

Heart of Jesus

LOVING US; REJECTING EVIL

Dear Friends of the Heart of Christ,

One of my recent interests is regularly to read the posts of Msgr. Stephen Rosetti at his site entitled: catholicexorcism.org. This priest, besides holding advanced degrees in psychology, is the founder of the St. Michael Center for Spiritual Renewal and assists in the training of priest exorcists and lay team members. He has assisted at hundreds of exorcisms and relates valuable insights into spiritual deliverance at his website.

In one of his articles, he recounts the story of asking the demons in the name of Jesus during an exorcism, "Does Satan love you?" The reluctant reply came, "No." Then Msgr. Rosetti asked, "Does Jesus love you?" Again, the reluctant reply came, "Yes." To which the priest responded, "You made a rotten choice, didn't you?" Then there was silence.

The lesson to be gleaned here is that—God is Love—that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son has a heart filled with love for every created being, no matter how they live or what they are. But Jesus obviously rejects the evil choices that the demons and we humans make. Just Judge that God is, we deserve the punishment that awaits us for our evil choices, even though God never stops loving us. "God cannot hate," Msgr. Rosetti tells us, "that is Satan's work. God is radiant, infinite and transforming love."

In the life of St. Margaret Mary, that chosen soul to whom God revealed His burning love for all of us, we find many expressions of God's undying love for us. Here is a little vignette illustrating this. Margaret Mary writes in her *Autobiography*:

Had I been allowed to go often to Communion, then I'd have achieved my heart's desire. As I was dreaming longingly of this one day, my arms full of sweepings, my divine Master appeared to me. 'My child,' he said, 'I've noticed your sighs; I'm so delighted with your heartfelt longings, that, if I hadn't already instituted the Sacrament of My Love, I'd institute it now for you—to give myself the pleasure of making my home in your heart, your soul the cradle of my love.' These words imbued me with such passionate fervor, and my soul knew such transports of joy, I could only stutter: 'Love! God's prodigal love for so wretched a creature!' An incentive—that's what this incident has been to me all my life—to spur me on to return that unselfish love.

It is interesting, that in the very next paragraph, our saint writes of her encounter with a soul who was suffering the purifying fires of purgatory for some transgressions he had committed in his state of life. In one breath, Margaret Mary is telling us of God's tremendous love for us, and in the next breath, she is relating how God, the just judge, demands expiation for our sins and offenses. Here is what she described:

Another time, as I was praying before the Blessed Sacrament one Corpus Christi Day, a blazing human form was suddenly set in front of me—the heat from it so intense, I thought I was on fire too. I understood that I was looking at a soul from purgatory, and its pitiful state made me weep. He told me, this soul, that he was a Benedictine monk who had once heard my confession; he'd urged me, on that occasion, to go to Holy Communion—but now, as a reward, God was letting him appeal to me for help in relieving his sufferings. He asked me to do and suffer everything I could for the next three months, and make it over to him. I promised—after I'd asked my Superior's permission—and then he told me the reason for his bitter sufferings. He'd preferred his own interests on earth to God's glory, too keen on his own reputation; then there was his lack of charity towards his brethren... I'd find it very hard to put into words what I had to suffer during those three months.

What do these stories tell us? Well, first of all, whatever we have done in life, no matter how heinous it was, God's love is

always there for us, and when we sincerely repent, an ocean of God's unfathomable mercy washes over us, renewing us and making us friends of Christ again. Secondly, we learn that our choices and actions in life have consequences to them. We can justify them all we want, but the choices that we consciously make which go against God's laws, will eventually bring God's judgment upon us. God will someday hold us accountable for these transgressions that have not been acknowledged and repented of. In each of our futures, whoever we are, God will remove the veil from our eyes so that we see ourselves as we truly are before His sight. Whether we believe this or not, it is going to happen, for no one escapes death, no one fools God.

In today's world, many as you well know, want to leave God totally out of the picture. Or they want to create their own image of a God who blindly accepts whatever they do. These people nominally live according to God's precepts and strive to make themselves on earth as comfortable, influential and powerful as possible. What a fantasy world they live in. These figures can come from many walks of life and desire us to participate in the illusion that peace and prosperity on earth can only come by uniting our theological and ideological vision with theirs. There is no way that any true believer can unite good with evil, light with darkness, right with wrong. To pretend otherwise would seriously imperil souls and bring on a state of mandated evil practices. History has shown us that this can happen and then the gates of hell will open up to empty their demons and their foul enterprises right before our eyes.

We have only to consider the atrocities of the holocaust to witness how lives once lived in relative tranquility can be changed into living hells. So what do we do when powerful voices decree laws that strike at the moral core of our being? We must resist them with all our might and pray strenuously for spiritual strength to do the right thing and for God's intervention.

The stories of two outstanding Catholics whose consciences would not permit them to cooperate with the overwhelming evils that surrounded them, can inspire us to put God first in our lives. The first example comes from Poland and he is now known as Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko (1947-1984). Jerzy was a priest who served at several local parishes after his ordination, whose sermons exhorting the faithful to resist Communism became famous when broadcast on Radio Free Europe. He was associated with Poland's Solidarity movement. Jerzy observed, "It is not enough for a Christian to condemn evil, cowardice, lies, and use of force, hatred and oppression. He must at all times be a witness to and defender of justice, goodness, truth, freedom and love. He must never tire of claiming these values as a right both for himself and others."

It was not surprising then that this courageous priest would soon be targeted by the Communist authorities. After several close life-threatening incidents, he was finally murdered on October 19, 1984 by three agents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The thugs lured him by faking a breakdown of their vehicle, flagging him down for help. Then they pulverized him, tying him up and shoving him into the trunk of their car. Binding a stone to his feet, they dumped him into a nearby reservoir. The body was discovered a few days later, causing an uproar across Poland. Jerzy's martyrdom sparked a mass movement against Communist aggression. His life is an admirable example of courage and integrity even in the midst of great personal anxiety and sacrifice. He has stated, "Truth, like justice, is connected to love, and love has a price."

The second example comes from the life of Blessed Franz Jagerstatter (1907-1943). Blessed Franz, an Austrian layman, was happily married with three children. His life is brilliantly portrayed in the new film *A Hidden Life* that depicts the deep Christian devotion of the Jagerstatters and the value of redemptive suffering. Their small Austrian community, located near Bavaria, was soon enveloped in Nazi ideology. Franz, wary of Nazi oppression, refused to vote for the Nazi takeover of Austria and scorned the oath to Hitler when he was drafted into the military. This resulted in his interrogation and imprisonment. Despite his great turmoil at being separated from his family, he knew he must be faithful to Christ first. However, on August 7, 1943, Franz was beheaded, having received a sentence of death from Berlin for the crime of "undermining military morale." His words and life continue to speak to us today, as he wrote: "It is said that words instruct, but examples inspire us to follow. Do we not want to see Christians who, in the midst of all the darkness, are still able to stand above it all in clarity, calmness, and confidence, who, in the midst of all the lack of peace and joy, the egoism and hate, still stand there in the purest peace and cheerfulness?" He furthermore wrote, "It's possible, with God's help, for us to work our way out of the swamp in which we're stuck, and to attain eternal bliss."

The late Father Gabriele Amorth, foremost expert in the fallen angels, has reminded us in his writings that a great number of angels fell because they rebelled against God. Their sin was pride and disobedience. Satan, the most beautiful of all the angels, aware of his supreme intelligence, refused to be subjected to anyone else, even though he was a creature made by God. And many angels followed him in his foolishness. Father Gabriele informs us that the original sins of the angels are the same as those who incline toward or unconditionally adhere to Satanism. He writes, "Angels and men who follow Satan base their existence on three principles and practical rules of life: you can do what you wish, that is, without subjugation to God's laws; you obey no one; and you are the god of yourself." Those who live by these tenets are to be resisted and made the object of our special prayers for deliverance and conversion.

A sentence from last month's *Magnificat* is worth repeating here: "Even if the whole world is under the power of the Evil One, we know that we belong to God." A good thought to keep in mind as we see so many malicious and misguided actions around us. With this final reflection from the book *In Sinu Jesu* we receive from the Lord direction on how we are to proceed: "...I want you to intercede much, to ask boldly, and to obtain great things from My omnipotent love. If you are praying well, that is, praying as I teach you how to pray, then act boldly and confidently, for I am with you and I will not forsake you, and My blessing will rest upon all that you do with a pure heart for My glory and the glory of My Father." +

This talk on Sacred Heart Spirituality was given in our Gathering Room on February 7, 2021. If you would like to attend similar presentations by the Sisters, our next talks will be held on Sunday, March 7, 2021 at 4:00 pm.