

St. Dominic's Chapel

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“The Christian Perfection?”

“What is a Christian? Asked a Roman centurion to a soldier, then he said: watch and see what they do. They love each other” That Roman centurion became a Father in the desert, and had said that Charity converted him. There is no a greater love than one lays down his own life for a neighbor. In addition, Saint Paul refers that perfection means in Charity; then, every being is perfect when it attains its final goal. Indeed, Charity unites us to God and we are on this life to get back to God. Therefore, Charity constitutes the life of Christian perfection. Faith and Hope are meritorious only so far they are vivified by Charity, which is their animating principle.

In this sense, perfection lies principally in loving God; secondarily in loving our neighbor, and only accidentally in the evangelical counsels: obedience, chastity and poverty, which are un-prescribed instruments of perfection. The advantage of literal observance of the counsels lies in this: They are the most sure and constant way whereby to reach sanctity.

Why then, the Blessed Lord command, not merely by counsel, to love Him completely, with heart-soul-mind-strength-, seeing that our love here below can never be perfect?

Saint Augustine tells that the love of God and neighbor is not a thing to be finished here and now, but a goal to be ceaselessly aimed at by all means according to one's own state of life.

As a matter of fact, Divine Providence works a complete and ordered plan of the universe, a plan pre-existing God's eternal mind. Divine government is the execution of that plan. But providence presupposes God's efficacious will to bring about the purpose of such plan. Whatever He ordains, whatever He prescribes, is what He must do to attain His purpose.

All creation down to tiniest detail is ruled by providence. *“Not a sparrow falls to earth without your Father's permission.”* When we talk of events, which men ascribe to fortune -good or evil- we must remember that we are dealing only with the second causes of those events. In relation to God (First Cause) such events are in no wise accidental and fortuitous, since God eternally results, however surprising to men, which come from complicated series of created causes.

Let's remember that Evil, as such, is not a positive thing, but is privation of good in the created thing. God permits it only because He is strong enough and good enough to draw from evil a higher good, the crown of martyrdom, to say, from persecution.

Here emerges a rule for Christian life, taking for spiritual writers: We must work out our salvation, certainly, but the chief element in that work is to abandon ourselves to providence, to God's wisdom and goodness, whether be at home or at work; whether be within or without the Church. It doesn't matter how dark is the crisis of Faith of today's world, our Lord Jesus Christ provides the means for eternal salvation through and by the Catholic Church, founded divinely by Him.

In consequence, we rest more surely on God's design than on our own best intentions. Our only fear must be that we are not entirely submissive to God's designs. To those who love God, who persevere in His love, all things work together unto good, said the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Without voluntary submission to God's Will, one can go astray, even if one is shelter in a holy place, which helps one to be faithful. It does help, but one could let it go away. For instance, it is a mystery how Luzbel fell from Heaven; and there is no place holier than Heaven, yet he went to the pit of Hell. What about Adam? He was in Paradise. Then he let it go away, and came onto this valley of tears, giving us grief, sorrow and pain.

Here is then what Divine Providence works for us! It makes salvation genuinely possible for all men: our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became Man through a Virgin-Mother - Our Lady- in order to be the victim of the Holocaust in the Calvary for the salvation of mankind.

Jesus Christ is Providence. We should be willing to abandon ourselves to Him. This abandonment evidently does

not dispense us from doing our utmost to fulfill the divine will signified by precepts, counsels, and the events of life. But, without overlooking them, we can and should abandon ourselves completely to God's pleasure, however hidden and mysterious it can be. As result of the ignorance of eternal salvation, not only our mind is darkened, but also our will is lukewarm in keeping us straight towards the salvation of one's soul.

Besides, this abandonment is a higher form of hope; it unites confidence and love of God for His sake. Its prayer unifies petition and adoration, as propitiation and thanksgiving as well. It does not pray, at all, to change the dispositions of Providence. But it does accept anything coming from God!

Concerning today's events in the Church, let's not forget that Our Lord Jesus Christ has founded His Church. It is His. He did, does, and will figure it out how to preserve His Church until the consummation of the world.

Nothing comes to pass in vain, either in the material or in the spiritual world. God has foreseen it from all eternity. There is no passing from ignorance to knowledge in Him; He has nothing to learn from events as they occur either. Not only has God foreseen everything that is happening now or will happen in the future, but whatever reality and goodness there is in these things He has willed, as whatever evil or moral disorder is in this world, including the crisis of the faith in the Catholic Church. All this mess, God only has permitted it, in spite of our stiff neck attitude of refusing Christ's way.

In addition, nothing can be willed or permitted by God that does not contribute to the end He purposed in creating, which is the manifestation of His goodness and infinite perfection. The Blessed Lord takes care for His Church. He sees to it that everything contributes to our spiritual welfare, not only the grace He gives us, but also the natural qualities He bestowed upon us. He endows us with His blessings, as reminds them to us through our sicknesses, contradictions and reverses.

Saint Augustine continues to say that even our very sins - which God only permits in order to lead us on to be an "apostle"- are a burning source for true humility, thereby His grace transforms into purifying love. Thus He permitted the three-fold denial of Saint Peter, to make the great Apostle more humble, more mistrustful of self, and by these very means became stronger, and trust more in the divine mercy.

If we persevere doing as much we can faithfully do for God in our daily life, we may be confident that He will give us grace to remain firm in whatever extremity we might find ourselves through His permission. If we have to suffer for Him, He will give us the grace to die a heroic death rather than be ashamed of Him and betray Him.

In today's world, both religious and secular, we should abandon ourselves to that Divine Will upon which all successive moments of the future depend. Our future is with God; human future events are in His hands.

Saint Joseph of the Old Testament is an example to contemplate. If the merchants to whom Joseph was sold by his brothers had passed by one hour sooner, he would not have gone into Egypt, and the whole course of his life would have been changed. Our lives also are dependent on events controlled by God. Daily fidelity and trusting self-abandonment give the spiritual life its balance, its stability and harmony in keeping the Ten Commandments, and asking Divine Providence to give us frequent reception of Sacraments, in particular Confession and Holy Communion. In this way we could spend our lives in almost continuous recollection, in an ever-increasing self-abnegation.

We also have a perfect model of this abandonment to Divine Providence in Saint Joseph, in the many difficulties that beset him at the moment of our Lord's birth at Bethlehem, and again when he heard the mournful prophecy of the aged Simeon, and during all the time that elapsed from the flight away from Herod into Egypt until the return to Nazareth. Following his example, we can live our lives in the same spirit, fulfilling our daily duties, and the grace of God will never be wanting. "Ask me whatever You want, but give me the grace to do it," said St. Teresa of Avila.

In concluding, let's think about the Archbishop's words written on his 'Open Letter to Confused Catholics, viewing'em trough Providence: *"At the end of my live our Lord will ask me, what have you done of your priesthood? What have you done of your episcopate? I don't want to hear from Him: You have also contribute to destroy My Church"*

Father Zendejas