

Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

During the Christmas season, our seminarians returned home to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord with their families, and the seminary was peacefully quiet for two weeks— “Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.” Since the 4th Sunday of Advent was the Vigil of Christmas—thereby making it back to back with Christmas—the priests and I, who travel extensively every Sunday and offer multiple Masses, had quite the task to return from the Sunday Mass circuit and prepare for the Midnight Mass. This same challenge occurred again on the following Sunday, which was followed by the feast of the Circumcision. As exhausting as it was, there was no better way to celebrate the Birth of Christ than to have the privilege to receive Our Infant King on His Birthday three times!

Now that the seminarians have returned, the seminary schedule has returned to normal with the exception of severe winter weather, which on occasion has prevented my travel out to the seminary. As the seminary is located in the remote hills of western Iowa, strong winds create amazing drifts of snow. Even after the county snow plows clear the roads by the seminary, the winds can close them right back up with deep drifts.

With every snowfall, it is all hands on deck with the seminarians clearing the seminary, classroom, and driveway before it gets packed too far down from repeated travel. This provides a great break from their seminary classes and studies.

As we begin a new year, let us remember how precious time is, and the need to use our time well to work out our salvation.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI





Solemn Chanting of Vespers for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Fr. Molina visited the seminary on the Epiphany and officiated at the Solemn High Mass and the blessing of gold, frankincense and myrrh in honor of the Three Holy Kings

The Scapular Promises

THE 1ST PROMISE

In the year 1251 the Order of Carmel was in grave danger of extinction because of persecutions from within and without. St. Simon Stock, the General of the order, prayed thus to the Queen of Carmel:

*“Flower of Carmel
Blossoming vine
Splendor of heaven
Mother divine
None like to thee
Peerless and fair
Thy children of Carmel
Save by thy care
Star of the Sea!”*

Suddenly the cell was flooded with a great light. Surrounded by a concourse of angels, the Queen of Heaven descended toward him, holding forth the brown scapular of the friars and saying:

“Whoever dies piously wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal flames.”

This is the first and the better know of the two scapular promises. Catholic theologians and authorities explain this promise to mean that anyone wearing Mary’s Scapular at the hour of death will receive from her the favor of dying in the state of grace.

The main requisites are valid enrollment and constant wearing of the scapular. A priest obtains his faculties to enroll from the Carmelite Order or from the Holy See. He must see that the name of the one whom he enrolls is duly inscribed in the register of the Confraternity of the Scapular, with a few exceptions: Pope Pius X granted to soldiers in time of war the privilege of enrolling themselves with a blessed scapular or scapular medal. Missionaries have the power at times to enroll many people at once.

Though the cloth scapular may be replaced by the scapular medal, the latter should be done only in cases where the scapular itself would cause great inconvenience, such as physical inability, torrid climate, etc. The Vicar

of Christ, in granting the medal, said: “I desire most vehemently that the cloth scapular be worn as heretofore.” An indulgence of 500 days is granted each time one kisses the cloth scapular (not the scapular medal).

The cloth scapular must be of woven wool, of any size and of a rectangular shape, so made that the straps hang over the shoulders and the woolen material thus rests at once against the front and the back of the body. New scapulars need not be blessed once the wearer has been enrolled.

The scapular affiliates its wearer with the Order of Carmel. Therefore, everyone who practices the scapular devotion shares in the prayers and penances of an Order consecrated to the Mother of God.

There is no sweeter nor more complete assurance at the hour of death than the presence of this sign of true devotion to the Queen of Heaven.

“And because all the forms of our love for the Blessed Virgin, all its various modes of expression cannot be equally agreeable to her and therefore do not assist us in the same degree to heaven, I aver without a moment’s hesitation that the scapular is the most favored of all.” -Bl. Claude de la Columbiere, S.J.



THE 2ND PROMISE

“As a tender mother, I will descend into purgatory on the Saturday after their death and will deliver them and bring them to the holy mountain, into the happy sojourn of life everlasting.” (Words of the Blessed Virgin to Pope John XXII)

NOTE: This second privilege requires:

- 1) Observance of chastity according to one’s state in life.
- 2) For all who can read, the recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin; otherwise, abstinence from flesh meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The latter conditions can be commuted by a priest possessing the faculties, into other good works—such as the daily recitation of the Rosary, etc.

This promise is what is known as the Sabbatine Privilege, from the Hebrew word *Sabbato*, or *Saturday*.

More Answers to Today's Moral Problems

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

DIFFERENCE OF THEOLOGICAL VIEWS AMONG PRIESTS

Question: In recent times I have heard a considerable number of complaints from lay persons regarding the great difference of views on moral problems they hear expressed by priests. “One priest tells you this, another tells you that,” they say. What answer should be given to a lay person who expresses such a complaint?

Answer: A priest who encounters this complaint on the part of a lay person should point out, in the first place, that often the laity differ in their manner of presenting the same problem to different priests. To one they present a circumstance that is not mentioned to another. Hence, it is not surprising that they receive different answers, when they have stated the problem differently. Secondly, it should be explained that in applying principles to concrete cases, especially when many factors have to be considered, priests come to different decisions at times, just as different physicians disagree in their decisions as to the best remedy to be applied to a specific disease. Even the most learned theologians differ in their application of principles that all accept.

However, this complaint of the laity should remind priests of their grave obligation to familiarize themselves with the teachings of theology; for it is to be feared that at times the divergence of views arises from lack of theological knowledge on the part of some of our clergy. Such priests, when they encounter a difficult case of conscience are too much inclined to settle it on the basis of what they call “common sense”—which too often provides a purely naturalistic solution, without any relation to the principles of sound Catholic theology. Others are apparently concerned mainly with rendering the way of virtue as easy as possible, and give the questioner the benefit of any opinion that they ever saw in print or heard enunciated by another priest. There would be less divergency in the opinions expressed by priests if all took to heart their obligations to render sane and reasonable decisions in conformity with the declarations of the Church and the teachings of approved theologians.

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