

Capuchin Friars - Morgon, France
Letter to the Franciscan Tertiaries - US Translation

+Pax et Bonum+

February 2013



STRENGTH AND GENTLENESS

A Word from Father: Very dear Tertiaries,

Isn't this picture of the Holy Capuchin Priest striking as realistic and beautiful as he presents the Divine Infant for our veneration? What strength on the one hand and what gentleness on the other! What a contrast between the manly face which is a little rough of the courageous son of Saint Francis and that of the little King of hearts! What a difference between these two right hands that we see: this tiny one which is tendered graciously towards us, and that adult and imposing one which hides its wound and its terrible sufferings under the black mitten and the lace of his alb! On the one hand the strength of a male athlete whose life is but a perpetual and dolorous immolation for God and souls, a fierce combat against sins and the demon (Bluebeard, as he calls him) and the on the other hand, the sweetness and abandon of a peaceful Baby.



But if one penetrates even further in the contemplation of this picture and thinks of Christmas Night, one perceives how goodness and sweetness is also found in the celebrated stigmatist. Loaded with such a noble burden, how lightly he walks, how his heart must be entirely enflamed at the touch of Jesus, so precious and amiable. And faith makes us see in this little Infant of Christmas the Strong God, The Lord of Hosts, Who begins His gigantic course to become one day at His turn cruelly stigmatized and immolated. He who is carried gives to him who carries Him all the strength he has need of to advance in his career of Priest and victim. "The old man carried the Infant, says the liturgy of the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, but the Infant governed the old man." (The Alleluia verse from the Mass, taken from a profound remark of Saint Augustine).

Meditation on this picture of our Capuchin “Simeon” and of his Heavenly burden will aid us to understand that in the Heart of God and of His Saints, there is as much strength as there is gentleness, as much unction as there is courage. In God and in those who resemble Him, the rigor, the intransigence, in respect to evil and error, doesn’t take away suppleness, goodness and condescension. This is a harmony and equilibrium that often escapes us. Our frailty makes us pass from stiffness to laxity, from hardness to liberality, from willfulness to passiveness, or vice versa.

The Great Antiphon that the Church has us sing before the Magnificat of Vespers on December 17th (the first of the “O” Antiphons) is perfectly adapted to our needs as children of our Seraphic Father and of Padre Pio. Before the image of the Divine Infant, let us repeat it several times with confidence: “O Wisdom, that proceeds from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end, **mightily and sweetly disposing all things, come** to teach us the way of prudence.”



May Saint Pio obtain for us from this Jesus that he so loved while on earth and that he “savors” from now on in Heaven, all the graces of force and of sweetness, of courage and of interior unction that we have need of. Very dear Tertiaries, this is the Christmas present that we ask for our souls this year and that the illustrious Capuchin will obtain for us in addition to sending us his Blessing. May you have a Holy and very Merry Christmas!

Day of Retreat for the month of February

Patron Saint of the month: Blessed Eustochium (1430 – 1484)

Virgin of the 2nd Order (Poor Clares): Feast Day is February 13.

Daughter of Count Calofato, Blessed Eustochium was born in a stable at Messina. She overcame a hard combat to oust the rich party who was proposed for her to marry in order to be faithful to the religious vocation she felt God was calling her to.

When she entered the Poor Clares she became distinguished for having a great love of poverty, the spirit of penance and devotion for the Passion of Christ. Under the influence of the Holy Ghost, she drew much spiritual good from the reading of “Itinerary of the Holy Land”. Traveling thus in spirit and meditating on the mysteries of Jesus and Mary, she progressed marvelously in contemplation, never leaving prayer except to lavish true charity on her neighbor, who was often to be found among her fellow Sisters who were stricken with the plague.

When her death neared, a virgin of great beauty appeared to her and placed a ring on her finger. Her virginal soul flew off to the Heavenly nuptials on January 11, 1484.

Meditation

Two Corresponding Qualities in the Tertiary

Such is the pearl that we must enclose in our soul; that from thence certain qualities impose themselves on us that we may be worthy of it.

1.) Greatness of soul: Our Faith is sublime, profound, immense, and it isn't just a small portion of our soul that should hold it. God made us for the Faith, as He made the Faith for us. We must therefore grow. For that we must first remove all purely human preoccupations that encumber our soul, taking up considerable space there and relegating Faith to a far away corner. Neither must we allow our soul to be invaded by a crowd of tempestuous thoughts which trouble it. One cannot contemplate God but in a calm and peaceful soul. So much so that Our Father Saint Francis, while in contemplation, admiring all the magnificence of the Faith in God, cried out: "Who art Thou Lord, and who am I?"

2.) Firmness of character: "Do not allow yourself to be balloted about by every wind of doctrine." This is the teaching of Saint Paul on the subject of the Faith. Our times are rife with novelties; the Faith is old as God who presents it to us in His teachings; old as the Church who transmits its lessons to us. We must not allow ourselves to be seduced "Do not believe every spirit" says Saint John. Let us keep the ancient rule: "Nisi quod traditum est. Do not believe but what has been handed down to us", and the Church is the channel of Tradition, as it only belongs to her to interpret the Sacred Scriptures.

May our Faith not diminish before all the apostasies and human scandals, that would be nothing but weakness added to weakness. May our soul remain calm, unperturbed, recovering itself after each fall; it is thus that the firmness of our soul will be worthy to understand the firmness of our Faith.

Every man, despite his efforts, must submit to the law of fluctuation. Our Holy Father Saint Francis endured it in respect to the Rule that he wished to impose on his Brethren. He complained to God, and God replied: "Poor little man, why are you troubled?" In the troubles of our Faith, let us go to God.

(By the Rev. Father Augustine – Annals of the Third Order 1912 Pages 66-67)

* Reminder: the Franciscan Third Order Retreat – directed by the Capuchin Friars of Morgon, at Los Gatos, CA will be held November 4-9, 2013. Please call to make your reservation soon.

Fr. Jacques Emily, TOSF chaplain
St. Aloysius Gonzaga Retreat House
PO Box 1379 Los Gatos, CA 95031
408-354-7703 tel | 408-354-7369 fax
trad.thirdorderofpenance@gmail.com

Sr. Mary Bernard TOSF co-Secretary
ourladyministry@hotmail.com

www.sspix.org (Select Third orders-TOSF)

(218) 776-2111