

Some Words on the Virtue of Hope

by Father R. P. Quadrupani



blesed is the man who hopes in the Lord," says the Holy Spirit. The weakness of our souls is often attributable to lukewarmness in regard to the Christian virtue of hope.

Hold fast to this great truth: he who hopes for nothing will obtain nothing; he who hopes for little will obtain little; he who hopes for all things will obtain all things.

The mercy of God is infinitely greater than all the sins of the world. We should not, then, confine ourselves to a consideration of our own wretchedness, but rather turn our thoughts to the contemplation of this divine attribute of mercy.

"What do you fear?" says Saint Thomas of Villanova: "this Judge whose condemnation you dread is the same Jesus Christ who died upon the Cross in order not to condemn you."

Sorrow, not fear, is the sentiment our sins should awaken in us. When Saint Peter said to his divine Master: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," what did our Saviour reply? "*Noli timere*, — fear not." [Luke 5:8, 10] Saint Augustine remarks that in the Holy Scriptures we always find hope and love preferred to fear.

Our miseries form the throne of the divine mercy, we are told by Saint Francis de Sales, for if in the world there were neither sins to pardon, nor sorrows to soothe, nor maladies of the soul to heal, God would not have to exercise the most beautiful attribute of His divine essence. This was our

Lord's reason for saying that He came into the world not for the just but for sinners. [Luke 5:32, Mark 2:17, Matthew 9:13]

Assuredly our faults are displeasing to God, but He does not on their account cease to cherish our souls. (St. Francis de Sales writes:) "It is unnecessary to observe that this applies only to such faults as are due to the frailty inherent in our nature, and against which an upright will, sustained by divine grace, continually struggles. A perverse will, without which there can be no mortal sin, alienates us from God and renders us hateful in His eyes as long as we are subject to it. At the feast spoken of in the Gospel, the

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Saint John Vianney's Sainly Helper

by Abbe Francis Trouchu,
from his book *The Curé d'Ars*

At what period did people begin to attribute a miraculous efficacy to the prayers of M. Vianney? Without doubt the very first prodigies — viz., the multiplication of the corn and flour, which had taken place about the year 1830 — soon came to the knowledge of the inhabitants and of the strangers who already flocked to Ars in considerable numbers. The stir caused by those extraordinary events worried the Curé; he trembled lest men should attribute to him the glory of having been their author.

At an early date the sick and infirm were found mingling with the crowd. After they had asked the prayers of the Curé d'Ars, some of these testified to a feeling of relief, and not a few were completely cured. These things, of course, got talked about. "However," says Pertinand, the schoolmaster, "M. le Curé recommended silence, so that people were afraid to give him pain by proclaiming the favors they had received. But a change took place when the cult of St. Philomena came to be established in the parish. From that moment the servant of God gave to her all the credit of the marvels that were being accomplished, so that he took delight in proclaiming them. To her he attributed all the prodigies that made the pilgrimage so famous. Thanks to him, devotion to the youthful saint spread rapidly, both in the surrounding district and all over France."

It is likely enough that if the Curé d'Ars had not sounded her praises for the space of thirty years, St. Philomena would not have enjoyed the immense popularity that came to her in the Nineteenth Century. Prior to 1830 very few people had heard her name. As recently as May 24, 1802, a workman, whilst engaged in clearing a gallery in the catacomb of St. Priscilla, in Rome, had discovered her tomb — viz., a *loculus*, or cavity, hewn out of the live rock and closed with three bricks, on which

was to be read the inscription, written in minium:

PAX TECUM FILUMENA.

The bones were those of a girl between fourteen and fifteen years of age. Near the head was found, shattered into several fragments, the glass phial which, no doubt, had contained a few drops of blood, and which the Church holds to be a proof of martyrdom. The remains of *Filumena* were translated to the *Custodia* of the Sacred Relics. They were destined to remain there, in comparative oblivion, until

June, 1805, when they were given to Don Francesco di Lucia, a missionary of Mugnano. At Mugnano, a small village in the kingdom of Naples, *Filumena*, whose arrival had been honored by the entire population, at once displayed her power by astounding prodigies.

However, the echo of these marvels only reached France about 1815. At that time the *Benfratelli*, or Brothers of St. John of God, having been expelled by the revolutionary storm, were visiting the villages and towns of the whole of France. They were on a begging tour in behalf of their work, but whilst asking for alms they likewise sang the praises of St. Philomena. Their superior, Père

de Mongallon, passed through Lyons, where he enjoyed the hospitality of the wealthy Jaricot family. Yielding to the entreaties of Pauline Jaricot, then seventeen years of age, he gave her a relic which he had brought from Mugnano. Of this relic M. Vianney in turn obtained a small fragment. In this way, very humbly indeed, little *Filumena* entered Ars, where she was destined to play a twofold role — one public, the other private and intimate. In the eyes of the crowd she would be the heavenly wonder-worker at whose intercession any miracle would be granted, but, in addition, a pure and mysterious

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Conference News

You have been showing us that you feel as we do, the “Last Chance for World Peace” Conference may be our last chance! Your letters of support and your prayers have heartened all of us at the Fatima Center. We were touched when one woman became an “angel” to sponsor a bishop’s participation. She told us, ‘I would like to come to the conference and on the pilgrimage. But it is just a little bit more to sponsor a bishop who might need financial assistance. Rather than come myself, I want him to gain the benefit.’ God bless your generosity and all those who are extending a hand like bright angels. We will try to match sponsors to bishops so that as many as can may come to participate in the conference.

We have not seen this kind of interest from the bishops in some time.

Following the invitation to the bishops, we also sent out the conference announcement and *Crusader* 49: “The Magnificent Promise for The Five First Saturdays” to another 49,000 priests in North America. They are not promised financial assistance, but we would like to assist those who are genuinely interested to come. Imagine at the Conference, when so many clergy come together and see their colleagues who earnestly desire to please Our Lady and to obey Her request. How heartened they will be to know they are not alone! Please keep up your prayers and your daily sacrifices for the success of this conference. We hope that one bishop may consecrate his diocese to the Immaculate Heart, then another, and another... And that the Pope will see that the bishops will support him when he rises to consecrate Russia, according to Our Lady’s request. And all these souls, hallmarked with Holy Orders, may lead their sheep in renewed personal sanctification. †

Grace and the Will

by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

When grace comes into the will, it gives us new power, new strength that we never had before. It gives us a new ability to resist temptation. Too often in this world as soon as anyone becomes a slave of sin, we speak of him as having a compulsion. We say, “Oh, he is a compulsive drinker. He is a compulsive eater.” Now that is true. The word that Our Lord used to explain that compulsion was slavery. But this does not mean that these people have completely destroyed their freedom. Believe me, there is always a little area of freedom left in an alcoholic or in anyone who is given over to the slavery of sin. Sins which started with free acts of our own weaken our will, but they do not completely destroy it. It is possible for grace to establish a beachhead. Grace has its D-Day, and God can get in to anyone. After all, when we are trying to cure people of vices, we can never drive out a vice. We can only crowd it out. How do you crowd it out? You crowd it out by putting in something else. The grace of God comes in. When we begin to love Him, then these vices begin to be pushed out. Once a new love comes in, we are changed.

SAINT JOHN VIANNEY’S SAINTLY HELPER

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affection was to link her to the saintly parish priest; she would be “his Beatrice, his ideal, his sweet star, his guide, his comforter, his pure light.”

This mystic friendship was destined to become so strong and so deep that it could be described in the following astonishing lines: “From the start the beloved saint responded to the affection of her servant. As time went on the harmony between their hearts also grew, so that, in the best years of his life there obtained between them not merely a distant relationship, but a close and direct connection. Henceforth the saint on earth enjoyed with the saint in Heaven a most sweet and intimate familiarity. On the one hand we see a

ceaseless invocation, on the other a sensible assistance and a kind of real presence.”

This “ardent and almost chivalrous love” could not remain hidden in his heart. The pilgrims were admitted to the secret; they reaped its benefits. Many times a day, in the pulpit, in the confessional, in the square in front of the church, M. Vianney exhorted his hearers to call upon his *dear little saint*, his *consul*, his *representative*, his *agent with God*.

Thus it came about that whilst he was still misunderstood and contradicted by men and subjected to the vexations of the devil, the Curé d’Ars, visited and comforted by his immortal friend, retained even in extreme old age that moral vigor, that freshness of the heart which in him were the presage of the unfailing youthfulness of the elect. †



India Office:

Readers are always interested in our international efforts and the faces of those with whom they are united on behalf of Our Lady's Apostolate. Our India office recently sent pictures of the children at the Indian orphanage and of some of the daily activities at the Indian office.



Making Green Scapulars



Meals are a highly organized affair – the children's interest is divided between smiling for the camera and eating lunch.

SOME WORDS ON THE VIRTUE OF HOPE

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King receives with love the poor, the blind, and the lame who are clothed with the nuptial garment — that is to say, all those who desire to please God maintain themselves in a state of grace notwithstanding their natural defects and frailty: but His rigorous justice displays itself against him who dares to appear there without this garment. This distinction, found everywhere throughout the Gospels, is essential in order to inspire us with a tender confidence when we fall, without diminishing our horror for deliberate sins.”

A good mother is afflicted at the natural defects and infirmities of her child, but she loves him none the less, nor does she refuse him her compassion or her aid. Far from it; for the more miserable and suffering and deformed he may be, the greater is her tenderness and solicitude for him.

We have, says Saint Paul, a good and indulgent High-Priest who knows how to compassionate our weakness, Jesus Christ, who has been pleased to be-

come at once our Brother and our Mediator. [Hebrews]

Do not forfeit your peace of mind by wondering what destiny awaits you in eternity. Your future lot is in the hands of God, and it is much safer there than if in your own keeping.

The immoderate fear of hell, in the opinion of Saint Francis de Sales, cannot be cured by arguments, but by submission and humility.

Hence it was that Saint Bernard, when tempted by the devil to a sin of despair, retorted: “I have not merited Heaven, I know that as well as you do, Satan; but I also know that Jesus Christ, my Saviour, has merited it for me. It was not for Himself that He purchased so many merits — but for me: He cedes them to me, and it is by Him and in Him that I shall save my soul.”

Far from allowing yourself to be dejected by fear and doubt, raise your desires rather to great virtues and to the most sublime perfection. God loves courageous souls, Saint Theresa assures us, provided they mistrust their own strength and place all their reliance upon Him. The devil tries to persuade you that it is pride to have exalted aspirations and to wish to imitate the virtues of the saints; but do not permit him to deceive you by this artifice. He will only laugh at you if he succeeds in making you fall into weakness and irresolution.

To aspire to the noblest and highest ends gives firmness and perseverance to the soul. †

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