



S S P X



Holy
Angels
Novitiate



The King of Peace is magnified above
all the kings of the whole earth.
— 2 Ant. Christmas Vespers —

Annunciation and Adoration of the Magi by Fra Angelico
(d. 1455), an Italian painter with a rare and perfect talent.



Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Many blessings to all in this new liturgical year. The Christmas season is a great time for reflection. One of the highest faculties of man is his ability to reflect or contemplate; to ponder the highest and most noble things. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is undoubtedly most worthy of our contemplation. The Mass is the most profound act we have to worship God. Indeed it is perfect in itself. It is the perfect prayer. God knows how to worship God. We, as poor creatures, needed to be taught by Christ, how to worship God. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, God offers God to God. This is the reality. The priest acts as His instrument. It is profound. It is deep. It is not just for our contemplation, an act of the intellect, but also for us to engage our will, to adore, to praise, to love, to thank, to manifest our unworthiness, our humility or littleness before His majesty. To show Him empathy at His sufferings, His sorrows, His wounds; these acts of the will are what the spiritual authors call the affections. They are movements of the will to make known or better yet, to vitalize our communication with God. The heart of prayer is the affections.

When we attend Mass on Sunday, do we pray the Mass? Do we move our affections toward God? Unfortunately, there are many who simply follow the Mass as spectators. Some try to keep up with the priest, but often they cannot, because the priest goes too fast or on account of other distractions. So they find that their heart is not in it. Are Catholics bound to “keep up with the priest”? Must they repeat every prayer? The answer is no. Rather, the faithful are asked to pray the Mass. But the ideal in prayer is to lift up their hearts (*Sursum Corda*) to God. Again, the heart of prayer is to move the affections. Not the emotions, but the affections. With the beautiful prayers of the Mass—Introit, Collects, Hymns,—the ordinary of the Mass—Kyrie, Gloria, and the Credo,—there is ample supply of beautiful words of scripture and of the Church to encourage the faithful to move the affections toward God, to make those prayers your prayers.

Now it is not possible to move the affections at every prayer. But the Holy Ghost wants to help us move the affections toward God. We must pay attention to Him. If we try to focus on one of the above-mentioned prayers, the Holy Ghost will help us to lift up our affections to God. So when you are inspired to notice a beautiful phrase, concept or passage or a deep mystery, then work with the Holy Ghost. He is trying to lift your heart to God and at that moment adore, or thank or petition God. Maybe offer yourself to His service. Tell Him you believe in Him and hope in Him. Tell Him you love Him. Maybe you need to beg for mercy or sorrow for your sins. Get busy...move your affections. If you get lost and/or dry then figure out where the priest is and begin from there and move the affections again from that point. God wants you to engage your will and move your affections.

Certainly we must pay special attention at the consecration to make an act of adoration and praise. So also we look forward to receiving our Divine Lord in Holy Communion. Adore Him again and again. Beg for love and strength. To remember the basics is important: Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (ACTS). If you remember this you can always get back to the affections. This method is also helpful when we say the rosary, or spiritual reading, or other prayers. Hold fast to the affections and you will pray well. Ask for the grace of prayer. God wants to communicate with us. He wants our affections.

Be sure to read Father Dean’s good article on “The Freedom of Detachment.” It must be part of our life.

The exterior cleaning and sealing of the sandstone is now complete. Thanks to your support, the Novitiate looks beautiful. Winters are rough here in Winona. So we must wait to begin other outdoor staircase work, which is still necessary.

We are most grateful for your support and sacrifices made on behalf of our religious brothers and priests. So, we trust in your continued support to upkeep this beautiful property for our religious brothers. The brothers pray the entire rosary daily for our friends and benefactors.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
Father Charles J. Ward, Rector

The Freedom of Detachment

By Fr. Kenneth Dean



Detachment is not a popular subject. Speak about ambitions and desires and people will flock to hear you. Speak about detachment or mortification and most don't want to hear it. Why? Because the negative is never as appealing as the positive. Yet the negative aspect still has its importance. Pull the brakes out of a car and see how far you can drive. Remove all the red lights at intersections and see what results. We need the negative to function in daily life. We need the negative also to survive in the spiritual life. Seven of God's ten commandments are formulated in the negative, beginning with "Thou shalt not..."

The simple truth is that the negative is needed in this life to remove obstacles to virtue and safeguard what is positive and good. In heaven there will be no need for the negative. But as long as we are in this world, we need God's prohibitions, and we need mortification and detachment to proceed positively on the road to eternal life.

Now to our point which is detachment. How important is detachment in the Christian life? Jesus Christ tells us: *"If anyone will follow me, let him*

Brother Dismas makes his perpetual vows.



Father Fullerton offers the Holy Sacrifice at the vows ceremony in beautiful gold vestments.

deny himself, and take up his cross...” So Jesus Himself sets down as the first condition of following Him, self-denial. Sounds kind of negative, doesn’t it? The divine logic is simple: the human soul must firstly be emptied in order for it to be filled with God. Emptied of what? Emptied of all its disordered attachments to created things.

Let’s take an example: Garages are meant for cars. But if your garage is full of stuff, you have to clean it out before you’re able to get the car inside where it belongs. Self-denial or detachment does something similar for our soul. Detachment cleans or purifies the soul of things which God never meant to be there. Self-denial does not mean hating oneself or rejecting one’s existence, no—that is also forbidden! Christian self-denial means denying the old man, the man of selfish interests, the man of inordinate desires for this world, so that one can be a new man in Christ.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him... And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15, 17). When we speak of the world as an enemy of the Christian and an obstacle to his sanctification, we are referring not so much to the world itself as to the worldly or mundane spirit manifested by those who live in complete neglect of God and excessive attachment to created things... It is this environment which presents a great obstacle to the Christian who is in earnest about making progress in holiness through detachment and positive practice of virtue.

The traditional liturgy frequently reminds us of the vanity of earthly things, which should be despised for the sake of heaven. The collect for the Feast of the Sacred Heart reads, *“...having tasted the sweetness of Thy most dear Heart, may we learn to despise earthly things and love those of heaven.”* He who attaches himself to the goods of this world, is tying himself down to earth. He who loves the things of this world more than God is not worthy of God.

The human heart, however, is like velcro. It easily sticks and attaches itself to things, almost anything, but especially those visible and sensible things of



this world. According to Fr. Leo Trese, *“It is easy to become the slave of things... the spiritual palsy which is the result of original sin makes it difficult for us to control our naturally good desires and instincts... it is so easy for us to lose control, so easy for us to go to extremes. There is a type of covetousness which is the inordinate seeking of temporal goods by loving or desiring them too much... Once we let covetousness take hold of us, we never are satisfied, no matter what we have got... The antidote to covetousness is the spirit of detachment... The detached man is never a slave to things... His is the family whose members find their greatest joy in each other rather than in an abundance of merchandise... True detachment is harder to acquire than it might seem—but prayer and honest thinking can achieve it.”*

How can we know if we are inordinately attached to something? Think of losing it, or removing it from us. If this thought causes an emotional upheaval, undue sadness, or anger, then that is a sign that there is certainly an inordinate attachment to some

degree. The good news is that the human will can fight against itself. There are lesser goods and there are higher goods. And our will can overcome an attachment to a lesser good, with the help of grace, by clinging to a higher good. *“You ask me to what you must avoid becoming attached,”* writes St. Claude de la Colombiere, *“You must be attached to nothing, neither fortune, nor relations, nor interior consolation; there must be nothing in the world which we are not ready to forgo without trouble if God asks it of us.”* The same saint said on another occasion, *“Every Christian has renounced the world and its pomps at baptism. This vow does not oblige you to live like a hermit, but it certainly obliges you to something. It is not an empty promise.”*

Religious take a vow of poverty. The religious vows are essentially negative—but their purpose is to protect and encourage something positive. The vow of poverty works in this way: by renouncing control over the goods of this world, the religious seeks to unburden himself of much that can hinder him from the positive perfection towards God that he is striving for. It is not so much the goods themselves of this world that hinder us, but the worry and

anxiety about these goods, and the attachment to these goods that constitute the obstacles to sanctity. By vowing to remove the control he has over earthly goods, the religious can more easily cut his attachments to these goods and not worry nearly so much about them. And in this lies his advantage.

Our Lord taught us the right attitude towards material things. *“Your Father in heaven knows you need all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be given you besides.”* Put God first; seek to please Him firstly; and you will not be wanting in whatever else you need. Our excessive worry often comes from excessive attachment. Christ also told us that, *“No man can serve two masters.”* If we are not willing to break our excessive attachments to the things of this world, we will not be able to persevere in serving God faithfully: *“Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*

Life in this world is short, while eternity is forever. All the goods of this world must be left behind at death, while the spiritual goods, such as virtue, will continue forever. *“Do not lay up for yourselves*

treasures on earth, where rust and moth consume, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth consumes, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there thy heart also will be.” (St. Matt. 6:19-21)



Retreat Master—Father Andrew, OSB (from Silver City, NM)—gives a conference to the brothers.



Visiting priests and brothers rejoice after the vows ceremonies.



Cleaned and sealed sandstone complete!

Holy Angels Novitiate is the house of formation for the Brothers of the Society of Saint Pius X in the United States.

The Brothers of the Society are religious dedicated to the glory of God through the service of His priests. They accomplish this primarily through the observance of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—the foundations of Catholic religious life through the centuries—by their prayers and by their example. They also assist the priests of the Society in their apostolates in many different ways according to the needs of each individual priory. Brothers are currently engaged in teaching catechism, serving Mass, maintaining sacristies, and directing choirs. They also care for the material needs of the priests by cooking, performing maintenance, accounting, and completing innumerable small but useful tasks.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of Saint Pius X and its Brothers, recognized the dignity and value of the Brothers' vocation when he exhorted them to be the "guardian angels of our communities." It was his wish that each priory of the Society would eventually have a resident religious Brother. This wish can only be realized through the selfless response of many souls to Christ's call together with the generosity of our benefactors. God will certainly reward all of them abundantly.

Donation Information

Please make out checks or money orders in US dollars only to: "Holy Angels Novitiate."

Holy Angels Novitiate

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www.sspix.org

Upcoming Events

Priests meeting
April 17-21, 2023

Visit Our New Website:

holyangels-novitiate.com/en

— Please do not send cash since this is against US Postal Regulations.