

The Principle of Christ's Humility

by Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.

True humility does not arise from any lack of clear-sightedness or ability; it springs from a profound understanding of God's infinite greatness and of the nothingness of creatures which cannot exist by themselves. This twofold knowledge becomes ever more unified, for God's infinite majesty manifests the frailty of creatures, and inversely our helplessness reveals to us by contrast God's immense power. St. Catherine of Siena tells us that these two truths are, as it were, the highest and lowest points on the circumference of a circle which grows continually in size. When anyone knows where the lowest point is, he can see by contrast where is the diametrically opposite point. The ever-growing circle is the symbol of contemplation.

Humility is born of the realization of the abyss which separates God from creatures. God the Father, desiring to instill this thought into the soul of St. Catherine of Siena, said to her: "I am who am, thou art who art not." This is what He had said to Moses.

God is Being. He cannot not be, having existed from all eternity, without beginning and without any limitation whatever, the infinite ocean of being. God is also sovereign wisdom, who knows everything that is to happen in the most remote future, and for whom there is no mystery. He is love, never-failing and impeccable. He is power, before whom nothing can resist without His permission.

On the other hand, no matter how gifted a creature may be, by itself it is not, that is, it is not self-existent. If a creature has received its existence from God it is gratuitously on His part, because He has most freely loved it, by creating it out of nothingness. The ancient



philosophers never rose in their thinking to the explicit idea of creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing!). The thought of the absolute liberty of the creative act never occurred to them. God might very well not have created us. He had no need of us, He who is infinite goodness and beatitude.

continued on page 2

In this issue:

The Principle of Christ's Humility.....	1
Saint Anthony Mary Claret and the Prodigy of the Waves.....	2
Teaching Children about Pain and Suffering: Saint Patrick and the Prince.....	4
News from the Apostolate.....	4

Saint Anthony Mary Claret and the Prodigy of the Waves

Saint Anthony Mary Claret, who was canonized in 1950, is one of the great prodigies of modern times. Born in 1807 in rural Spain, in the province of Barcelona, he was the fifth of eleven children. It would seem that God prepared the child at an early age to consider well the promptings of God. At the tender age of five, he would lie awake at night. When his mother would ask him what preoccupied him, he would answer, "Eternity, eternity."

During the revolutionary years that accompanied his early life, the threat reached his town, Sallent, that

the invaders would burn it to the ground. Denizens of neighboring Manresa and Callers had already fled from the ashes of their homes. The people of Sallent lost no time in taking flight, fearful for their lives. Amidst the turmoil, small Anthony took his grandfather's hand and walked patiently with the old man. "Don't worry, grandfather," the boy said, "I will accompany you to safety." As the two shuffled along, Anthony prayed with fervent heart. His grandfather wept as they walked, for no one else had offered to assist him to a haven. But the French invaders turned to the north, and Sallent was pre- *continued on page 3*

THE PRINCIPLE OF CHRIST'S HUMILITY *continued from page 1*

Creatures by themselves are nothing, and once they exist they are still nothing in comparison to God. The glow of a candle is something, minute as it may be, in comparison to the blazing sun. However, even the noblest creature is nothing compared to God's infinity, compared to the infinite perfection of His wisdom and His love. Since creation, there have been more beings, but there is no more being, no more life or wisdom or love. Likewise, in relation to the Most High, angels, men, and grains of dust are equally infinitesimal, for between all creatures and God there is always an infinite distance.

Moreover, intelligent creatures depend upon God for the direction of their lives, for He assigns to them their final end, eternal life. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" And what is the best path to attain eternal life? The path that divine Providence has mapped out for us from all eternity. It is incumbent on us humbly to recognize this path. It is not for us to determine it ourselves. It may be a hidden way, to preserve us from pride and from forgetting God. Perhaps it is a path of suffering, one that is richer than any other in the fruits of life. The apostolate of prayer and of suffering is no less fruitful than the apostolate of teaching, and it even fecundates the latter by inspiring the search of doctrine not only in books but from the source of life. We must humbly accept the path, which may be hidden and painful, that Our Lord has chosen for us in His mercy, the path that is indicated to us by circumstances and by those that Our Lord has give us as guides.

Finally, in order to advance in this path which leads to eternal life, what can a creature accomplish of itself? Nothing. Even if a creature has received an abundance of sanctifying grace, it cannot accomplish the slightest salutary act or make the smallest step forward without God's actual help. This help is offered to each creature, but it cannot benefit by this help if it falls prey to the attraction of pleasure or to the tempta-



tion of pride. Those who best understand the sublimity of the goal to be attained, are also best aware of their own frailty. Who knew this better than the saints? They mistrusted themselves and placed their confidence in God.

This is the principle of humility: the realization of God's infinite greatness and of our own nothingness. †

served from any destruction. To what did the townspeople attribute their protection? To the child who, without fear of danger, while all else fled, prayed and walked through the streets guiding an aged invalid.

As a priest, his life was one of sacrifice and tireless work to save souls. In thirty-five years of priesthood, he preached some 25,000 sermons – almost two per day. And that was in the days of the dogcart, when travel was much more burdensome than it is now! He evangelized the Canary Islands, served as bishop and Archbishop of Cuba, and even served as confessor to the Queen of Spain. He would curtail his sleep to as little as an hour a night, so as to write 144 books and pamphlets. He was considered a worker of wonders, often commanding nature for the service of God.

Even as a young man, he had a deep and vital devotion to the Blessed Mother. Often he would make pilgrimages with his sister to a remote mountaintop shrine to prostrate himself in prayer before the Virgin.

Father Juan Echevarria, who compiled *The Miracles of St. Anthony Mary Claret* describes an event, formative to the discerning young man, which reveals Our Lady's protection of Her client. Before his call to the priesthood, Anthony delighted in and was consumed with work. But he would drive himself to excess, until his health was near a breaking point. In those days, he would retire to the serene and sparkling beach to breathe the fresh air and thus to restore his strength. Father Echevarria writes:

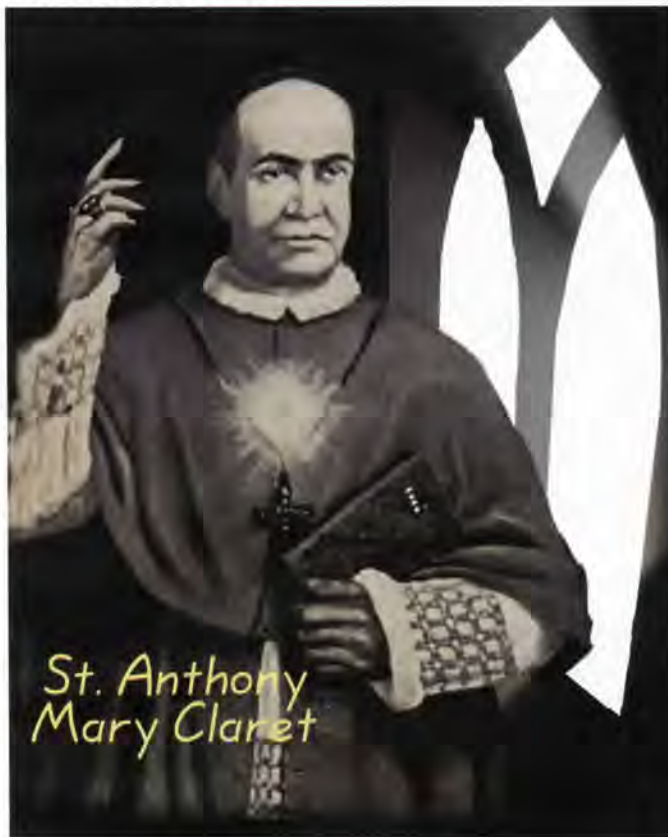
"One day, as at other times, he went, accompanied by some friends, to wade in the water at Barceloneta, a solitary and abandoned beach, which now attracts crowds because of the marvelous transformation made by engineers. Anthony had seated himself there when suddenly a terrific wave took hold of him and dragged him into the sea, submerging him into the agitated waters. His companions, on seeing it,

wept and cried for help. Unable to give him assistance, they ran home hurriedly to tell of the tragedy. Anthony, struggling in mid-sea with the tempest, remained serene amid grave dangers. While the waves were tossing him on high and submerging him, Anthony, from the depth of his heart, cried to Our Lady, 'Holy Mother, help me!' Instantly a wave seemed to carry him in its arms. Without any effort on his part, he floated on the water. Soon after, without knowing how, he found himself safe on shore. His face was calm; his clothing dry. He did not doubt but that it was a miraculous intervention of Our Lady, whom he had invoked in the hour of danger.

"The storm at sea continued. The waves rose mountain-high and opened again, forming deep abysses; striking furiously they threw a water-spout into space. Anthony then understood his imminent danger. He began to weep. He wept because he thought of his unpreparedness to die, and exclaimed amid sobs: 'O, my God! What would have been my fate, the fate of my soul if I had been drowned now! Thanks to Thee, Holy Virgin, my Mother, for having saved me. I will try to live better and be more fervent in the future.' He looked about but saw no one. His companions had fled in consternation. Anthony, finding himself alone, went to his rooming-house. On seeing him, his friends who had supposed that he was already a corpse in mid-ocean, were amazed,

especially at seeing him tranquil. They cried out: 'A miracle! This is a great miracle!' They questioned him, but he was silent.

"After a lapse of years, Anthony, with supreme simplicity, wrote in his autobiography: 'Since I did not know how to swim, I was on the point of drowning. The thought of invoking the Blessed Virgin came to me. I did the best I could, and without knowing how, I found myself instantly on shore. I became frightened when I thought of the imminent danger of death through which I had passed and how Our Lady had delivered me.' " †



Teaching Children about Pain and Suffering: Saint Patrick and the Prince

by Mary Reed Newland



St. Patrick

Does someone in your house have to have a penicillin shot, or boosters for all those things you get booster shots for? Or is there one who is chronically ill and has frequent pain, perhaps every day? Here is a story to help the fearful grow stout of heart and the stout-hearted to endure even when they grow weary of *offering up*.

It is told of the time when St. Patrick baptized Aengus, prince of Munster, at Cashel. As you know, St. Patrick was a bishop and in addition to mitres and copes and rings, bishops always appear for ceremonies bearing their staves, or croziers. Apparently St. Patrick's crozier was sharply spiked. On the day he was baptizing Aengus, he reached that part of the ceremony where he needed the use of both hands, so he stuck his crozier firmly into the ground – or so he thought. Unknowingly he had stuck it through Aengus' foot! The prince said not a word. The baptism continued and only when the final words and the pouring on of water was done and the birth of the new Christian was completed, did St. Patrick discover what he had done. He was horrified! Full of concern and pity for the suffering prince, he asked why he had not cried out? Aengus replied simply. "But is this not part of the ceremony? I thought it was, and since Christ whose feet were pierced by nails shed His blood for me, I am glad to suffer pain at baptism to be like Him."

Oh glory — what a wonderful thing to do with all our suffering! In pain and suffering we can be like Him! †

Apostolate News

You know that the Fatima Center has many activities and projects underway in Our Lady's service. The quarterly *Fatima Crusader's*, and mailings to bishops, priests, and supporters are just routine activities. Also included these days are preparations for the October 2007 pilgrimage to Fatima and other holy sites, the finishing of the guidelines for the Fatima Movement of Priests, production of television and radio programs (as well as another documentary on the Fatima Message), publishing programs – and, of course, preparation for the next two international conferences for the clergy, scheduled for later this year.

This past March, just before Holy Week, Fatima Center employees, volunteers and friends were able to take a few moments away from all this work to reflect on higher things, and to re-orient themselves to the ultimate Good. A visiting priest, Fr. Isaac, known for his sermons offered a four-day mission in the chapel at the Fatima Center. Employees who wished to attend were able to do so during work hours. Father stirred many hearts as he spoke on the Four Last Things. His examination of conscience was especially serious.

Every one of us needs to take time in this kind of reflection – even the best works can lose their fruitfulness if the doer gets caught up in himself. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it."

(Psalm 126:1) In these times, the opportunity to go to a good mission or on a silent retreat is a rare privilege. But one can spend a few minutes after Sunday Mass in meditation, to confer with Our Lord and Our Lady. These few minutes will function as leaven for bread, helping us to detach ourselves from worldly attractions, and grow in God's grace.

Please keep Our Lady's Apostolate and all Her workers in your prayers. Preparations for the next conferences for the clergy, to be held in South America and Asia, are well underway. The Apostolate's friends have continued to support this extraordinary effort to bring the Fatima Message to every corner of the world. Thank you. God bless you. †



To reach us: Call or write us at

International Fatima Rosary Crusade Newsletter,

In U.S.A. – 17000 State Route 30, Constable, NY 12926

In CANADA – 452 Kraft Road, Fort Erie, ON L2A 4M7

Call toll-free: 1-800-263-8160 • Fax: 1-905-871-3646

www.fatima.org • E-mail: info@fatima.org

**Be sure to visit fatimashoppe.org
for all things Fatima!**