

**Reading the Catholic Classics Together**  
**Introduction to the Devout Life**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Chapters</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>September 13, 2021</b>	<b>Introduction to the Author, Text and Spirituality (Preface as review)</b>	
<b>PART 1</b>		
<b>EXERCISES AND SACRAMENTS</b>		
<i>Counsels and Exercises for the Guidance of the Soul from Its First Desire After a Devout Life until a Full Resolution of Pursuing the Same</i>		
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## **October 18, 2021**

### **Modesty in Dress**

- always clean dress
- dress according to the situation – funeral, mass, lent, wedding, king’s court
- state in life, married, widowed, single
- If you are not looking for a mate, you should not dress like you are looking for it.  
– “Those who do mean to entertain guests should take down their signboard
- Old women should dress their age and not try to dress in ways that are only tolerable in the young.
- Be neat and never any disorder and untidiness about you
- Devout men are to be best dressed person in the company but the least fine or splendid or adorned, meet and quiet spirit

### **Conversation – First, How to Speak of God**

- The state of your soul can be judged by your words
- If you love God you will speak often of him to everyone
- When you speak of God, know that he is God, speak reverently and with devotion

### **Unseemly Words and Respect Due to Others**

- Careful with your words, even an impure word falling on a weak mind spreads its infection like a drop of oil on a garment
- The body is poisoned through the mouth, and the heart through the ear
- Do not say that you mean know harm with your words because even if you did not mean any harm, the evil one means a great deal of harm and can use those idle words as sharp weapons against some neighbor’s heart.
- Those who cherish the angelic virtues of purity and modesty, will always speak simply, courteously and modestly.
- If anyone addresses you with unseemly language, show that you are displeased by turning away.
- Most evil – those who use satire or turn everything to ridicule. God abhors this vice. Ridicule is the greatest sin we can commit in word against our neighbor
- There are light hearted humor over the amusement we find in innocent things that human imperfections afford, Be careful that it does not go too far and become ridicule. Laughter at someone else expense.

### **Hasty Judgments**

- To judge belongs to the Lord
- Hasty judgments are displeasing to God
- To judge one must know the intention and the heart, which Man cannot know

- You have enough to judge yourself, that should take up all your time, and if you will not judge yourself, then you should not judge others. It is usually the opposite, we judge others rather than ourselves.
  - If you are and excessive and rash judge of others, you are in great need of a wise and spiritual physician. That is because the bitterness is natural to them and I tis hard to conquer.
  - Others it is not bitter but pride, in that they exalt their own self by disparaging others.
  - For others, they take delight in knowing the wrongs of others because they believe they are better than others. This is often hard to find and requires an experienced person to point it out to them.
  - For others still, they want to excuse and justify themselves by pointing out the guilt of others who have the same faults. They think that it is less culpable if lots of people have it. See everyone does it.
  - Some take pleasure in it. They just love to criticize others
  - For some, they do not judge people they like and judge people they dislike. Excessive love provokes a false judgment
- CURE
  - Love – which is the great healer of all ills
  - Attack judgment through the affections, not the intellect or eyes. If your affections are warm and tender, your judgments will be not be harsh
  - Take the most charitable view of the case that was possible. – the worse, when you think of something. Accept the best first. Joseph could not believe there was any sin in Mary, he left all judgment to God. Jesus pleaded the ignorance of those who crucified him. Impute the least damaging motives we can find, as ignorance or infirmity.
- It is forbidden to judge one another
- We can have doubts about our neighbor but be careful that they are not rash or hasty.
- There is not surer sign of an unprofitable life than when people give way to criticism and inquisitiveness into the lives of other people. – Exceptions for those for whom they are responsible for others like family or public life.

#### Slander

- This is the pest of society
- He who unjustly takes away his neighbor's good name is guilty of sin.
- Slander is a kind of murder, murder of the civil life.
  - Three lives, spiritual life, bodily life, civil life
  - Killing of life, sin, death and slander kill the life respectively
  - The slanderer commits three murders with his tongue
    - He destroys his own soul
    - Destroys the soul of the person who hears it
- The devil has possession both of the slanderer and of those who listen to him, the tongue of one and the ear of the other
- Never speak evil of anyone. Beware of imputing sins or faults to others of needlessly disclosing this real faults of exaggerating faults, or of attributing wrong

motives to good actions. Of maliciously concealing it, of depreciating it in conversation, In all these, you offend God

- Greatest, false accusation or denying the truth.
- Those who slander others with an affectation of good will, or with dishonest pretenses of friendliness, are the most spiteful and evil of all. They appear to not be slandering but let the slander fly even deeper into the ears of others.
- Witty slander is the worse. It stays in the listener because it is accompanied with amusing witty comments
- If someone sins once, do not speak of him as if it were a habit.
- You must also guard against an extreme into which some people fall, in the their desire to speak evil of no one, actually uphold and speak well of vice
  - Call evil evil and sin sin
  - If you be sure it was for someone's good. To not speak to young of evil, they may think lightly of evil and so start doing it.
  - Make sure you are the most proper person among those present to express your opinion and makes sure that your silence would not in any way condone the sin.
  - Do not exaggerate, but be exact if you must speak ill of another. Say no more than that.
  - Blame the sin and spare the sinner as much as possible
- Public sinners – charity, do not speak of them with arrogance or take any pleasure in their fall. You must condemn heretics
- Most people permit themselves absolute latitude in criticizing and censuring rulers, and in calumniating nationalities, according to their own opinions and likings. This displeases God
- If you know of anything favorable to the person you are criticizing, take pains to mention it.

### **Further Counsels as to Conversation**

Let your words be kindly, frank, sincere, straightforward, simple and true; avoid all artifice, duplicity and pretence, remembering that, although it is not always well to publish abroad everything that may be true, yet it is never allowable to oppose the truth. Make it your rule never knowingly to say what is not strictly true, either accusing or excusing, always remembering that God is the God of Truth.

- when it is necessary to contradict anybody, or to assert one's own opinion, it should be done gently and considerately, without irritation or vehemence. Indeed, we gain nothing by sharpness or petulance.
- Look less to the quantity (for fewer and for many words) and look to the quality of your words

### **Amusements and Recreations: What are Allowable**

- We must relax the mind and the body and so have recreation
- Francis gives a list and says they are all good, but we must avoid excess, either in time or in the amount of interest they absorb.

### **Forbidden Amusements**

- Dice, cards and the like are hazards, not like dancing which is dangerous, they are bad and harmful. Games of chance, there is no skill to boast of. Winning should be the result of skill or labor, not chance
- They are not recreation when there is anxiety, fear and agitation of the gambler. Cannot even cough because you will annoy the people gambling. The only pleasure is to win.

### **Balls and other Lawful but Dangerous Amusements**

- Dances and ball are indifferent but they can become full of temptation and danger.
- Staying out too late and sleeping late the next day is not good, not spent in God's service
- If you must then have moderation, dignity and good intentions, like bad food,
- Dances attract bad behavior as well. Quarrels, envy, slander, indiscretion
- After dances enter into pious actions to counteract it.
  - Think that while dancing, souls were groaning in hell
  - Others were kneeling before God praising him, which was better spent than what you did
  - The good you could have done, visiting sick, those dying. One day you will be sick and others dancing and making merry
  - God, Mary, angels saints all say you doing that.
  - You are closer to death and you wasted the time dancing

### **When to Use Such Amusements Rightly**

- Constant habit, recreation turns into an occupation
- When you do these things out of courtesy of others, it can be done on a limited basis. You can do a little of it

### **We must be Faithful in Things Great and Small**

- Be ready to do great things for the Lord and small things
- Take patiently the petty annoyances, discomforts, unimportant losses that come to us daily. Accept them lovingly and freely, the headaches, toothache, cold, peculiarities of husband or wife, the broken glass, the loss ring, the sneer of the neighbor. Accept them lovingly.
- Dedicate all we do to God, no matter how small
- Seek the higher things of faith but do not neglect the little things of the day of family cares and duties and do them with diligence
- Great occasions for serving God are few but little ones come all the time daily. If done in God's name all you do will be well done

### **A well-Balanced, Reasonable Mind**

- We find fault with our neighbor very readily for a small matter, while we pass over great things in ourselves. We strive to sell dear and buy cheap. We are eager to deal out strict justice to others, but to obtain indulgence for ourselves.

- We complain and do not like when others complain of us, Many more examples of how we seem to do things that are not reasonable.
- We can have two scales (one to our advantage for our benefit and disadvantage to others for our benefit) two hearts,
- Be just and fair in all you do and put yourself in your neighbor's place, sell as you would buy and buy as you would sell.

### **Wishes**

- Do not long after things that are far off when it wears you out or expense your energies uselessly or cause distractions, married wanting to be religious, wanting property that is not for sale, etc.
- When sick, to waste time in being anxious to do good that you do when you are strong, it is a waste of time. When you have no power to fulfill it.
- Useless wishes take the place of being patient, resigned, self-denying, obedient, gentle under suffering, which are required under certain circumstances.
- I can never think it well for one whose vocation is clear to waste time in wishing for some different manner of life than that which is adapted to his duty, or practices unsuitable to his present position--it is mere idling,
- Do not desire crosses, except for the one's God gives you.
- The Enemy of souls often inspires men with ardent desires for unattainable things, in order to divert their attention from present duties, which would be profitable however trifling in themselves.
- Select among the many spiritual things to do, do not try to do them all.
- Do not waste your time on unprofitable wishes

### **Counsels to Married People**

- He who would find a blessing in his marriage, must ponder the holiness and dignity of this sacrament, instead of which too often weddings become a season of mere feasting and disorder
- Mutual love. God gives you one to the other and cherish one another with holy sacred heavenly love
- Effects of marriage
  - Indissoluble union of your hearts
  - Inviolable fidelity to one another
  - Birth and bringing up of children – God works with you in his work in the production of bodies for him to infuse a souls
- Husbands:
  - preserve a tender, constant, hearty love for your wives.
  - No failings or infirmities, bodily or mental, in your wife should ever excite any kind of dislike in you,
- No jealousy in the marriage
- Whatever you ask of the other, you yourself must be, chaste,
- Wives:
  - Never let only speak disparaging of your husband, but be offended, especially from another man

- Offer their children to God
- As soon as children can reason, you must fill their hearts with faith
- Children are the crown of their parents. Build up a family.
- Woman cares for the faith of the family, and wife must see that her husband has devotion, a man without religion is rude, rough,
- Do not grow angry or argue. God's spirit will not dwell in house where there is fighting
- On anniversary, go to Mass, confession and commend their married life to God and renewing their resolution to their vocation

### **The Sanctity of the Marriage Bed**

- The marriage bed should be undefiled

### **Counsels to Widows**

- Be a widow in the heart as well as in the body. Even take a vow to widowhood
- It should be focused on God and not worldly motives for vow of widowhood. Not trying to win the praises of men and dress and attend places to captivate men.
- If children need her, then she should tend to them until they no longer need her
- Prayer is the widow's chief occupation
- Widow should have perfect modesty, minister to the poor and sick, lead the young to a life of devotion, comfort the afflicted, example to young women, humility simplicity and kindness.
- True widow abides in the church
- Do not be disparaging to women who remarry

### **One Word to Maidens**

- Jealously guard your love for you husband
- Think of possibly being called to be the bride of Christ.