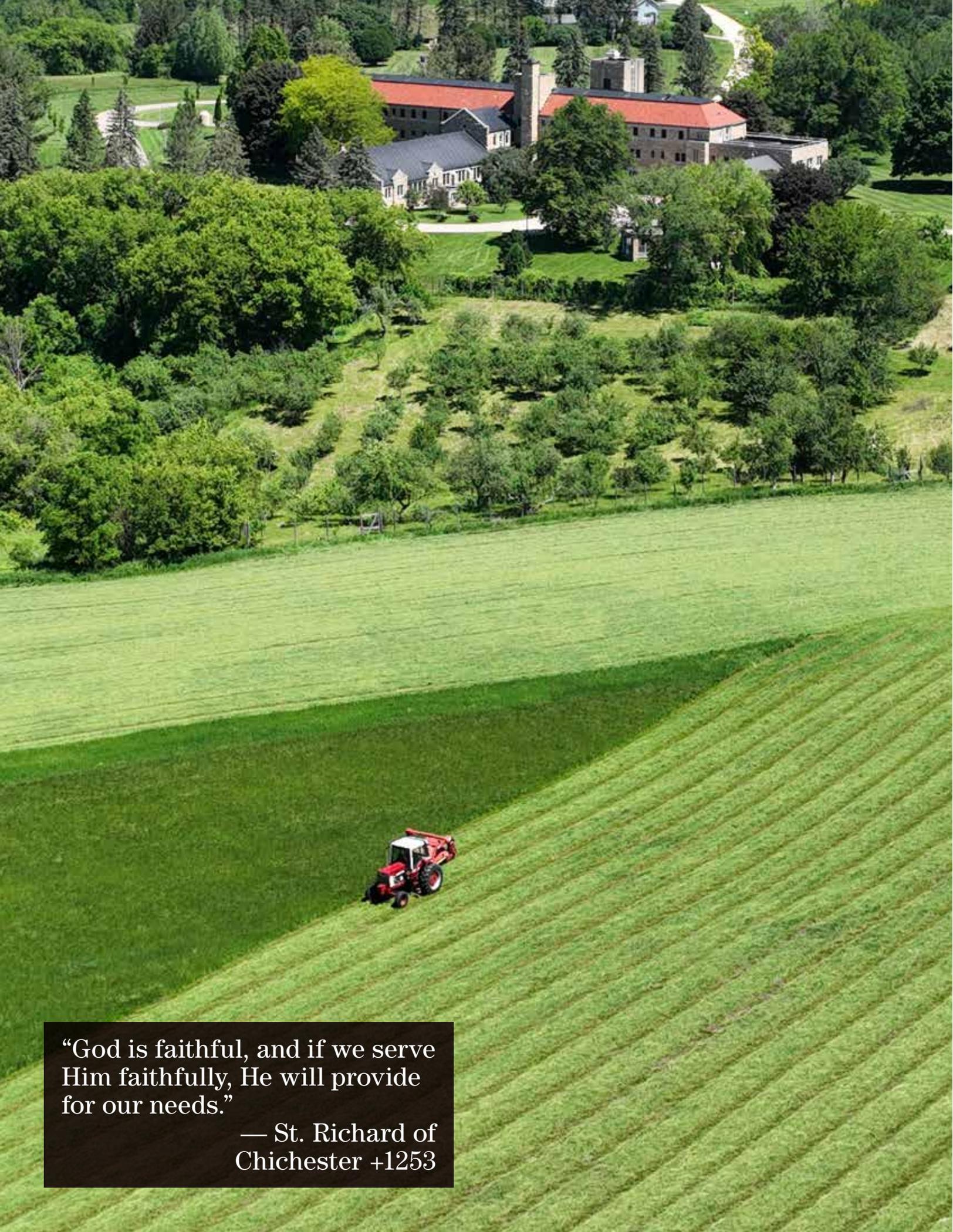




S S P X



Holy
Angels
Novitiate



“God is faithful, and if we serve Him faithfully, He will provide for our needs.”

— St. Richard of Chichester +1253



Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

It has been a busy summer for the brothers and priests of the Novitiate. They have accommodated about ninety men for retreats. Two men's Ignatian retreats and one young men's vocations retreat. It is a great blessing for men to be able to make a five day retreat. To be in the presence of Our Lord, contemplating divine truths, and the treasures that God has bestowed upon them, fills the soul with admiration and thanksgiving. Father John Young, with the help of Father Andrew Dwyer, preached the Ignatian retreats.

During the summer months the brothers also work on our farm. Yes, our farm operation is in full gear at this time. Three years ago, we began a farm, and it has been a success, a great thanks to the brothers. A large amount of farm equipment has been donated to the farm: IH-1086 tractor (1980 model), Skid-steer loader (similar to a Bobcat), nine-blade hay cutter, ATV vehicle, pick-up trucks, and a dump truck. The faithful have been generous.

This summer the brothers cared for and butchered Six Hundred chickens. The same are then packaged and stored in our freezer. We also have fifty laying hens that provide eggs every day throughout the year.

Now what would a farm be without pigs? We currently have eleven that are probably Two Hundred Fifty pounds each, as I write. Soon they will be brought to the butcher to process. This is pork produced at a very low cost for us and will last the whole year.

Finally, we have twelve sheep. These creatures are the easiest to care for. Just give them water. That is it! Let them graze the land. They dwell in our orchard from April to November until they are butchered, packaged and again, stored in the freezer.

It is an education for the brothers on many levels. Care for God's creatures, interactions with farm animals, that all have passions, which leads to the practice of patience. They are doing their part to help feed the community. It is getting back to the basics, which I would recommend to all families. As the globalists carry out their long-term food shortage plan, it is wise to prepare for your family's needs.

Besides raising livestock, we also raise hay in our fields. The hay is cut, raked, and bundled (baled) two or three times a year. We then sell the hay to farmers even those in other US states. We were able to have sales of Forty-Thousand dollars last year. We have added special farm pictures for your interest.

We have some great news! Twelve new postulants will enter the Novitiate this fall. Deo Gratias! Let us continue to pray for vocations for the harvest. Please visit our website to learn more about our work.

Father Dean's article *The Good of Obedience* gives us an understanding of God's plan for an ordered society.

The exterior cleaning and sealing of the sandstones that encompass the building has begun. The bid for some stone work is already at Forty-Seven Thousand. Our Calvary Scene for our cemetery cost us Six-Thousand dollars, but additional costs to erect the same is forthcoming.

We are most grateful for your support and sacrifices made on behalf of our religious brothers. 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 Good of Obedience

By Fr. Kenneth Dean



Brother Jerome collects eggs

Obedience! The very word brings up all kinds of notions in our head, both good and bad. On the bad side, we may think of “blind obedience” as a fault; we may think of those who have followed authorities by allowing or going along with abuses in the Church – the kind of which Archbishop Lefebvre said, *“The Church is destroying herself by the way of obedience.”*

However, on the good side we think of the trusting obedience of children to their parents; we think of the respectful obedience of the faithful towards their pastors; we think of the obedience of Christ to His Father *“I came to do the will of Him who sent me”*.

I think deep down, we all realize that obedience is a good thing; that it is a virtue; but we would be quick to point out that it has limits! Well, this is nothing new. The Church herself has always acknowledged the limits of obedience to men. And here we touch upon an essential point that helps us understand true obedience – obedience to God has no limits; obedience to men always does.

Let’s start with obedience to God. Obeying God means obeying His commandments - the ten commandments as well as the commandments of His Church. It also means willfully accepting and believing all the dogmas presented to us by the Church which come from God. Indeed the Faith is



Brother John Evangelist begins the meat bird harvest.

a kind of obedience, but distinct from the virtue of obedience. Faith involves a trust in God and His authority – who cannot deceive; whereas obedience to men is a separate virtue involving an act of our will to do what we are told by a human being possessing some legitimate authority over us which comes from God.

Heretics sift the dogmas and commandments of the Church through their own values and experiences, and decide which seem good to them and which do not. Some they choose to believe, the others not. In this case there is no longer faith, no absolute trust in God and His authority; only a trust of self, and one's own judgments. There is no true obedience to God through faith.

In a similar way, a disobedient person will sift every order or thing he is told to do through his own values and desires. What doesn't line up with his own criteria is rejected. There is no reference to authority as coming from God; there is no realization that the person with authority is taking the place of God in this instance. There is no virtue of obedience.

It should be clear from this comparison that although there is a link between the virtues of faith and obedience, they are quite different. A person may very well have the Faith, yet have many problems

in obeying others. Faith is a theological virtue; obedience is a moral virtue. Faith has no limits; obedience always does.

This becomes clear when we think of the case of a parent, teacher, or government official who would have us commit sin or agree with it. Obviously, we cannot obey them. *"God must be obeyed rather than men."* But short of sin, are there any limits to obedience? Yes, every human authority is limited to the domain of their authority. The boss at work can tell you how to do your job, but he cannot tell you how to act when you get home – that's way beyond his authority! A parent's authority over their children is much more universal, but it oversteps its bounds in trying to get the child to do something offensive to God. A pastor's authority ceases when he tries to get his parishioners to do something which actually puts their faith or morals in danger.

Having a clear idea of obedience, its limits, and where it fits into the whole scheme of a Catholic's life, is essential to being a good Catholic today. Gone are the days when a Catholic could let the clergy think for him and didn't have to bother about thinking through issues of faith or morals that come up in his life.

Before the crisis of faith that came in the wake of Vatican II, most Catholics erred on the side of obedience. They presumed the authority was right;

they presumed they didn't really understand or didn't need to understand. But for many Catholics living in modern times, obedience is a thorny problem that is not easily solved by "being obedient". In fact, sometimes it simply makes the problem worse.

The problems today with obedience stem from a lack of a proper understanding of obedience, a lack of a proper training in obedience, and an abuse of authority. When authority doesn't obey God then it undermines all obedience to itself. When authority departs from the path of tradition (as a clear expression of God's will) and goes off into the weeds, it shouldn't be surprised if some of the sheep balk at following.

The Catholics of generations past were always inclined to obey authority. Sometimes they obeyed to a fault. But they certainly did have the virtue of obedience. However, since obedience is a moral virtue (and not a theological one), it has two extremes — an excess and a defect.

The excess consists in obeying any order from authority, simply because it comes from an authority without any consideration to the laws of God, His Church, or the limits of the authority itself. This can lead to the fault of obeying men rather than God. When this happens, it is no longer a virtue, no longer pleasing to God. This is the "obedience" of those who deny or compromise the Faith or morals of the Church to avoid the consequences of going against the mandates of the powers that be.

The other extreme would be the defect of obedience. Because authority often abuses its power, some souls conclude that authority can no longer be trusted. They then take matters into their own hands or mind if you will. Every order of authority is sifted by one's own judgment. It is obeyed if thought reasonable, otherwise it is disobeyed. What is important to understand here is that the reference to God through the human authority has been lost. One clearly sees the limits and faults of authority but has forgotten the value of obeying human beings because they represent God; even though they may be far from perfect.

Must a Catholic then blindly obey any legitimate authority because it comes from God? The distinctions and limits we have already set down should be sufficient to answer this question. Let's simply state that true obedience is never blind, because a Catholic should always know *why* he obeys – it's to do the will of God which is known through His Church or through one's superiors. However, obedience can be called blind in the sense that we might not know the reason for this particular command. We know the ultimate reason *why* we obey; we may not know the reason why *this* command was given to us. So, St. Joseph Cupertino compared obedience to "*a little dog that leads the blind.*" To continue the comparison: the little dog is our conviction of faith that all authority comes from God, so in obeying I am doing God's will – while the

blind one being led is oneself when we don't know the particular reasons behind what we are told to do. This is the true obedience of a soldier following his orders; or a Catholic who follows the Church's teaching that contraception is wrong but can't explain why.



Brother Stanislaus uses the skid loader to stack the hay truck.



Brother John Evangelist cares for the pigs

Brother Gregory seals the fresh chicken in air-tight bags



Religious brothers and sisters take obedience to the next level by taking a vow of obedience. But their obedience is not a mindless servility. It is very specific and limited in its scope. The obedience of a religious is confined to those things that pertain to the vows, and the rule and constitutions of their particular religious congregation. It goes without saying that these things must be in-line with the laws of God and of the Church. And a religious also vows to obey his superiors who represent God for him within his congregation. For a religious, his constitutions and rule are the written will of God; his superior is the voice of God's will. So it is that St. Thomas Aquinas concludes, "*Obedience is the perfection of the religious life; by it man submits to man for the love of God, as God rendered Himself obedient unto men for their salvation.*"

Let's appreciate and love obedience for what it is. A beautiful moral virtue that submits us to God by obeying human beings whom God has placed over us. Let's not blow it up out of proportion to include everything (this tries to turn it into a theological virtue); neither let us reduce it in significance by our

lack of trust in God and authority. This would be no longer treating obedience as a virtue, but rather a suspicious consul; or perhaps at best a virtue of the past.

There is always a danger in following our own will. It is precisely this danger that is removed when we obey. Which is why St. Francis de Sales could say, "*The devil doesn't fear austerity but holy obedience.*"

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

21077 Quarry Hill Rd.,
Winona, MN 55987
T (507) 454-8000
www.sspix.org

Upcoming Events

Brothers Vows:
September 29th

Visit Our New Website:

holyangels-novitiate.com/en

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