



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Early in the month of October an announcement appeared in a local newspaper from central Nebraska that St. Mary's Catholic Church (Rockville, NE) had closed and was to be auctioned off on October 11, with many contents of the church. It just so happens that this small town with a population of 111 people is centrally located between a number of neighboring towns where we have offered Holy Mass for over twenty-five years.

What especially caught my attention about this auction of the church was the date chosen for the sale—the feast of the Divine Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is under this title of Our Lady that our seminary, convent, and academy are dedicated.

Nevertheless, the two factors of the favorable location of the church and the date of the auction were not



Our newly acquired church, St. Mary's Rockville, Nebraska



Reception of the Cassock

enough to indicate God's will for its acquisition. The deciding factor was whether we had sufficient funds to be a serious bidder. The answer, one week before the auction, was that we did not have the funds. Whenever the thought of the auction came to my mind and how beneficial it would be to have a church for our long established Mass center, I was faced with the reality of insufficient funds and I turned my thoughts into a prayer to Our Lady to provide the necessary monetary help if it was God's will. Within this one week of the auction, some of our parishioners unsolicitedly gave what they could.

On the day of the auction, I was resolved to only get what was absolutely necessary—nothing more, nothing less. That meant hopefully to acquire the church, the beautiful, large Stations of the Cross, the original church statue of the Blessed Virgin and the Christ Child and as many of the pews as could be afforded. As most auctions go, the bidding went very quickly and providentially I was able to get everything that was needed. When the final tally of all of our bids was made, the amount was only \$48 over the total amount of donations that I had received for this auction. I could not have planned this if I had tried.

The auction provided an opportunity for Fr. Carlos Borja, the seminarians, the religious Sisters and myself to make some good contacts with the people of the area besides our own local parishioners. A number of these non-parishioners gave me donations during the auction when they found out that the church was going to be used for Holy Mass again. Also during the auction, I could tell from the reaction of the crowd that they were very supportive of our endeavor. There were a number of Novus Ordo priests present and when I would win the bid over them on the items such as the Stations or the statue of Our Lady the crowd would cheer.

Besides extensive traveling during the month of October and teaching in the seminary and high school, we have managed to acquire a beautiful high altar for St. Mary's and organize a brief restoration of the church to its original form before it had been modernized after Vatican II. A number of older parishioners had indicated to me that there was no little anger or frustration when their beautiful church had been modernized and rendered ugly and empty.

I find it interesting that the rural people of central Nebraska have an innate sense of what is beautiful and what is ugly. This could be readily seen at the auction where religious items which were traditional and beautiful were bid for at a high price and that modern items from the aftermath of Vatican II went for little



Seminarians picked apples for recreation

or nothing. No one bid on the Novus Ordo table and so one of our parishioners acquired it for \$1.

After classes, our seminarians have been busy on the renovation of the high altar and the communion rails for St. Mary's. This has been a good, practical experience for them.

On a completely different note, I am sure that many of our readers have heard of the synod, that was held by the modern hierarchy this past month, which generated much publicity in the secular media. Among the issues of debate at the synod were homosexuality and the admission of divorced, remarried Catholics to Communion. Although there were not enough votes to approve of a favorable approach to the unnatural sin and to admit adulterers to Communion, is it not the height of irony that these so-called Catholic clergymen would even consider these issues to be debatable? What is even more preposterous is that Francis I praised the debate on these issues. If he were a true pope, he would have taught clearly that the sixth and the ninth Commandments are not debatable or negotiable. As I travel throughout the U.S., I have run into numerous people who inquire what I think about Francis I and his radical ideas. Even non-Catholics can see that Bergoglio has seriously contradicted what the Catholic Church has always taught.

Once again, thank you for your prayers and support and be assured of our prayers and appreciation.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most. Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



A seminarian works on the restoration of the altar

Indulgences—Our Hidden Treasures

by a seminarian

Our Holy Mother the Church is a mother ever solicitous for the good of her children. One of our greatest needs is that of making atonement for the temporal punishment due to sin. Our sins, although having been confessed and forgiven, require an atonement either in this life or in the eternal life to come. In order to help us expiate for these sins, the Catholic Church grants what we call indulgences.

An indulgence is the remission granted by Jesus Christ through His Church of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. It does not refer to sin, past, present or future. It deals with the temporal punishment due to forgiven sin. This power of the Church may be better understood, if we compare it with the State's custom of pardoning the whole or part of the punishment inflicted by the civil law upon the criminal. The President has the right to grant this pardon within the confines of the United States, and the Governor to any criminal in his state.

In granting indulgences, the Church exercises "the power of the Keys" which was given to her by Christ. When the Church through an indulgence remits the temporal punishment due to sin, this action is ratified in heaven. We read in Sacred Scripture: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: And whatever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. 16:19).

There are two types of indulgences: plenary and partial. A plenary indulgence, as we read in the Baltimore Catechism, is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to our sins. The conditions ordinarily prescribed to gain the plenary indulgence and designated by the familiar phrase "under the usual conditions" are the following: Confession within eight days preceding the day to which the indulgences are appointed; Communion may take place on the previ-

ous day; or both conditions may be satisfied on the day itself or within the following week; and finally praying for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff.

The second type, partial indulgence, is the remission of part of the temporal punishment due to our sins. These can be gained many times throughout the day, whenever the prescribed work is repeated. These indulgences are expressed in fixed periods of time. They do not represent days or years off Purgatory time; they only indicate a certain amount of remission corresponding to the penances formerly imposed on penitents in the early times of the Church.

In November there are many indulgences that can be obtained for the souls in Purgatory. To name a few:

A plenary indulgence is applicable only to the souls in Purgatory under the usual conditions when one visits each time a church or an oratory either public or semi-public, on the 2nd of November and recites six times the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, and *Glory be* for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff.

Those who visit a cemetery during the octave of All Souls' Day, in the spirit of piety and devotion to pray for them, may gain a plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, each day of the octave, applicable only to the Poor Souls.

Those who make such a visit and pray for the Poor Souls, any day throughout the year may gain an indulgence of seven years, applicable only to the departed.

In closing, in order that one may benefit from an indulgence, either partial or plenary, one must be in the state of grace. The gaining of indulgences is most salutary because we thereby keep far from us temporal evils, and are stimulated to the accomplishment of good works.

"May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen." (300 days indulgence, applicable only to the Holy Souls)

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

Sunday Morning Confessions

Question: What is to be said of the obligation of pastors to have confessions in their churches on Sunday mornings? There are many different views and customs on this matter. Some priests refuse to hear any confessions in the church on Sunday morning, others hear before Mass, others hear up to the Offertory, while in some churches, staffed by a large number of priests, the opportunity is given the faithful to go to the confession during the entire Mass.

Answer: Undoubtedly, there are many difficulties and inconveniences connected with the hearing of confessions regularly in our parish churches on Sunday morning. This is particularly the case in large urban parishes. The priests are kept busy with other tasks, the churches are crowded, the Masses follow one another in quick succession. It is easy to understand why, generally speaking, pastors do not favor Sunday morning confessions.

However, it is difficult to see how a pastor is justified in laying down a hard and fast rule that confessions will not be heard on Sunday morning. For a parish priest is bound in justice to hear the confessions of those of his flock who reasonably ask this service (Can. 892, § 1). Now, it is certainly a reasonable request on the part of a person who is anxious to receive Holy Communion, yet was unable to get to confession Saturday afternoon or evening, to ask to receive the sacrament of Penance on Sunday morning.

It cannot be denied that in practically every parish in the United States there are people who have a just reason for going to confession on Sunday morning. In the country parishes there are always some who live a great distance from the church and who could not make the long journey on Saturday and again on Sunday. In the city parishes there are some who have to work on Saturday afternoon and evening. It would seem to be a grave neglect of the pastoral ministry if a parish priest regularly refuses such persons the opportunity of confessing on Sunday morning.

Of course, there will be abuses if confessions are heard regularly on Sunday morning. Some, who could easily come to confession the previous day, will take advantage of this opportunity to “streamline” their devotions by receiving both Penance and the Holy Eucharist in the briefest possible time. However, the fact that there will be some abuses does not exempt the priest from a duty so important as giving deserving members of his flock the opportunity of confessing their sins on the only occasion available to them. The priest is, indeed, fully justified in taking measures to limit the Sunday morning confessions to those who cannot come the day before. He can frequently announce that the opportunity is intended only for such members of the parish, and even personally admonish those whom he knows are transgressing this ruling. In a small parish where there are very few persons who have not the opportunity to confess on Saturday, he can even wait for individual requests before entering the confessional. But in a parish where there is a considerable number of persons able to come to confession only on Sunday morning there should be a regular time assigned for the confessions of any who present themselves.

The most desirable system is to have confessions before the Mass; and naturally this is the only procedure possible where only one priest is available. It is interesting in this connection to recall that the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore exhorted pastors to be on hand for confessions, not only on Saturdays and the vigils of Feasts, but also on Sundays and Feast days in the morning before the first Mass (*Conc. Plen. Balt. II Acta et decreta* [Baltimore, 1868] n. 291). This sentence was added: “It would be a most grave crime if through the negligence or sloth of a pastor even one of the faithful were deprived of this sacrament.”

When there are several priests and the Masses are close together an effort should be made to have all the confessions heard at least before the offertory. For, it is a disputed point whether or not a person going to confession can at the same time be considered as hearing Mass (cf. Damen, *Theologia moralis* [Rome, 1947], I, n. 527; Prummer, *Manuale theologiae moralis* [Friburg Brisgov., 1935], II, n. 491). At any rate, if the confession is going on at the time of consecration, the priest should suggest to the penitent that he pause and center his attention on this most solemn portion of the Holy Sacrifice.

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