and study so much the more to show a pious cheerfulness. -----St. Ignatius.

Cheerfulness strengthens the heart and makes us persevere in a good life; wherefore the servant of God ought always to be in good spirits. -----St. Philip Neri.

The soul of one who serves God always swims in joy, always keeps holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation, ever singing with fresh ardor and fresh pleasure a new song of joy and love. -----St. John of the Cross.

What a great right Jesus Christ has to our service, for the benefits with which He has loaded us! and how dear have these benefits cost Him! When He purposed to act according to His love, He seems, if we may so speak, to have forgotten He was God. -----St. Ignatius.

Some negligence in serving a man might perhaps be excused, but in the service of God it ought not, at any price, to be endured. -----St. Ignatius.

One act performed in dryness of spirit is worth more than several done in great sensible fervor. -----St. Francis of Sales.

How many courtiers there are, who go into the presence of the King, a hundred times, not to speak to him, or to listen to him, but merely to be seen by him and to show by their assiduity that they are his servants. When, then, you come into the presence of Our Lord speak to Him, if you can; if you cannot, because you are spiritually hoarse, stay nevertheless, and make Him a reverence. -----St. Francis of Sales.

We are made for this, that we may be good, and serve our Maker; when we act against His precepts, we act against Nature. -----St. Paulinus.

The service of God is not a burden, but an honor: so far from branding us with the mark of slavery, it wipes it away. -----St. Peter Chrysologus.

This is man's glory, to persevere and abide in the service of God. -----St. Irenaeus.

He is the Creator, thou art the creature; thou art the servant, He is the Lord; He is the Maker, thou art the vessel: therefore, to Him thou owest all thou hast, from whom thou hast received all, thy Sovereign Lord, Who made thee, and made thee well. -----St. Bernard.

To love God is to reign; he who desires to reign, let him adhere and be subject to God, the one Lord of all things; that soul is most free which is ruled by Him alone. -----St. Augustine.

There is no higher dignity than to serve Christ. -----St. Ambrose.

O man! thou art pleased to have a faithful servant and yet thou wilt not be faithful to God: thou who hast a servant, remember that thou too hast a Lord. -----St. Augustine.

Every creature, whether it will or not, is subject to the one God and Lord; but a warning is given to us, to serve the Lord with our whole will, because the just man serves Him willingly, but the unjust serves Him as a slave. -----St. Augustine.

God can never command anything that is impossible, because He is just, nor will He damn any man for what he could not avoid, because He is merciful. -----St. Augustine.

God does not command impossibilities, but when He commands anything, He admonishes thee to do what thou canst do, and to ask for what thou canst not do, and He helps thee to do it. Strengthen me, O Lord, that I may be able; give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt. -----St. Augustine.

GENEROSITY

Should he require what is my own, as my land or my money, I would not refuse him, though all I have belongs to the poor. But the Emperor (Valentinian I) has no right to that which belongs to God. If you require my estate, you may take it; if my body, I readily give it up; have you a mind to load me with irons or to put me to death, I am content. I shall not fly to the protection of the people, nor cling to the altar; I choose rather to be sacrificed for the sake of the altar. ----- St. Ambrose

Why should others cause me to offend God, or to lose the charity which I owe and bear them? If any person were to cut off my arms or pluck out my eyes, they would be the dearer to me, and would seem the more to deserve my tenderness and compassion. ----- St. Edmund, K.C.

In proportion as a soul is generous in the service of God, she experiences the effects of her liberality, and becomes day by day a more fit recipient of heavenly gifts and graces. ----- St. Ignatius

The dangers to which I am exposed, and the pains I take for the interests of God alone, are the inexhaustible springs of spiritual joys; insomuch that these islands, bare of all worldly necessities, are the places in the world for a man to lose his sight with excess of weeping; but they are tears of joy. I remember not ever to have tasted such interior delights, and these consolations of the soul are so pure, so exquisite, and so constant, that they take from me all sense of my corporal sufferings. ----- St. Francis Xavier

Would not traders go thither were gold to be found there, and can I hesitate when there are souls to be saved instead? ----- St. Francis Xavier

Christ one day said to St. John of the Cross, "John, what recompense dost thou ask for thy labors?" He answered: "Lord, I ask no other recompense than to suffer and be contemned for Thee." ----- St. John of the Cross

I know not your gods. Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is my God. Beat, tear, or burn me, and if my words offend you, cut out my tongue: every part of my body is ready when God calls for it as a sacrifice. ----- St. Theodorus, M.

"If we had taken you at such a time," said the heretics to St. Dominic, "what would you have done?" The Saint replied: "I would have asked you not to kill me all at once, but to have cut off my limbs, one by one, and to have placed them before my eyes, and then to have torn out my eyes, and left me so to perish." ----- St. Dominic

St. Martin, moved by the tears of his religious brethren, wept also and prayed thus: "Lord, if I am still necessary to Thy people, I refuse not to labor, Thy holy Will be done!" As if he had said, My soul is unconquered by old age, weakness, or fatigue, and ready to sustain conflicts, if Thou callest me to them. But if Thou dost spare my age and take me to Thyself, be the Guardian and Protector of those souls for which I fear. ----- St. Sulpicianus

For my part, I declare that nothing shall induce me to comply with your demand. What reproaches should I not suffer from my conscience?---what answer could I give to God, if I renounced the faith, for human respect? ----- St. Maximus, Confessor

The Martyrs desired death, not to fly labor, but to attain their end. And why did they not fear death, from which man naturally so shrinks? Because they had vanquished the natural love of their own bodies, by Divine and supernatural love ... How can man regret to lose that which he despises? Nay, rather he desires to give his life for God, who is his life, and to shed his blood for love of the Blood that was shed for him. ----- St. Catherine of Siena

Nothing richer can be offered to God than a good will; for the good will is the originator of all good and is the mother of all virtues; whosoever begins to have that good will has secured all the help he needs for living well. ----- Blessed Albert the Great

Better to live in uncertainty of one's own salvation, and yet devote one's self to the service of God and the welfare of souls, than to die this very hour with the certainty of entering into eternal glory ... We must not act in a niggardly way when God shows Himself so liberal to us. ----- St. Ignatius

We should not value much what we have given God, since we shall receive for the little we have bestowed upon Him much more in this life and the next. St. Teresa

I would willingly endure all the sufferings of this world to be raised a degree higher in Heaven, and to possess the smallest increase of the knowledge of God's greatness. ----- St. Teresa

In the Old Law, God would accept no victim as a holocaust, if it had not first been flayed; in like manner, our hearts can never be immolated and sacrificed to God until they shall have been flayed, stripped of this old skin, that is, of their habits, inclinations, repugnances, and superfluous affections, and self-love reduced to ashes and our whole soul converted into flames of heavenly love. ----- St. Francis of Sales

The throes and pangs of spiritual birth are painful to nature; our souls must give birth not exteriorly, but interiorly, to the sweetest, the most pleasing, the most beautiful child that could be desired. It is the good Jesus, whom we must form within ourselves. Courage! we must suffer much that He may be born in us.
----- St. Francis of Sales

A monastery is an academy of strict correction, where each one should allow himself to be treated, planed, and polished, so that, all the angles being effaced, he may be joined, united, and fastened to the Will of God.
----- St. Francis of Sales

In the monastery of the devout life, each one considers himself a novice, and a lifetime is devoted to a probation according to the rule of the order; it is not the solemnity of the vows, but their fulfillment which makes novices professed. ----- St. Francis of Sales

POVERTY AND DETACHMENT

The love of worldly possessions is a sort of bird-lime, which entangles the soul, and prevents it flying to God. ----- St. Augustine

Poverty was not found in heaven; it abounded on earth,---but man did not know its value. Therefore the Son of God longed after it, and came down from Heaven to choose it for Himself, to make it precious to us.
----- St. Bernard

As riches are the instruments of all vices, because they render us capable of putting even our worst desires into execution, so a renunciation of riches is the origin and preserver of virtues. ----- St. Ambrose

Blessed are the poor in spirit. He is rich in spirit who has riches in his spirit, or his spirit in riches. He is poor in spirit who has neither riches in his spirit, nor his spirit in riches. There is a vast difference between having poison and being poisoned. Apothecaries have almost all kinds of poison for their use, as circumstances may require, but they are not poisoned, because they keep their poisons not in their bodies but in their shops. In like manner you may possess riches without being poisoned by them, provided you have them for use, in your house or in your purse, and not by love in your heart. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Heaven is promised to other beatitudes as a future reward. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." But to the poor in spirit the Kingdom of Heaven is assigned as a present recompense, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. This is so, because to them who are truly poor in spirit the Lord gives great helps, even in this life. ----- St. Liguori

The less we have here, the more shall we enjoy in God's Kingdom, where the mansion of each is proportioned to the love with which he shall have imitated Jesus Christ. ----- St. Teresa

It is not mere poverty, but the love of poverty which is reputed virtue. ----- St. Bernard

Many religious glory in the name of poverty, but shun the sufferings and humiliations which are attached to it. They glory in the name, but fly from the reality. ----- St. Vincent Ferrer

Perfection does not consist in not seeing the World, but in not having a taste or relish for it. In a word, the perfection of charity is the perfection of life; for the life of our soul is charity. The primitive Christians lived in the world in body but not in heart, and were nevertheless very perfect. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Let us not esteem worldly prosperity or adversity as things real or of any moment, but let us live elsewhere, and raise all our attention to Heaven; esteeming sin as the only true evil, and nothing truly good but virtue which unites us to God. ----- St. Gregory Nazianzen

Every earthly possession is but a sort of garment for the body, and therefore he who hastens to contend with the devil should throw aside these garments, lest he be borne down. ----- St. Gregory

Poverty should be the badge of religious; and as men of the world distinguish their property by stamping it with their names, so the works of religious should be known to be such by the mark of holy poverty. ----- St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi

We ought to love poverty as a mother, and rejoice at the opportunity of feeling its effects. ----- St. Ignatius

We must look upon all things of this world as none of ours, and not desire them. This world and that to come are two enemies. We cannot therefore be friends to both; but we must resolve which we would forsake and which we would enjoy. And we think that it is better to hate the present things, as little, short-lived, and corruptible; and to love those to come which are truly good and incorruptible. Let us contend with all earnestness, knowing that we are now called to the combat. Let us run in the straight road, the race is incorruptible. ----- St. Clement

SELF-DENIAL AND MORTIFICATION

The perfection of a Christian consists in mortifying himself for the love of Christ. Where there is no great mortification, there is no great sanctity.

To mortify one passion, however small, is a greater help in the spiritual life than many abstinences, fasts, and disciplines. ----- St. Philip

Lament and consider that day as lost in which you have not in some way mortified yourself for the love of God. ----- St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi

Inordinate love of the flesh is cruelty, because under the appearance of pleasing the body we kill the soul. ----- St. Bernard

Be assured that the mortification of the senses in seeing, hearing, and speaking is far more profitable than wearing even sharp chains or hair shirts.

It ought to be our principal object to conquer ourselves, and from day to day to go on increasing in spiritual strength and perfection. But, above all, it is necessary that we should study to overcome our little temptations to anger, suspicion, jealousy, envy, duplicity, vanity, foolish attachments, evil thoughts, and so on: for, by so doing, we shall gain strength to resist more violent temptations. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Beware of too much speaking, for it banishes from the soul holy thoughts and recollection with God. ----- St. Dorotheus

They who pay a moderate attention to the mortification of their bodies, and direct their main attention to mortify the will and understanding, even in matters of the slightest moment, are more to be esteemed than they who give themselves exclusively to corporal penances. ----- St. Philip

There is great reason to lament the ignorance of some, who burden themselves with indiscreet penances, and with many other disorderly exercises of their own self-will, putting all their confidence in such acts, and believing that they become Saints by means of them. If they would but use half the same diligence in mortifying their unruly appetites and passions, they would make more advancement in a single month than in many whole years with all the other exercises. ----- St. John of the Cross

A man's chief care ought to be turned within himself: the renunciation of self-will is a greater thing than the raising of the dead to life. ----- St. Ignatius

While a single passion reigns in our hearts, though all the others should have been extirpated, the soul will never enjoy tranquility. ----- St. Joseph Calasanctius

A man who governs his passions is master of the world. We must either command them or be enslaved to them. It is better to be the hammer than the anvil. ----- St. Dominic

The more you hate and ill-treat your flesh, the greater will be your reward in the next life. ----- St. Benedict Joseph Labre

Our Saviour has annexed the prize of His love and of eternal glory to the victory we gain over ourselves. If, in good earnest, you abandon and renounce yourselves, you will find an incomparable sweetness in God's service, and it will be your delight to trample on self-love for the advancing of the kingdom of grace. It is the reward God promises to the conqueror. ----- St. Jane Frances de Chantal

Prayer without mortification is like a soul without a body, just the same as mortification without prayer is a body without a soul. ----- St. Francis of Sales

But the practice of mortification must be moderated by the rules of prudence and by the counsel of a wise director, because it may happen and often does happen that the devil urges on a soul to excessive penances in order to tire her and render her unfit for the service of God and the fulfillment of her duties. ----- Ven. Anna Maria Taigi

The fruits of a good heart which God waters and nourishes with His grace are a total forgetfulness of itself, a great love of humiliations, and an universal joy and satisfaction in everybody's good. ----- St. Jane Frances de Chantal

The spiritual combat in which we" kill our passions to put on the new man is the most difficult of all the arts. We must never weary of this labor, but fight the holy fight fervently and perseveringly. Jesus Christ came down from heaven to earth to point out the way that leads to true happiness, and the first Christians imitated their Divine Master in all things. They left the world with all its riches and pleasures, in order the more easily to subdue their passions, to tame their sensuality, and to exercise themselves in virtue. ----- St. Nilus, Abbot

This is self-renunciation---to unlock the chains of this earthly life, which passeth away, and to set one's self free from the business of men, and so to make ourselves fitter and meetter to enter on that path which leadeth to God, and let our reason be more unhampered to gain and to use those things which are far more precious than gold or precious stones. ----- St. Basil

We must live in this world, as if our spirits were in Heaven and our bodies in the tomb. We must live a dying life and die a living and life-giving death, in the life of our King and sweetest Saviour. ----- St. Francis of Sales

ON PRAYER

Prayer is a fragrant dew; but we must pray with a pure heart to feel this dew. There flows from prayer a delicious sweetness, like the juice of very ripe grapes. Prayer disengages our soul from matter; it raises it on high, like the fire that inflates a balloon. The more we pray, the more we wish to pray. Like a fish which at first swims on the surface of the water, and afterward plunges down, and is always going deeper, the soul plunges, dives, and loses itself in the sweetness of conversing with God. ----- Ven. Cure d'Ars

Prayer is nothing else than union with God. When our heart is pure and united to God, we feel within ourselves a joy, a sweetness that inebriates, a light that dazzles us. In this intimate union God and the soul are like two pieces of wax melted together; they cannot be separated. This union of God with His little creature is a most beautiful thing. It is a happiness that we cannot understand. ----- Ven. Cure d'Ars

Countless numbers are deceived in multiplying prayers. I would rather say five words devoutly with my heart, than five thousand which my soul does not relish with affection and understanding. "Sing to the Lord wisely," says the Royal Psalmist. What a man repeats by his mouth, that let him feel in his soul. ----- St. Edmund, B.C.

God will grant all that thou askest for in prayer, provided it be expedient; if it be not expedient, He will bestow something more conducive to thy welfare. He best knows how and when to supply thy wants. When, through ignorance, thou askest for what is not beneficial, it is better thy petition should not be granted. ----- Ven. Blossius

A religious ought to desire nothing so much as to obtain the grace and gift of prayer, for without this he cannot hope to be able to make any progress in God's service; and with it there is nothing he may not promise himself. ----- St. Francis of Assisi

What is most valued in religious persons is not depth of learning and great talents for preaching, nor any other natural or human endowment, but it is humility and obedience, a spirit of recollection and prayer. St. Ignatius

Prayer is an impenetrable shield, a safe refuge, a certain harbor, and a most secure asylum. From the heart of man it ejects misery, and endows it with all good; indeed, by means of prayer, every blessing is attainable. As often as thou wilt, thy heavenly Father granteth thee an audience, and is ever ready to soothe thy anguish, comfort thy distress, and restore peace to thy troubled mind. Ven. Blossius

However great may be the temptation, if we know how to use the weapon of prayer well, we shall come off conquerors at last; for prayer is more powerful than all the devils. He who is attacked by the spirits of darkness needs only to apply himself vigorously to prayer, and he will beat them back with great success. St. Bernard

How should Our Lord fail to grant His graces to him who asks for them from his heart, when He confers so many blessings even on those who do not call upon Him? Ah, He would not so urge, and almost force us to pray to Him, if He had not a most eager desire to bestow His graces on us. St. John Chrysostom

God is more anxious to bestow His blessings on us than we are to receive them. St. Augustine

It is an old custom with the servants of God to have some little prayers ready, and to be frequently darting them up to Heaven during the day, lifting their minds to God out of the mire of this world. He who adopts

this plan will get great fruits with little pains. St. Philip Neri

Aspire to God with short but frequent outpourings of the heart; admire His bounty; invoke His aid; cast yourself in spirit at the foot of His cross; adore His goodness; treat with Him of your salvation; give Him your whole soul a thousand times in the day; fix your interior eyes on His ineffable sweetness; stretch forth your hand toward Him as an infant toward its father to be conducted by Him. ----- St. Francis of Sales

As those who are influenced by human and natural love have their minds and hearts constantly fixed on the objects of their affections; as they speak often in their praise, and when absent lose no opportunity of expressing by letters this affection for them, and cannot even pass a tree without inscribing on the bark the name of their beloved: so those who are possessed of Divine love have their minds and hearts constantly turned toward the Divine object of their love; they are ever thinking of Him, they long after Him; they aspire to Him, and frequently speak of Him; and, were it possible, would engrave in the hearts of all mankind the Name of their beloved Jesus. ----- St. Francis of Sales

One of the fruits of prayer is the knowledge of God, who manifests Himself to those who adore Him in spirit and truth. Hence love is kindled in the soul, it runs in the odor of His sweet perfumes, is drowned in the torrent of His sweetness, enjoys perfect interior peace, and is brought to immortal glory. ----- Blessed Giles

To pray is to raise the mind to God and converse with Him concerning our interests with a reverent familiarity, and a confidence greater than has the most petted child with its mother, and to talk with Him of all things both high and low, of the things of Heaven and the things of earth; it is to open one's heart to Him and pour it out unreservedly to Him; it is to tell Him of our labors, our sins, our desires, and all that is in our soul, and to find our rest with Him as we would with a friend. It is what the Holy Scripture calls "pouring forth one's heart as water before Him." ----- St. Francis of Sales

When through frailty a Christian is disturbed in prayer let him not imagine his entreaties to be worthless; for the benignity of God is such that, provided the petitioner's virtual intention be good, his prayer is not rejected. ----- Ven. Blosius

There is one thing that greatly afflicts pious souls, which is the distractions they suffer in prayer ... On such occasions, it is necessary to call back our wandering thoughts by renewing our faith in the presence of God, and by again placing ourselves before Him with reverence and respect; and if we cannot succeed in fixing our mind on the subject of our prayer, then we must endure with resignation and humility the painful cross. For the time will not be thrown away, as at first sight might appear; but on the contrary, one single hour of prayer performed in this manner will oftentimes prove more fruitful than many hours passed in recollection and peace; for each effort which the soul makes to drive away distractions, in order that it may not displease God, but serve Him better, is an act of the love of God. ----- St. Teresa

Sometimes Our Lord will require souls chosen for the service of His Divine Majesty, to be invigorated with a firm and invariable resolution of persevering in His service, amid a continued series of disgust, dryness, repugnances, and spiritual asperities, without consolations, without fervor, without any tender feelings and sensible delights; and He wishes them to consider themselves as not worthy of any other treatment; thus following their Saviour in the superior and most delicate part of the soul, without any other support than that of His Divine Will which will have it so. ----- St. Francis of Sales

After the winter of this coldness the holy summer will arrive, and we shall be consoled. Alas! we are always ready to welcome sweetness, enjoyment, and delicious consolations; but, after all, the roughness of desolation is more fruitful; and although St. Peter loved the mountain of Thabor, and fled from that of Calvary, the latter is, nevertheless, more salutary than the former; and the blood which is sprinkled over the

one is more desirable than the light which is diffused over the other. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Great talent is a gift of God, but it is a gift which is by no means necessary in order to pray well. This gift is required in order to converse well with men; but it is not necessary in order to speak well with God. To speak well with God, one needs good desires and nothing more. ----- St. John of the Cross

Some people, because of their self-love and the hollow joy which they have in prayer, will multiply their prayers beyond measure. Now, if they were to attend to something else of more importance, they would do better: namely, if they set about the purification of their own conscience, and applied themselves to the affair of their own salvation, omitting all prayers which have not this for their immediate object. If they do this, they will obtain that which concerns them most, and they will obtain besides all else, though they did not pray for it, in a readier and better way than if they had directed all their energies to it. We have for this the promise of Our Lord Himself, who tells us, "Seek ye, therefore, first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." ----- St. John of the Cross

It is quite clear that when the disciples of Christ said unto Him, "Teach us to pray," He told them all they were to do in order to be heard of the Eternal Father. He knew His Will. He then taught them only the seven petitions of the Pater Noster, which includes all our wants, spiritual and temporal. He did not teach them many and other forms and ceremonies. He had before told them not to use many words when they prayed, saying, "When you are praying, speak not much, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you." Only He charged them with great earnestness to persevere in prayer---that is, the Pater Noster---saying, "that we ought always to pray and not to faint." He did not teach us a variety of prayers, but to repeat often, with care and fervor, these petitions---for they contain the whole Will of God and our wants also. He Himself, when He fell on His face in the garden and prayed three times to the Eternal Father, thrice repeated the self-same words of the Pater Noster, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt;" that is, Father, if I must drink this chalice, Thy Will be done. ----- St. John of the Cross

CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

Our whole perfection consists in loving our most amiable God; and all the perfection of the love of God consists in uniting our will with His most holy will. The greatest glory that we can give to God is to fulfill His Blessed Will in all things.

The pure and perfect love which the Blessed in Heaven have for God consists in the perfect union of themselves with His holy will. If the Seraphim understood it to be His will that they should be employed for all eternity in raising heaps of sand on the seashore, or in the meanest employment on earth, they would do it with the utmost delight. Conformity means our joining our will with the will of God; uniformity means our making the Divine will and our own will but one, so that we will nothing but what God wills, and God's will alone is our will. This is the summit of perfection to which we should always aspire; this should be the object of all our actions, of all our desires, meditations, and prayers. If you embrace all things in life as coming from the hands of God, and even death to fulfill His holy will, assuredly you will die a Saint and will be saved. Let us then abandon ourselves in all things to the good will of that Lord who, being most wise, knows what is best for us, and, being most loving, since He has given His life for the love of us, wills also what is best for us. ----- St. Liguori

Man's salvation and perfection consist in doing the will of God; which he must have in view in all things and at every moment of his life: the more he accomplishes this Divine will, the more perfect he will be. To do the will of God man must despise his own: the more he dies to himself, the more he will live to God. ----- Blessed Peter Claver

We must remember that it is God's will, and not our own will, that we must do, for he that doth His will shall abide forever, even as He abideth forever. Therefore, with mind entire, faith firm, courage undaunted, love thorough, let us be ready for whatever God willeth, faithfully keeping the Lord's commandment, having innocence in simplicity; peaceableness in love; modesty in lowliness; in ministering, diligence; in helping them that toil, watchfulness; in succoring the poor, mercifulness; in standing up for the truth, firmness; in keeping of discipline, sternness; lest we be found wanting in every good work. These are the steps which the Saints who "have already gone home have left marked for us, that, by keeping in their footprints, we may follow them in their joy. ----- Ven. Bede

Let us throw ourselves into the arms of God, and be sure that if He wishes to accomplish anything by us, He will qualify us for all He desires us to do for Him. When the soul lies resignedly in the hands of God, and is contented with the Divine pleasure, she is in good hands, and has the best security that good will happen to her. Entire conformity and resignation to the Divine will is truly a road on which we cannot go wrong, and it is the only road which leads us to taste and enjoy that peace which sensual and earthly men know nothing of. ----- St. Philip Neri

We should unresistingly allow Our Lord to operate in us what---where---and when He pleases. We should willingly submit to be drawn by Him, so to speak, through the shades of death and the darkness of Hell. Is it not absurd to say in the Lord's prayer so frequently: "May His holy will be done," and feel ourselves disconcerted and inconsolable when it is accomplished? ----- Ven. Blossius

Who art Thou but my Creator and my Sovereign Good? and who am I but a miserable creature? I am bound in all things to conform my will to Thine. Thou alone knowest best and what is for my good. As I am not my own, but altogether Thine, so neither do I desire that my will be done, but Thine, nor will I have any will but Thine. ----- St. Francis Borgia

O sovereign Spouse of my soul, never suffer me to love anything but in Thee or for Thee. May everything which tends not to Thee be bitter and painful, and Thy will alone sweet. May Thy will be always mine: as in Heaven Thy will is punctually performed, so may it be done on earth by all creatures, particularly in me and by me. ----- St. Elizabeth of Hungary

Feed upon the will of God, and drink the chalice of Jesus with your eyes shut, so that you may not see what is inside; let it be enough for you to know that it is the cup of your sweet Jesus. Above all, form to yourself a constant habit of resignation by making frequently such acts as these: O beloved Will! O most Holy will of God, I love Thee! ... The food of my Jesus was to do the will of His Father, mine shall be the Same. ----- St. Paul of the Cross

The whole science of the Saints consists in knowing and following the will of God; because then only can a man be perfect indeed, when, raising himself above all other things, he subjects himself to eternal truth and justice, for, since man was made after the image and likeness of God, Who is Eternal Truth and Justice, he cannot expect to attain either perfection or happiness except by conformity to his divine original. On the other hand, the most dangerous of all temptations are those which lead us to follow the suggestions of our own hearts and thoughts, instead of the will of God. The pleasure which a man seeks in the gratification of his own inclinations is quickly changed into bitterness, and leaves nothing behind but the regret of having been ignorant of the secret of true beatitude and of the way of the Saints. ----- St. Isidore

A servant who follows his master, if he be asked where he goes, might reply that he does not go, that he only follows: because it is his master's will and not his, which determines the place to which he walks. ----- St. Francis of Sales

St. Macarius once sent a youth who wished to become an anchorite to the burial ground of the brethren, and

ordered him to praise the dead. When he returned he said to him: "Go there once more and revile the dead." After he had obeyed the Saint asked: "What did the dead answer thee, my son?" "Nothing, my father," replied the astonished youth. "Imitate, then, my son, their insensibility to the contempt or praise of men; for eternal life depends not upon the judgments of the world, but upon the judgments of God." To another he said: "Receive poverty, want, sickness, and all miseries joyfully from the hand of God, and with equal joy, consolation, refreshment and all superabundance. By this uniform joy in the will of God, thou wilt deaden the stimulus of thy passions." ----- St. Macarius

The accomplishment of Divine will is the sole end for which we are in the world. It is our only business, and our unum necessarium. This is what we ask this day of God: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." It is our center and our element, in which we find sweet repose, true life, perfect happiness, and eternal salvation, out of which there is nothing but trouble, death, and eternal loss. ----- Ven. John Eudes

To be a good servant of God is to be charitable to our neighbor, maintaining in the superior will an invincible resolution to do God's will; to possess great humility and simplicity in confiding one's self to God; to rise as frequently as one falls; to inure one's self to humiliations, and to tranquilly bear with the defects of others. ----- St. Francis of Sales

The exercise of continual abandonment of one's self to the hands of God includes in the most excellent manner all other exercises in their greatest simplicity, purity, and perfection, and while God leaves us the desire for it we should not change. ----- St. Francis of Sales

You desire that it should always be spring in your soul, but that cannot be. We must endure vicissitudes of weather interiorly as well as exteriorly, It is only in Heaven that we shall find the perpetual beauty of spring, the perpetual ripening of summer, the perpetual fruition of autumn. There we shall have no winter; but here winter is required for the exercise of abnegation, and a thousand little virtues which are practiced in times of sterility. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Paradise is no more pleasing than the miseries of this world, if the Divine good pleasures be equally in the miseries as in paradise. Labor is paradise, if the Divine will be found in it, and paradise labor, if the Divine will be not in it. ----- St. Francis of Sales

If I want only pure water, what does it matter whether it be brought me in a vase of gold or of glass? What is it to me whether the will of God be presented to me in tribulation or consolation, since I desire and seek only the Divine Will? ----- St. Francis of Sales

A heart indifferent to all things is like a ball of wax in the hands of God, capable of receiving all the impressions of His eternal good pleasure. It does not place its love in the things which God wills, but in the will of God Who decrees them. ----- St. Francis of Sales

PRESENCE OF GOD

If you wish to find a short and compendious method, which contains in itself all other means, and is most efficacious for overcoming every temptation and difficulty, and for acquiring perfection, it is the exercise of the presence of God. ----- St. Basil

In the midst of our employments we ought to have God present to our minds, in imitation of the holy Angels, who, when they are sent to attend on us, so acquit themselves of the functions of this exterior ministry as

never to be drawn from their interior attention to God. ----- St. Bonaventure

He who desires to make any progress in the service of God must begin every day of his life with new ardor, must keep himself in the presence of God as much as possible, and must have no other view or end in all his actions but the Divine honor. ----- St. Charles Borromeo

When I attentively consider, O Lord, that Thou hast Thine eyes as continually and as carefully fixed upon me as if neither in heaven nor on earth Thou hadst any creature to govern besides myself; when I think Thou beholdest all my actions, that Thou dost penetrate my most hidden and secret thoughts, and that all my desires are in Thy sight, I feel myself filled with confusion. ----- St. Augustine

As there is not a moment in which man enjoys not the effects of God's goodness, so there ought not to be a moment but he should have God present in his thoughts. ----- St. Ambrose

In all our thoughts and actions we ought to remember the presence of God, and account all lost in which we think not of Him. ----- St. Bernard

God is to be feared in public; to be feared in private; go in where thou wilt, He sees thee; light thy lamp, He sees thee; quench its light; He sees thee. Fear Him who ever beholds thee. If thou wilt sin, seek a place where He cannot see thee, and then do what thou wilt. ----- St. Augustine

We avoid the eyes of men, and in God's presence we commit sin. We know God to be the Judge of all, and yet in His sight we sin. ----- St. Ambrose

Who shall dare, in the presence of his prince, to do what displeases that prince? ----- St. Basil

He who remembers the presence of God is less open to other thoughts, especially bad thoughts. As long as we believe that God sees us, we are restrained from daring to sin before such a Witness and Judge. In two ways the presence of God is an antidote against sin: first, because God sees us, and secondly, because we see God. ----- St. Ignatius

He is never absent, and yet He is far from the thoughts of the wicked: yet He is not absent, when far away, for where He is not present by grace He is present by vengeance. ----- St. Gregory

This thought alone would save anyone from falling into sin: to remember that God is always present. St. Clement

The prodigal went far away, and fled into a distant country, but he did not escape from his witnesses, from the accusing eyes of his father ----- . St. John Chrysostom

In thy strife with the devil, thou hast for spectators the Angels and the Lord of Angels. ----- St. Ephrem

I will not turn my eyes from Thee, because Thou dost not turn away Thine eyes from me. I have labored much, seeking Thee out of Thyself, and Thou dwellest in me, if only I desire Thee. ----- St. Augustine

It behooves thee to be very careful, for thou livest under the eyes of the Judge who beholds all things. ----- St. Bernard

Surely, if we remembered that God sees us when we sin, we should never do what displeases Him. ----- St. Jerome

Though everyone that worketh evil hateth the light, and seeketh darkness, yet he cannot be hidden from God, whose eyes look down upon all things. ----- St. Innocentius

RECOLLECTION

Disengage thyself a while from earthly care, and give thyself for a time to think of God, and to repose a little in Him. Then, having closed the door of thy senses, say with the affection of thy soul: O Lord, behold I am in quest of Thy lovely Countenance; teach Thy poor servant how to find it. ----- St. Augustine

As birds have their nest where to retire, and deer their brakes and thickets to which to resort, either to enjoy the cool shade in the heat of summer, or to protect and defend themselves, so ought we to choose some place every day, either on Mount Calvary or in the Wounds of Our Lord, or nigh unto Him, whither to retreat on all occasions, there to refresh and recreate, or else to defend ourselves, as in a stronghold, against temptation. Happy the soul that can truly say to Our Lord: "Thou art a house of refuge unto me; my protection from thorns, and my shadow from the heat." ----- St. Francis of Sales

Those who can enclose within the little paradise of the soul Him who created heaven and earth, may well believe they are in a good road, and that they shall not fail to arrive at length at the fountain of life, because they will make great progress in a short time. ----- St. Teresa

Be assured that he who shall always walk faithfully in God's presence, always ready to give Him an account of all his actions, shall never be separated from Him by consenting to sin. ----- St. Thomas Aquinas

Some there are who visit with great devotion holy places and solemn shrines. I do not condemn their piety, but I would remind them that faith teaches us that our own interior is also a sanctuary, because it is the living temple of God, and the dwelling of the Most Holy Trinity. Let us enter, then, into this temple, and adore Our Lord there in spirit and in truth: this is a most sublime devotion. Make frequent visits to this interior sanctuary, and see that the lamps be ever burning there. These lamps are the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Your soul is the temple in which the living God dwells by faith. ----- St. Paul of the Cross

By interior recollection we retire into God, or draw God within ourselves. But when and where can we have recourse to it? At all times, and in all places. Neither repast, nor company, nor change, nor occupation can hinder it, as neither does it hinder or interfere with any action. On the contrary, it is a salt which seasons every kind of meat, or a sugar which spoils no sauce. It consists only in interior looks between the soul and God. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Let a man always think that he has God before his eyes. ----- St. Philip

I stand between two eternities. I must fall either into one or the other. ----- St. Ambrose

Heaven open, Hell open,---between the two is the Christian. ----- St. Francis

Recall yourself sometimes to the interior solitude of your heart, and there, removed from all creatures, treat of the affairs of your salvation and your perfection with God, as a friend would speak heart to heart with another. ----- St. Francis of Sales

We should speak to God as a friend speaks to his friend, or a servant to his master, sometimes asking a favor, sometimes accusing ourselves of our faults, sometimes laying before Him all that concerns us, our thoughts, our doubts, our projects, and our dispositions, and asking counsel from Him in all these things. ----- St. Ignatius

It is most important to always seek to preserve the presence of God, for it excites in us a tender love for His Divine Majesty, and gives us great purity of conscience. ----- St. Teresa

Watch over yourself, that your heart may be always inflamed with the fire of charity. As long as oil is kept boiling, flies do not come near it, but when it cools they are drowned in it and it is spoilt. In like manner, as long as a soul glows with the fire of Divine love, the devil keeps at a distance, but when the soul becomes tepid the flies of vanity and idle thoughts enter and defile it. ----- Blessed Baptista Varani

St. Paul of the Cross used to say to those about him: "Stay at home; stay at home." When they asked, "What do you mean? am I never to go out of my house?" He would answer them: "Stay in the solitude of your own heart before God, and keep three lamps burning before the altar---faith, hope, and charity---before the presence of God in your heart. ----- St. Paul of the Cross

PRUDENCE AND SIMPLICITY

Prudence must precede every action which we undertake; for, if prudence be wanting, there is nothing, however good it may seem, which is not turned into evil. ----- St. Basil

The virtue of prudence is indispensably necessary to teach us how to adapt ourselves to the state and disposition of each person with whom we have to do; to make us circumspect in word and action; and to restrain us from all that may be prejudicial to our neighbor. It is the function of prudence to regulate our words and actions. Prudence prompts us to speak with due caution, so as to suit our discourse to the time, place, and subject. It causes us to abstain from such arguments as offend God or our neighbor, as well as those which tend to our own praise, or other evil consequences. It makes us proceed with consideration and with a right intention in action, so that the prudent man does everything in the manner, at the time, and for the end it ought to be done, such end being nothing but God Himself. It teaches us to make choice of the most proper means, and puts us in the most direct and sure way to obtain our last end.

There are two sorts of prudence, the one human, the other Christian. Human, carnal, or worldly prudence is that which has only worldly prosperity in view, and is indifferent about the means, provided it attains its object. Christian prudence takes Eternal Incarnate Wisdom for its guide in every thought, word, and work. It is regulated in every emergency, not by fatuous, glimmering light of its own, or by worldly judgment, but by the maxims of faith. ----- St. Vincent of Paul

It is not good to load ourselves with many spiritual exercises: it is better to undertake a little, and go on with it; for if the devil can persuade us to omit an exercise once, he will easily bring us to omit it a second time, and, more easily still, a third, until all our pious practices will, at last, melt away. ----- St. Philip

Be ye prudent as the serpent; he, on being in danger, exposes his whole body to preserve his head. In the same manner, we must risk everything, should it be necessary, to preserve the love and presence of Our Lord whole and entire within ourselves, for He is our Head, and we are His members. This is the prudence which we are to unite with simplicity. ----- St. Francis of Sales

Christian simplicity is an act of simple charity which makes us have no other view in our actions but the sole desire of pleasing God; this is the one thing necessary. It is a virtue which is inseparable from charity, which looks straight to God, and which can- not suffer any interference from the consideration of creatures: God alone finds place in it. ----- St. Francis of Sales

God in His nature is most simple, and cannot admit of any duplicity. If we then would be conformable to Him, we should endeavor to become by virtue what He is by nature; that is to say, we should be simple in our affections, intentions, actions, and words; we should do what we find to do without artifice or guile, making our exterior conformable to our interior; we should have no other object but God in our actions, and seek to please Him alone in all things. ----- St. Vincent of Paul

The soul that has attained to perfect simplicity loves but one thing, which is God, and has but one personal desire in the gratification of this love, which is to repose in His bosom: there, like a child of love, she fixes her abode; she puts herself, without reserve, under the care of His paternal providence, without any anxiety but what is found in maintaining this confidence.

There is a certain simplicity of heart in which consists the perfection of all perfections. This is when the soul fixes her intention only on God, and retires into herself, in order to attend, with great diligence and simplicity, to the fulfillment of the duties prescribed to her, without turning her mind to desire or to undertake anything else. Craftiness is the accumulation of artifices, intrigues, deceits, and appearances, to mislead the minds of those with whom we converse. This is quite the reverse of simplicity, which requires that the outside should correspond with what is within. There are souls so much engaged in considering what they shall do that they lose the time for action; but in everything respecting our perfection, which consists in the union of the soul with God, little knowledge and much practice is what is demanded. It appears to me that, when asked to point out the road to heaven, we might very rationally reply with those who say that to reach a particular place we must go straight forward and keep moving, putting one foot before the other, and, by that simple operation, we shall soon arrive at the object of our wishes. "Always advance," may be said to those souls so solicitous to attain perfection: "pursue the path of your vocation with simplicity; be more attentive to act than to form desires. This is the shortest way." ----- St. Francis of Sales

PURITY OF INTENTION

An action of small value, performed with much love of God, is far more excellent than one of a higher value, done with less love of God. A cup of cold water given with this great love is meritorious of eternal love. ----- St. Francis of Sales

We make little actions great by performing them with a great desire to please God; the merit of our services consisting, not in the excellency of the works, but in the love which accompanies them. ----- St. Francis of Sales

In all your actions seek in the first place the kingdom of God and His glory; direct all you do purely to His honor; persevere in brotherly charity, and practise first all that you desire to teach others. ----- St. Bernardine of Siena

He who wishes for anything but Christ does not know what he wishes; he who asks for anything but Christ, does not know what he is asking; he who works, and not for Christ, does not know what he is doing. ----- St. Philip

A man ought never to think he has done any good, or rest contented with any degree of perfection he may have attained, because Christ has given us the type of our perfection in putting before us the perfection of the Eternal Father: "Be ye perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect. ----- St. Philip

Every creature in the world will raise our hearts to God, if we look upon it with a good eye. ----- St. Felix of Cantalicio

As a master of a family calls together his servants at the close of the day to see how they have fulfilled their various offices, so must the Christian summon before the tribunal of his reason, every day, the sense of his body and all the various faculties and powers of his soul, and ask of them a strict account of the manner in which they have fulfilled their respective functions. ----- St. John Chrysostom

If those things which God commands are only done outwardly, by the hands, and not inwardly, in the heart, no one is so senseless as to think he has fulfilled the commandment. ----- St. Augustine

Let your intentions in the fulfillment of your duties be so pure that you reject from your actions every other object but the glory of God and the salvation of souls. ----- St. Angela of Merici

From the time that we go on with a right and pure intention, seeking not our own interests, but those of Jesus Christ, our adorable Master Himself preserves us because of His infinite goodness. ----- St. Ignatius

It is not on the multiplicity of our actions that our progress in perfection depends, but on the fervor and purity of intention with which we do them. Purity of soul increases the merit of a good action, because it is the end which gives value to the action, and the more pure is that end and intention, the more perfect is the action. What more worthy end can we have in our actions than the glory of God? ----- St. Francis of Sales

The whole conduct of a Christian proposes to itself only one end, which is the glory of God; wherefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ----- St. Basil

Let all our study be to have an upright intention, not only in our state of life in general, but also in our actions in particular; proposing nothing else to ourselves than to serve and please God; and this rather through love and gratitude for the benefits we have received, than through fear of punishment, or hope of reward, though these motives are good and ought to be made use of by us. ----- St. Ignatius

O pure and upright intention of the will! Intention so much the more upright and pure, by how much it is purified from any mixture of self-interest! Affection so much the more tender and sweet, by how much it is moved or touched by nothing but what is divine; and to be moved and affected after this manner is to be deified. ----- St. Bernard

Be careful to purify your heart more and more each day. Now, this purity consists in weighing everything in the scales of the Sanctuary, which are only the will of God. Ah! do not examine whether what you do is much or little, whether it is done well or ill, provided it be not sin, and provided you have an upright intention to do it for God. Do everything as perfectly as you can; but once an action is performed, think no more of it, but rather of what there is to be done.

It seems to me that I see your heart before me like a dial placed in the sun, which never moves while its needle and balance are continually in motion, ever turning toward the beautiful planet; for your heart in like manner remains motionless, while your will is continually turning by means of its good desires toward God. ----- St. Francis of Sales

There have been many persons in the world of old times who had some virtue and did good works; and there are many Christians also at this time, who are virtuous men, and who do great things, but their virtue and good works are utterly useless in the matter of eternal life; because they do not, in them, seek the honor and glory and love of God solely, and above all things. ----- St. John of the Cross

A Christian ought to rejoice, not because of his works and virtuous life, but because his life and acts are such solely for the love of God, and for no other reason whatever. For as works done only for God's honor will have a greater reward of glory, so good works which men do under the influence of other considerations will

end in our greater confusion in the sight of God. ----- St. John of the Cross

The Christian, therefore, if he will direct his rejoicing to God in moral goods, must keep in mind that the value of his good works, fasting, almsgiving, penances, and prayers does not depend upon their number and nature, but on the love which moves him to perform them for God; and that they are then most perfect when they are wrought in the most pure and sincere love of God, and with the least regard to our own present and future interests, to joy and sweetness, consolation, and praise. ----- St. John of the Cross

Writings of María Concepción Zúñiga López

"Wisdom renews all things, and through nations conveys herself into holy souls.

She makes the friends of God and prophets." --- Wisdom 7:27

María Concepción Zúñiga López was a Mexican religious who died in the odor of sanctity in 1979. Her most famous book is *Legion of Victim Souls*. (Imprimatur, 1966).

Our Lord is seeking a legion of victims, who will help to save sinners from perdition. Her other works are:

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