



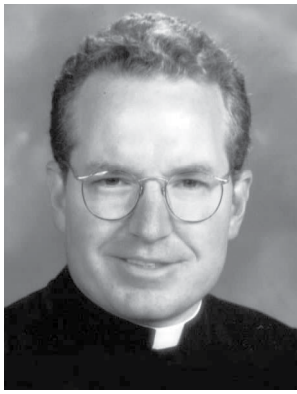
S S P X



Holy
Angels
Novitiate



Fr. Charles Ward was ordained by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in 1986. Here in Winona, he celebrated his 40th Anniversary of priesthood with Fr. Kenneth Dean and Fr. Loren Gerspacher at the Holy Mass.



Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

In my last newsletter I touched on the importance of spiritual reading and the will. Many faithful have a difficult time paying attention at prayer, whether it is at mass, at meditation or even the rosary. Real prayer engages the will; it also helps us to avoid distractions. Before praying humble oneself and admit your unworthiness. Note: we are not trying to move tears and emotion in prayer.

How well do you pray the rosary? When we use the will, we really communicate with God. Let us spend a few moments saying the rosary well. We all know that the Blessed Virgin Mary asked the children of Fatima to pray the rosary daily, that is: five decades daily. At that time the children were young: Jacinta 8, Francesco 10, Lucia 12. We also know that Our Lady also wanted them and us to meditate on the fifteen mysteries. Now for very little children, meditation is difficult. However, for the adolescent and adult, it is possible. But what does meditate really mean? Is just thinking of the mystery sufficient? The answer is - no. The heart of meditation is the moving of the affections. So, what are the affections? They are movements of a sincere heart to speak directly with God. Some examples may help: adoration, contrition for one's sins, thanksgiving, supplication (ACTS), to offer oneself to His service, confidence, acts of faith, hope, and charity, praise and love toward God.

Obviously, one cannot make all these affections during a mystery of the rosary, but you can make a few sincerely. Again, let us take an example: You are saying the joyful mysteries. Always put yourself in the mystery, here at the stable, dressed as a shepherd. You are kneeling and bowing down to the child Jesus in the manger. Adore Him. Tell him you love him. Offer yourself to him. Thank Him for coming into the world to save us. Pick Him up. Hold him close to your heart.

But how can I do this in the car for my daily rosary? You cannot! So, a car rosary cannot fulfil what Our Lady was asking. Pray your rosary at home with your family or by yourself in quiet.

Now what if I do well meditating on just one of the mysteries during the five decades of the joyful mysteries, must I interrupt that meditation and move on to the next joyful mystery to complete all five? Answer – no. The Holy Ghost is trying to work with you. You can continue on the same mystery as long as it is going well, even if you just considered only one mystery and used the affections the whole time of the rosary, then you did well. If the affections dry up, then move on to the next mystery. This should not be laborious. Lift up your heart with affections and speak to God while reciting the Hail Marys'. Keep trying to improve your affections to God. It is possible to do this and you will have fewer distractions.

Will I get some credit from heaven if I say my rosary without affections? You will, if you concentrate on the words of the Hail Mary and the Our Father. But if you do not even do that, you are most likely acting as a robot... The Rosary a winning prayer. Get to know the mysteries better.

Be sure to read Father Dean's excellent article: The Role of Our Will in the Life of Grace. We have reached our goal for our Capital Campaign. Thus, I would like to thank all of our benefactors who have donated to preserve this beautiful property for our priests, religious brothers, and seminarians. The brothers pray the rosary daily for our friends and benefactors. I invite you to view our website to see all our past newsletters.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Father Charles J. Ward
Rector

The Role of Our Will in the Life of Grace

It is related about St. Thomas Aquinas that he was asked by one of his sisters what she should do to reach sanctity, and he answered her in one short phrase: “Will it!” This might seem like a surprising statement, coming from a man who arguably had the greatest intellect that the Church has ever seen. However, his answer expresses a clear truth: that nothing can replace an energetic act of the will when it comes to pleasing God and growing spiritually. Our salvation and sanctification are the result of the action of God and the free cooperation of man. God’s action will not be lacking, yet it cannot replace the act of our own will in any good that we try to do.

Most everything we do is under the command of our will, except for some organic functions – such as heart beat and digestion which are largely outside our control. Also during our sleep, free will is suspended, which is why we aren’t responsible for what we dream; or what we do in our dreams. But aside from these situations, whatever we do is under the control of our will.

Our free will is the power to choose good. This is the reason why God gave us free will – to choose good. Although it is possible to choose evil, it is in fact, an abuse of our free will to do it. Let’s us an example to help us understand this... Motor vehicles are made to take us places more quickly than by walking or using a horse or bicycle. And cars are specifically designed to move us quickly and comfortably. However, if someone were to use his car as a



Fr. Kenneth Novak visited Winona and spoke to the brothers and seminarians on Christopher Columbus



Fr. Cyprian
Kramer visited
Winona and
spoke to the
brothers and
seminarians on
the Holy Land



weapon to intentionally hit something or someone, he would be abusing his car, because it was not designed for such a purpose. A car is not made to be a weapon. Yes, it can be used that way, but this is contrary to the purpose for which cars are made. Now back to our point - our free will is given us by God so we can choose to do good, as opposed to the animals who do good by nature or instinct. Choosing to do evil, which is sinning, is not the purpose of having free will – to choose evil is an abuse of free will. Yes, it is always possible, but that is not the reason why God gave us free will. The father who gives his son his first car, does not tell him, “Now you have to decide whether you’re going to run things over or not.” In the same way, sinning is strictly not an option for us; it’s an abuse. It’s true that we often have to say “no” to sin; but it is not God who tempts us. He gave us free will only so that we can choose good. Yet He also knows how weak we are, so He supports our wavering wills with many actual graces to help us avoid sinning. And in saying “no” to sin, we are doing something good!

In addition, the essential in free will is the act of choosing, not the variety of choices layed before us. Modern souls often mistake the choices we have presented to us for freedom, instead of the actual choice we make. Freedom consists in actually choosing, not being given a variety of choices. This is important to understand, because it plays an important role in our spiritual life. Sometimes God doesn’t give us a choice; He simply demands or asks our consent. We are always free to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, even when there aren’t any other options. And this is the essence of free will. When Our Lady was approached by the angel Gabriel, she was told, “You will conceive and bear a son.” No options were given, simply an act of obedience was sought from her for some awesome plan she had no part in formulating. And yet her “Let it be done to me according to Thy will,” was perhaps the greatest act of free will the world has ever known! Likewise, we also must give our consent or not, to many things that we have no part in choosing. And some of these situations may be the most important ones of our life.

Of course, our will itself depends upon our intellect. “The will is a blind power,” as they say; it knows nothing. It is our intellect that knows what is good, and our will simply “goes for” the goods that our intellect understands. Akin to a dog chasing a ball thrown by his master, is the relationship between our will and our intellect. The dog is our will; the master is our intellect; and the ball is the ‘good’ that our intellect presents to our will. And just as the master can motivate his dog more by showing him the ball and enticing him with it before throwing it, so the greater an idea of the good that our intellect conceives, the more our will is going to ‘go for it’.

This is incredibly important in the practical domain. The greatest good that exists, indeed the source of all other goods, is God Himself. He alone is ‘thee Good’ that we are made for. So we must conceive a very high and wonderful idea of God, and what it means to please Him, in order to give our will all the motivation that it needs



Brother Nathaniel has prepared Pepper Poppers for a feast



Brothers Paul and John of Mary work with Jonathan Davet for a celebration

to seek God and please Him at all costs. If our notions of God Himself, or the need to please Him are deficient, then our acts of will are going to be deficient, lacking in energy. And this means we won't make the efforts needed to overcome sin or the obstacles to doing good in our lives. For many Christians, what is lacking is not grace, for grace is never lacking, but rather an energetic act of their will to put God first, no matter what it costs or what it takes.

The difficulties we have in willing to overcome the obstacles to saving our soul or sanctifying ourselves come from original sin. The effects of this sin of our first parents have trickled down through the ages without losing any of their virulence. Even when the sin itself is gone through the sacrament of baptism, the wounds of the sin remain in us. All man's faculties are wounded by sin, and that wound in our wills is a kind of inclination to evil. The remedy for this of course, is the grace of God and the infused virtues that God gives us with His sanctifying grace. With God's help all things are possible, and we know that God Himself wants us to work out our salvation and grow in holiness. "This is the will of God, your sanctification." (I Thes. 4, 3) Yet nothing can replace that firm act of will that is our part to make.

St. Therese knew the struggles of our human wills. She knew how they easily get attached to anything and everything, even the slightest things, which is why she said, "We ought to do all that lies in our power...we must give without counting the cost; we must constantly renounce ourselves. In one word, we must prove our love by all the good works we can perform." She was a faithful disciple



of the One who said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (St. Luke 9, 23)

Because of the effects of sin, a double effort is involved to rectify our will. The first effort is the need to subject our will completely to God, by a total submission and conformity to His divine will. The second effort is to strengthen the authority of our will in regard to our passions by subjecting them completely to our will. But the strength to control our passions comes largely from our efforts to put God’s will first, so perhaps a word of encouragement about that.

God is wholly good, and there is no evil in Him. As Our Lord said, “God alone is good”; that is, He alone is completely good; entirely good. He is also the cause of all goodness in creation. Every good action we perform, every good thought we have, every sentiment of love in our hearts, it all comes from the infinitely good God. As the saintly Fr. Adolph Petit used to say, “God is so good, so good! Nothing in this world can give us the palest idea of how good He is!” And God can will nothing but good towards His creatures. Whatever He commands us; whatever He forbids us; it all comes from the will of an infinitely good Father, who has nothing but the eternal happiness of his children in mind. This is the basis of our trust in God, and our willful submission to His adorable will. Even when God seems to strike us, or punish us, it is for our true good, coming from His infinite love for us. The effort needed then, to conform our wills to His, is the best thing we can possibly do for ourselves. Indeed it will lead to true peace in this life, and eternal happiness in the life to come.



Two seminarians work in the woodshop

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

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

Upcoming Events

- Vocations Retreats
July 6-11, 2026
- Ignation Retreats
August 24-29, 2026
- Brothers Vows Ceremony
September 29, 2026

Visit Our New Website

www.holyangels-novitiate.com/en



Please donate to our Capital Campaign



Holy Angels Novitiate Website