

ABIDING SORROW FOR SIN

By Father Faber*

It is a very troublesome thought that so many persons have lofty and sincere aspirations after high things, and so few reach them; that so many are called to perfection, and so few answer the call; that so many begin ardently and prudently and yet die leaving their tower unbuilt; that so many are conversant with mental prayer, yet never come to perfection. It is a troublesome thought, because it sets us calculating the doctrine of chances about ourselves, and in less selfish moods calculating the loss of glory to God and of power to the Church. For every perfect ascetic is a veritable fountain of power in the Church, however hidden, unknown, or mean-looking he may be. There is certainly an analogy between the waste of grace in the spiritual world and the waste of seeds and flowers and fruits in the natural world. Yet there is poor consolation in a barren analogy. It may serve for a book of evidences, but we shall get little light out of it, and less heat. It does not content us. We must pursue our troublesome thought further, until we get some wisdom or warning out of it.

Now the universality of this phenomenon, when reflected on, leads us to suppose that it has some common cause which is one and the same in everybody. In the spiritual life, a variety of causes will produce a similar effect. But here is a case which holds equally among men of the south and men of the north, among born Catholics and converts, in all countries and in all times,—frustrated vocations to perfection. The more we think of it, the more irresistible seems the conclusion that there is one common cause; and if so, how much it imports to discover it

For a long time I thought it was the want of perseverance in prayer; but then there were so many instances in which the theory broke down. I must have gone against the whole tradition of mystical theology if I maintained that mental prayer was at all necessarily connected with perfection. Nothing grows upon us so much as the wide distinction between the habit of prayer and the gift of prayer. We may find men who have not missed a meditation for years and yet who seem to have no growth about them at all; nor even any tenderness, which ought to be the infallible product of persevering prayer if the prayer is right in other respects. They are perhaps critical to excess in judging others, or they are wanton and ungoverned in their loquacity; and month follows month, and year year, and these unbroken prayers do not seem to tell upon either of these faults. And can any faults be named more fatal to piety than criticism and loquacity? It is as if these men prayed in some way outside their souls, as if their prayer were an adjunct of their spiritual life and not its heart's blood. These inoperative meditations and unreforming prayers are very melancholy things. But, having tried to establish my theory, I found it was out of the question to attribute these failures to a mere want of perseverance in prayer.

Then I cast about for another guilty cause; and I took it into my head that these failures might be owing to a want of bodily mortification. Why did I not rather suspect the absence of interior mortification? For this reason. Because bodily mortification seemed so rare that I was afraid interior mortification was put forward as a means of evading bodily mortification. There is something honest, satisfactory, and intelligible about bodily mortification; and I preferred dealing with it. Moreover, I could not but see that bodily mortification almost always either brings interior mortification along with it or makes a man easily convertible to it. I had more fear lest the outward should be wanting than the inward. The style of the times obviously warranted this fear.

In truth, I found that incalculable mischiefs might be put down to this want of corporal austerity, but that it could not be brought in guilty of these failures in perfection. First there was the awkward fact that those who made most of the austerities practised them least. For it is obvious to put innocently impertinent questions to men who preach strong doctrines.

I was astonished how little they did who talked so much. This was discouraging at the outset of the enquiry.

However, further investigation seemed to show that although there could be no growth without austerity, the growth did not depend upon the austerity. Men mortified themselves and yet seemed to stand still. Much evil was hindered, and much killed. Souls were kept good who might have fallen away. But they did not seem to shoot ahead.

* *Slightly abridged from the original in Father Faber's Growth in Holiness.*

Austerity purified and prepared, and went no further. In a word, it appeared that in the soul bodily austerity was medicinal rather than nutritious, and that it sometimes made men irritable, morose, and hard-natured as medicine will do. All honour to it!—but it does not secure by itself our growth in holiness.

What was to be the third object of my suspicions ? They were awakened by perpetual hints and innuendoes dropped by St. Francis de Sales which observation seemed more and more to corroborate. I therefore charged with these failures in perfection that form of indiscretion which consists in taking too many things on ourselves, and so acting in an eager feverish, and precipitate manner, which St. Francis calls empressement. The circumstances of modern life appeared to beguile men into it more than ever. Its miserable consequences were patent on all sides. It vitiates all it touches, and weakens what is most divine in all our spiritual exercises. It confuses the operations of grace, and turns the fruit of sacraments on one side. Our duties are all disorderly, untidy, and ill-tempered, because they rush pell-mell from morning till night, treading on each other's heels, and turning round to reproach each other.**

Now let some men be found who have no duties but those which their state of life renders indispensable, whose day is roomy and large, quiet and old-fashioned, everything in its place and all things clean. They must have but few spiritual exercises, and they must make much of those few, do them slowly and punctiliously, value recollection, and have no signs of tepidity. Many such were to be found, but on close inspection growth in holiness was anything but the invariable rule with them. Their slow way of doing things, their roominess (so to call it) was an immense blessing to them, and fraught with many graces. Nevertheless they were for the most part a phenomenon. Unless all the spiritual books in the world have conspired to be wrong, there is no such thing as a dead level in piety, on which people can pace up and down without either advancing or going back, like a comfortable terrace without a single inequality in it. All theory is positive that there is no such thing. Yet by some means these good men have contrived to make it or to find it. Explain it who will, there they are pacing up and down, thoroughly good, truly edifying, yet on a level, and a low level too. I am not going out of my way to account for it. It overthrew my theory; and with all the good will in the world (and out of love for St. Francis de Sales) to give precipitation a bad name, I was obliged to return a verdict of Not guilty, at least on the charge of causing all these unhappy failures in perfection. But the oftener a man baffled, the more obstinate he grows. Here were three failures, and a determination to try again.

This time I was longer at fault than I had been before. I did not so much cast about for a theory as watched and waited; and by slow degrees so many facts obtruded themselves upon me that a sort of induction from them was unavoidable. At first it took this technical shape,—that all men are anxious to get clear of the Purgative Way of the ascetic life and enter into the brightness of the Illuminative or the sweetness of the Unitive; and that all failures in perfection, or so nearly all as to satisfy the requirements of a general rule, are owing to this one thing. Nothing ever presented itself to make me doubt the substantial truth of this conclusion.***

But the Purgative Way is a wide thing, a very comprehensive term. Would experience allow us to narrow it, without making it too narrow to bear the superstructure that was to be built upon it? The thing was to wait for more facts, so as to have a larger and safer induction. The result was a persuasion, which I venture to record under correction, that the common cause of all failures in perfection is the want of abiding sorrow for sin.

Just as all worship breaks down if it is not based on the feelings due from a creature to his Creator, just as all conversions come to nothing which are not conversions from sin, just as all penances come to nought which do not rest on Christ, just as all good works crumble away which do not rest upon Our Saviour,—so in like manner all holiness has lost its principle of growth if it is separated from abiding sorrow for sin. For the principle of growth is not love only, but forgiven love.

** *(Editor's Note) Compare the advice once given by Father Faber to a novice: "Walk slowly, and speak without emphasis; if you can manage these two exterior things, I will answer for your interior peace."*

*** *Father Faber is referring to the traditional "Three Ways" of spiritual progress. Beginners are in the Purgative Way and have principally to cleanse their souls from faults. The more proficient are in the Illuminative Way: following Him who is the Light, they are more concerned to do good than to merely avoid evil. The most advanced are in the Unitive Way: their union with God is intimate and absorbing and often consciously mystical." These three Ways are in practice subject to many diversities and interminglings. (Editor's Note.)*

This persuasion was strengthened in me by the gradual observation that the absence of abiding sorrow for sin adequately explained all the separate phenomena that had induced me to accuse and prosecute, first the want of perseverance in prayer, then the lack of bodily austerities, and last of all, the precipitation of having too much to do. For this abiding sorrow would produce the same continual feelings of our own unworthiness and of our dependence upon God which would be the fruits of persevering prayer. It would engage us in perpetual warfare with and disesteem of self, and would keep us in the spirit of penance, and that without intermission, which bodily mortification would do excellently but intermittingly. It would give us all the quietness and gentleness with self, the sweetness and forbearance with others, the patience and slowness with God, which we should gain from the absence of precipitation. The salient features, therefore, which had drawn suspicion upon these things, were all reunited in this abiding sorrow for sin.

Meditation on the mysteries of Our Blessed Lord, and on Our Lady's life, threw still further light on this supposition. First of all there was this remarkable fact. Jesus was sinless, by His own intrinsic sanctity, the unutterable holiness of His Divine Person. Mary was sinless, by the gift of Jesus and the pre-eminent prevention of His redeeming grace. Yet the characteristic of the lives of both was that they practised penance in an heroic degree, as if penance might be holy without innocence, but not innocence without penance.

The theological ways of accounting for the penance of Jesus and Mary led to more light. It appeared that their life of penance consisted in some measure in an abiding sorrow from first to last. The first moment of conception was the full use and complete energy of reason. But reason dawned upon a wonderful, deep, and fixed sorrow. From that instant till the moment of death the sorrow abided with them. It put itself in harmony with every kind of feeling. It adapted itself to all circumstances. It never darkened into gloom. It never melted into light. It lived on the present, and the clear view of the future was part of its present, and it never let go its hold of the past. It was keen and distinct in the soul of Mary, while she magnified God in the exultation of her Divine Maternity. In the ever-blessed soul of Jesus it dwelt amid the fires of the Beatific Vision, and was not consumed. It was a beautiful mystery of perennial sorrow.

The characteristics of this sorrow were that it was life-long quiet, supernatural, and a fountain of love. These features of it are very much to be weighed and observed. For when we come to look at ourselves, whether it be the rare few who have preserved their baptismal innocence and whose souls are only charged with venial sins, or the great apostles, unrivalled amidst the Saints, confirmed in grace, and whose grace was superabundant, or the mass of men, whose best estate is that of repentant and returning sinners,—we shall see that no sorrow is possible to us which shall unite these four characteristics except the abiding sorrow for sin.

It is as much life-long with us as anything can be. It is a prominent part of our first turning to God, and there is no height of holiness in which it will leave us. It is the interior representation of our Guardian Angel in our souls, and the disposition and demeanour he would fain should be constant and persevering in us.

It is quiet. Indeed, it rather tranquillizes a troubled soul than perturbs a contented one. It hushes the noises of the world, and rebukes the loquacity of the human spirit. It softens asperities, subdues exaggerations, and constrains everything with a sweet and gracious spell which nothing else can equal.

It is supernatural. It is all from God, and all for God. It is forgiven sin for which we mourn, and not sin which perils self. And this very fact makes it also a fountain of love. We love because much has been forgiven, and we always remember how much it was. We love because the forgiveness has abated fear. We love because we wonder at the compassion that could so visit such unworthiness. We love because the softness of sorrow is akin to the filial confidence of love.

Thus abiding sorrow for sin is the only possible parallel in our souls to the mysterious life-long sorrow of Jesus and Mary; and the fact that sorrow clung to them characteristically in spite of their sinlessness seems to show how much of the secret life of Christian holiness is hidden in its gentle supernatural melancholy.

Moreover, it was impossible not to perceive that under a variety of names,—sorrow, repentance, fear, and the like,—Scripture speaks of an abiding penance, of fearing always, of fearing forgiven sin, of passing the time of our sojourning in fear, of the sorrow which is unto life. It never contemplates the possibility of the dispositions of repentance ceasing; for the single passage of St. John about love casting out fear, is hardly to be understood of this

life. So that there seems to be a precept of always sorrowing for sin analogous to the precept of always praying, and subject to the same kind of difficulties in its interpretation.

Now what does this abiding sorrow of Scripture mean?

Certainly not austerities; for they are occasional and intermitting. Certainly not sadness, which is sorrow with self in it and where God should be. Certainly not human melancholy, which is either a consequence of sin or a fruit of idleness or a disease of a deranged bodily system. Thus Scripture,—forming the last link in that chain of proof which led me to charge failures in perfection on the want of abiding sorrow for sin as their single common cause, a cause uniting in all men with the other causes which affect this or that individual,—brings me also into the consideration of my subject. We must first ascertain the nature of this sorrow.

It consists in an abiding sense that we are sinners, without at all bringing up to remembrance definite and particular sins. On the contrary, it would not only avoid such a picturing of sins as a matter of prudence, but it would be quite foreign to its genius to think of it. It is too much occupied with God to do more than to fix its eyes on self with a touching, patient, reproachful look.

It consists also in an undoubting and yet an unceasing prayer for pardon. If it were argumentative it might say that a sin was either forgiven or was not forgiven,—that forgiveness was an instantaneous act, whether it were gratuitous or conditional,—and that to ask forgiveness for what is forgiven is to approach God with unmeaning words, But David gives it a voice, *Amplius lava me*, "Wash me more and more, O Lord "; and the whole Church throughout the world has adopted his *Miserere*, and is continually upon her knees, crying *Amplius lava me*. O how the soul yearns for that *Amplius* Theologians tell us that the fires of Purgatory do not amid their other severely benignant offices burn the stains of sin out of our souls; because in truth there are no stains there,—the Precious Blood obliterated them in the act of forgiving them. Still there are the fires. So there are the fires of that *Amplius* in the soul. It is a thing to be felt rather than accounted for, to be cherished rather than defined.

It consists also in a dread of forgiven sin, not so much because of purgatory (though it is far from affecting to be above these mixed and lower motives—poor soul, how should it venture to think itself above anything!), but because of the way in which old habits revive, and the species of old sins haunt the imagination, making it often, to use the forcible words of Scripture, like a cage of unclean birds. It dare not go to sleep with the seemingly dead enemy by its side. Through the cold night and on the strewn battlefield it wakes and watches, and in a low voice sings the triumphs of grace, that it may repel the approaches of slumber.

It consists also in a growing hatred of sin,—an increase of the spirit of Gethsemane in our souls, a communication from that solitary mystery beneath the olive trees, when even apostles slept. It is the Sacred Heart touching our hearts, and leaving faint stigmata of His own lifelong sorrow upon them.

It consists in a growing sensitiveness of conscience as to what is sin. Ineffably bright as is the sanctity of God and His refulgent glory, to gaze upon it strengthens our soul's eye unworthy, and dishonourable in actions. We discern the complication and mixture of motives more distinctly. And entangled in a confusion of infirmities, a very inevitability of imperfections, where self-love can find no single resting-place for the sole of its foot, we grow in a divine sadness which humility and faith will not allow to be disquietude. With all this, and in the way of consequence, our personal love of Our Most Blessed Lord increases, and love of Him as our actual Saviour from sin. It is our joy to "call His Name Jesus, because He saveth His people from their sins."

There are two classes of persons trying to serve God,—those who do not feel this abiding sorrow for sin and those who do. Or it would be more accurate to say that the one class has not got it and does not feel the want of it, and the other either has it or wants to have it. Various causes hinder men from feeling this want; the most common is tepidity. Lukewarmness is incompatible with this holy sorrow and cannot coexist with it. But the characteristic of such men is the absence of spiritual growth, and their perseverance in the ways of devotion doubtful.

On the contrary, those who have not this sorrow but feel the want of it have this consolation, that the very feeling of the want is a sign of a healthy state or at least of returning health; though it may be even with them that lukewarmness has brought their necessity safely home to them.

Many men are unhappily without it from their having suddenly or prematurely taken too high a place in the spiritual life, left the Purgative Way too rapidly, vitiated their palates by mystical books, or undertaken penances too

hard for them and works beyond their existing grace. If we insist upon our souls growing upward before they have taken root downwards they are sure to be stunted. Little birds that try to fly before they are fledged fall from the eaves, and are hurt or killed according to the height from which they fall. The love of such men for Our Blessed Lord is cold and poor, and anything like ardour looks to them mere highflown romance or a wordy enthusiasm.

That the sorrow, however, is not always sensible, is no proof that it is not habitual. Yet sensible sorrow, like sensible sweetness, is a great gift, and to be moderately desired and asked of God.

The Apostle tells us there are two kinds of sorrow: one of them is sorrow unto death, the other a sorrow unto life. The sorrow unto death is more like self-vexation than genuine sorrow. It is often the consequence of an exaggerated human respect. It is a sorrow for sin which causes fresh sins, by filling us full of irritability both towards others and ourselves. It is without any trust in God, without any realization of grace, and leads to no amendment of life. This is the sorrow unto death in its earlier stages, during which it may occasionally mingle unperceived with the dispositions of excellent and interior persons. Its later stages are the preparations of despair; and its consequence, worked logically out, is final impenitence and an unfavourable doom.

The sorrow which is unto life is of two kinds. The first is that which works conversion. It is impetuous, outwardly demonstrative, full of self-revenge. This sorrow is naturally transient; for it has an end to accomplish and then it goes.

The other is the sorrow which we should wish to retain with us always. As I have said, it is lifelong, quiet, supernatural and a fountain of love. Hence it is affectionate and not reproachful. It knows how to deal gently with self, without dealing indulgently. It is humble, and never downcast at falls. Strange to say, its fear of hell is infrequent, faint, and intermitting; yet it is never,—not for a moment nor even in ecstasy,—without a solemn, reverential fear of God's inscrutable judgments. The celestial raptures of Our Lord's Sacred Humanity interrupted not for one moment the reverential fear with which His Body and Soul were penetrated. Moreover, this abiding sorrow is devotional. It inclines to prayer, brings pleasure in prayer, and though a sorrow, is itself a sweetness. It is very confident, and its confidence rests solely upon God. It lives by the fountains of the Saviour's Blood, weeps silent tears like one who is continually hearing good news, and is hopeful.

This affectionate sorrow delivers us from many spiritual dangers. It throws a tenderness into our whole character, and makes us deep and pliant. It brings with it the unction of that special gift of the Holy Ghost which is named "piety." It hinders our getting into a formal way both of doing our ordinary actions and of going through our accustomed devotions. The sap subsides in the trees as the cold weather comes, and the chilly nights quicken its descent. So is the gradual declension of fervour in our souls. But this sorrow saves us from it; it is the sap of our spiritual lives, whose character it is to be perennial and its foliage evergreen. The leaves may be cold-crumpled and frost-bitten; but the tree is still green. It also saves us from making light of venial sins, and is always stopping (even when we know it not) little untruths, teasing jealousies, wounded conceits, and sins of the tongue.

For it is the sorrow which was the Lord's mantle. We are holding the sacred fringe, and virtue goes out of Him into us, and the issue of the bleeding soul is stayed.

The fruits which it produces in us are of equal importance with the dangers from which it preserves us. It makes us charitable towards the falls of others, and this reacts upon ourselves in the way of an increase of humility. It involves a continual renewal of our good resolutions, additional reality and fortitude in our wish to do more for God, and an increasing power of perseverance, with more stability and less effort. It blessedly diminishes our taste for the world and its pleasures. It flings the charm of heaven around us, and disenchants all other spells. It leads to a more fruitful, because a more reverent, humble, and hungry use of the Sacraments; and no grace that comes to us is wasted while this sorrow possesses our souls. It grinds all grist in its mill. There is nothing which makes our endurance of crosses more patient or more graceful,—nothing which gives us so calm and fertile a pertinacity in works of mercy to others. We are always flooded with inward tenderness, so that there is not an ache or a pain in one of Christ's members which does not awake our sympathy and find its account in our sensibility. Devotion to Our Lord's Passion is meant for the daily bread of Christian thought, and it keeps fresh and new in this sorrow as in a genial atmosphere. Our perceptions of the invisible world become finer and keener; we are more liable to be excited by spiritual interests, and more alive to the soul's wants and dangers; and there is about us a liveliness of thanksgiving which only shows the copiousness of the hidden joy in this apparent sorrow. It is as though the happy resurrection of the flesh were partially anticipated.

The coils and drags fall off our soul, and we have a new facility and promptitude for everything which has to do with God.

But how are we to get, or if gotten how keep, this dear and precious sorrow? Need I say that we must make it a subject of special prayer? We must not give way to disgusts with common devotions, tame books, ordinary practices, and commonplace direction. We must prepare carefully and leisurely for sacraments, and make much of them. We must have a great devotion for the conversion of sinners, and be very simple in the accusation of ourselves in the confessional. We must be jealous of anything which hinders our constant growth in personal love of Jesus. Whatever else stops for awhile, often inculpably, this love can never stop. There is no end to it. It partakes of God's infinity. Nothing is above it in kind, nothing coequal with it in degree.

We must never consciously seek consolation as a primary object either in sermons, direction, devotion, voluntary bodily inflictions, or spiritual conferences. We must not seek to be consoled in a sorrow which is our treasure, and which we are fain should abide with us not only until the day of this world is far spent, but until the new eternal day has veritably dawned. And if we be in the Illuminative, or even in the Unitive Way, never let us part company altogether with, meditation on the Four Last Things.

But particularly we must be upon our guard against two foolish mistakes which betray an ignorance of the first principles of the interior life, and which nevertheless are not uncommon. The first mistake is the putting lightly away of movements of remorse and inward upbraidings, as if they were, mere scruples. Directors, in a hurry to get rid of their penitents, or anxious to keep them calm at all costs, often cast them into this delusion. But it is a serious misfortune as well as a grave mistake. It may be some old root of bitterness which is causing the twinge, or some secret reserve with God which has found voice and is upbraiding us. What shall we lose if we leave these things still in us? Or it may be that Our Lord is doing to us something like what we read of various saints,—that He is squeezing the last drops of bad blood out of our hearts. And are we to meddle, and unclasp the kind firmness of His fingers from the aching place, when if we knew our own good fortune we should see that that ache is worth kingdoms to us? A cloud is always a cloud; but it is wisdom to know when the cloud that is overshadowing us is the Holy Ghost.

The other mistake is thinking it un-Catholic to take serious and religious views of things. Converts are very liable to this from the ordinary laws of reaction and recoil. So also are priests, seminarists, and religious, as thinking seriousness professional. Levity will not make us happy, and I never read the life of a saint who thought it fine to speak lightly, or who was given to do so. They said little, and what they said was invariably grave. I believe it was their gravity that made them cheerful. There is something undergraduate about this levity. It is partly the conceit and partly the vulgarity of the spiritual life.*

I am confident no vocation to perfection will be frustrated by a soul in which there is this abiding sorrow for sin. It is the quintessence of devotion to the Sacred Heart, and it is there that we must seek it.

APPENDIX: INDULGENCED ASPIRATIONS**

We might recite all or any of the following indulgenced aspirations from motives of divine charity and contrition, with the particular intention of begging from God grace for sinners and of helping to make reparation, in union with the redemptive mysteries of Our Lord, both for our own sins and for the sins of all our brethren of the human race. In this way we should be acting in the spirit of Father Faber's advice to us in this pamphlet.

Any aspiration may be repeated over and over again (e.g. on a decade or even on a full round of our Rosary beads). In this connection let us recall that St. Francis de Sales regarded a single aspiration recited a hundred times as more fruitful than a hundred different ones, each recited once. But let us beg God for the grace of saying the aspirations attentively and from our hearts. Mere quantity of prayer without good quality could not greatly please Him.

** Father Faber is finding fault only with heartlessly unseasonable flippancy and the like. He has no quarrel with the virtue of happy Christian lightheartedness and even playfulness. Similarly sorrowfulness of heart for him is consistent with—and indeed presupposes—the grateful joyousness of a soul that knows it has been created and redeemed by an infinitely loving God. (Editor's Note.)*

*** Added by the editor.*

As for the Indulgences, we cannot do better than to place them in the hands of Our Lady, with the request that she should apply them as she sees fit, either to our own souls or to the suffering souls in Purgatory. Slow, thoughtful reading of the pamphlet, interspersed with these aspirations, would be an excellent way to make a Holy Hour in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The aspirations are

1. O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
2. O Lord, deal not with us according to the sins that we have committed, nor according to our iniquities.
3. O Lord, remember not our old iniquities and be merciful to our sins for the sake of Thy name.
4. Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
5. From all sin deliver me, O Lord.
6. Lord, save us, we perish.
7. My Jesus, mercy!
8. Dear Jesus, be to me not a Judge but a Saviour.
9. Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.
10. O Jesus, be to me a Jesus and save me.
11. Christ Jesus, my Helper and my Redeemer.
12. Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.
13. O Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, have mercy on us.
14. Hail, O Cross, our only hope!
15. Through the Sign of the Cross deliver us, O God, from our enemies.
16. Lord, I thank Thee for having died on the Cross for my sins.
17. O good Jesus, hide me within thy wounds.
18. We beseech Thee, therefore, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy Precious Blood.
19. Divine Heart of Jesus, convert sinners, save the dying, free the holy souls in Purgatory.
20. Dear Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us and on our erring brethren.
21. Sacred Heart of Jesus, convert poor blasphemers.
22. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.
23. God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
24. May the grace of the Holy Ghost enlighten our thoughts and our hearts.
25. O Holy Virgin, deign to let me praise thee; give me strength against thine enemies.
26. Mary, our hope, have pity on us.
27. Mother of love, of sorrow, and of mercy, pray for us.
28. Holy Mary, preserve us from the pains of hell.
29. O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.
30. Mary of Sorrows, Mother of Christians, pray for us.
31. Virgin Most Sorrowful, pray for us.
32. Holy Mother, pierce me through; in my heart each wound renew of my Saviour Crucified.
33. Holy Mary, our Deliverer, pray for us and for the souls in Purgatory.
34. Our Lady of La Salette, who bringest sinners to repentance, pray without ceasing for us who have recourse to thee.
35. Grant, O Blessed Joseph, that we may pass through our lives free from sin, ever secure under thy fatherly care.
36. Saint Michael Archangel, defend us in the battle, that we may not be lost in the dreadful Judgement.
37. That Thou wouldst recall the erring to the unity of the Church, and lead all unbelievers to the light of the Gospel: we beseech Thee, O Lord, to hear us.
38. From a sudden and unprovided death, O Lord, deliver us.
39. That Thou mayest deign to humble the enemies of the Holy Church: we beseech Thee to hear us.

40. O Most Pure Heart of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, obtain for me from Jesus purity and humility of heart.

Here, to conclude, is a prayer to ask for the grace of doing our work well. It is directed to St. Joseph, head of the Holy Family, patron of the Universal Church, who by his work provided for Jesus and Mary —for God and God's Mother. We might say the prayer slowly, from time to time, with an eye on how far our own work habitually shows forth the qualities the prayer asks for. The prayer was indulged by Saint Pius X (who was named Joseph at baptism):-

O glorious Saint Joseph, model of all those who have to spend their lives in work, obtain for me the grace of working in a spirit of penance, to make amends for my many sins,—of working conscientiously, putting devotion to duty above my own inclinations,—of working gratefully and joyously, considering it an honour to employ and develop, by means of my work, the gifts I have received from God,—of working methodically, peacefully, temperately, and patiently, never flinching before weariness and difficulties,— of doing above all entirely selfless work with the pure intention of pleasing God, death being always before my eyes and the account I shall have to render of time lost, of talents left unused, of good left undone, and of that self-satisfied conceit in success which is so fatal to work for God. All for Jesus, all through Mary, all according to thy example, O Patriarch Saint Joseph, —that shall be my watchword in life and in death. Amen.

(Biographical Note.—Frederick William Faber was born in Yorkshire on June 28th, 1814. He spent eight years as a clergyman in the Church of England before becoming a Catholic on November 17th, 1845. He was ordained a Catholic priest on Holy Saturday, 1847. He joined before long the Oratorian Fathers of St. Philip Neri, and spent the rest of his life in that Congregation. He died in the London Oratory on September 26th, 1863. He had great largeness of mind; his heart was most loving. His works include: All for Jesus; Bethlehem; Growth in Holiness; Spiritual Conferences, and The Foot of the Cross. He also wrote some well-known hymns, among them Faith of Our Fathers.)
