



***SECOND YEAR
MEETING THREE
CALL TO CHARITY***

1. Introduction

Natural charity is the giving of self to aid others; its goodness and worth is recognized even by the Internal Revenue Service, which allows deductions for material charity given to others.

The supernatural virtue of charity has God as its primary object; secondarily, its objects are our neighbors and ourselves. We are drawn to love God for Himself above all things because of His supreme Goodness and as the source and fulfillment of our happiness.

2. Exemplar: Praxedes Fernandez, O.P.L (or T.O.P)

Praxedes Fernandez was born in Sueros, Spain, July 21, 1886 into a well-to-do family. She was educated by Dominican nuns, and married the poorest suitor, in 1914. He was an electrician and they had four sons. In 1920, she was widowed when her husband was killed in a train accident. She worked as a maid to support her children. Maids, especially in those days, did not have an easy life and she worked long hours and was very poor.

She was a Dominican Tertiary who answered the call of all the townspeople who needed her help. She cared for the sick, the poor and the hungry. She ate one meal a day, except on Friday when she fasted the whole day. She cared for the sick, even those with contagious diseases, in her own quarters.

Every day, she set aside hours for prayer and reflection and attended Mass even if, during the Spanish Civil War, she had to walk to another village.

One son was killed in a train accident. Another died in the Civil War and the third is a Dominican priest, Fr. Enrique Fernandez, who preaches in Leon, Mexico.

Praxedes Fernandez is already known as Servant of God, the first step toward her canonization. Her cause was introduced in 1957. Her cause is now a priority of the order's Postulator General.

During the Spanish Civil War when no priests were available, she baptized babies, comforted the sick and dying and held prayer services. Her village was under siege and she became ill with acute appendicitis. No doctor was allowed to attend her and so she died. Her body was thrown in the truck with those of dead soldiers and she was buried with no funeral, placed in a common grave.

3. Theology

CHARITY

The virtue of charity is an infused gift of God which inclines our will to love God for His own sake and to love ourselves and our neighbor for His sake. We may be as St. Francis and love all creatures for His sake.

It is the virtue that unites us most intimately with God. When we love, we are drawn to be loved, to unite with the beloved, to become one with the beloved. If the beloved is inferior, we are drawn down to its level; if it is superior, we are drawn upward. By the virtue of charity, we are drawn up to the infinite to love God and all in and through Him.

The quality of charity can grow infinitely: the more deeply we love, the more deeply we are able to love; the more deeply able, the more we love. It is the growing, deepening quality of charity that is its hallmark. Just being doers of good works is not necessarily the hallmark of charity for they may be done out of a sense of duty or with lukewarmness. The more we are rooted and united in the object of our love, God, the more intense the quality of charity becomes.

The danger to the theologian is to have a vast, speculative, and as comprehensive as humanly possible, knowledge of God, but not have love of Him. The simple true love of the unlearned is richer and more pleasing than all the knowledge of God.

The more intense the desire to unite the act of charity to Christ, the more pleasing it is. The love is centered on God; when it is shown to neighbor or to self, it is to see God is goodness and glory in creation. We love our spirit as a reflection of God's glory; we love our body in the same way, but as faithful Christians, we know its weaknesses and therefore do penance so that the spirit will be strengthened. In charity, we love neighbor, sinner, and enemy for the good within each and for recognition of their capability for good, for attaining eternal life. The more we seek their infinite good, the greater is our true charity toward them.

St. Thomas speaks of the order of charity:

First is the love of God and with it, the desire to fulfill His precepts and to accept trials and difficulties. It is a love of benevolence to do good to add to His glory; it is a love of friendship to add good to Him; it is a love of complacency to rest totally in Him.

Second is a love of self so that we look to the spiritual good of self more than any other in the created order, remembering always that the end does not justify the means of showing this love. It is also to love our neighbor and to seek his spiritual good more than our bodily good.

The effects of charity are divided by St. Thomas into those that are:

- Internal:
 - Spiritual joy which coexists with sorrow
 - Peace which is an inner tranquility of order
 - Mercy which is having compassion toward others
- External:
 - Beneficence or doing good to or for others
 - Alms giving
 - Fraternal correction

The opposites of charity are:

- Hatred, most grave when it is directed against God
- Spiritual sloth which is opposed to joy and may be characterized by malice, rancor, pusillanimity, despair, indolence and flightiness
- Envy is discord which is opposed to peace and may be characterized by contention, schism, war, strife, or insurrection and scandal which is opposed to beneficence.

WISDOM

Wisdom is a supernatural habit, inseparable from charity, which makes us able to "taste and see that the Lord is sweet". We have a sort of connatural understanding of God by this gift of the Holy Spirit. We know something of divine things in our intellect and in our will, we direct our human acts to these divine things.

The gift is primarily concerned with God and gives the knowledge of Him which delights and moves us to act in accordance with our knowledge and love of Him. We almost take a divine view of created things, see and use them in the proper perspective. We experience, we "taste" with intuition or illumination the goodness of God and His revealed truth. We see life and created things radically, or rooted in the supernatural order.

Supernatural wisdom gives us profound knowledge of divine things, far beyond theology. The person gifted with such wisdom does not proceed in a rational discourse to learn and then to act; rather the person acts in a rapid intuitive way, having great clarity and certitude in the action even if not always sure within himself why he acts or speaks in such a way.

Wisdom perfects charity drawing us ever closer and deeper in love with God and leads to the mystical state, a state open to all.

The effects of wisdom are listed by St. Thomas as:

1. Giving a divine sense by which to judge all things, to see all things, to see life from God's view and to see His hand in our lives and relationships so that we know that God is the only treasure worth possessing and this knowledge gives us peace toward all events.
2. The ability to live the faith in a divine manner, knowing that God is present in the soul, animating it so that the person knows the joy of union and can know the mystical, ecstatic state.
3. For the saint, life is lived in union with the three Divine persons through participation in his life; there is an "understanding" of the Trinity and no matter what external conditions are, the spirit is united with God, for the true contemplative has the quiet cell in the heart.
4. Wisdom raises the virtue of charity to heroism, that death to self that God may more abound and one is able to love neighbor in a totally supernatural manner.
5. Wisdom gives all the other virtues their ultimate perfection and makes them divine.

The truly wise saint can say that all is only for the honor and glory of God while the rest of us can only strive to make this true in our lives.

Opposed to the gift of wisdom are both spiritual dullness and fatuousness or the lack of ability to judge divine things.

To be more responsive to the gift of wisdom, we must practice trying to see and evaluate all things from God's point of view; combat worldly wisdom which is foolishness in God's eye and not be attached to spiritual consolation but rather to love, to serve, instead, in darkness and privation, willing to trust taking one step at a time.

Beatitude: Blessed are the peacemakers for they (we) shall be called the children of God.

This is the social and active beatitude which must start with obedience to God and peace in Him. Peace is given to us by God in Christ. "Peace be with you;" "let your peace be to those in the house" and we begin to have peace when we practice self-knowledge, develop trust and humility and respond to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially that of wisdom, so that truth becomes apparent to us.

Jesus said that He came to give peace; He also said, "I come not to bring peace, but the sword. These contradictions can only be reconciled by our faith, our trust in Him and His Word that in God alone is our true peace.

As peacemakers, we cannot take sides and we cannot be effective unless we are at peace ourselves. Peacemakers are not negotiators. They radiate first of all an inner peace.

Peace means the tranquility of order. That is, within ourselves, it means accepting who and what we are and rooting ourselves in Christ to become like Him, fellow heirs of the Father. It means going to others with His peace reflected in us to convert the hearts of others and help them attain inner tranquility. The mutual desire for and love of this tranquility will be reflected in a growing desire for and a manifestation of peace in action. As peace becomes apparent, it spreads by

example to others. Therefore, we must work for proximate goals as we become peacemakers; we build on these goals and come to a larger common goal.

Peace is only found rooted in virtue; when a peacemaker acts, it reflects his inner beliefs. When we live our faith and imitate Christ, we share His peace and become able to bring it to others. As each of us reflects on the virtue of charity and gift of wisdom and the goodness that ensues from practicing or living a life increasingly full of them, we are well “on the way” to becoming a peacemaker and truly a Dominican preacher.

**HOMWORK
YEAR TWO
LESSON THREE**

DAYS	SCRIPTURE	CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH	DOMINICANA
FIRST WEEK	Letter to James		Dialogue of St. Catherine of Sienna
MONDAY	1-3	2006-2011	The Bridge-pg.88-100
TUESDAY	4-5	2012-2016	
WEDNESDAY	I Peter-1-2	2017-2029	
THURSDAY	3-4	2030-2040	
FRIDAY	5	2140-2051	
SECOND WEEK	II Peter		
MONDAY	1-3	2052-2057	The Bridge-pg.100-120
TUESDAY	I John1-2	2058-2063	
WEDNESDAY	3-5:3-5	2064-2071	
THURSDAY	II & III John	2072-2082	
FRIDAY	Jude	2083-2089	
THIRD WEEK	Revelations The Apocalypse		
MONDAY	1-2	2090-2097	The Bridge-pg.120-139
TUESDAY	3-4	2098-2103	
WEDNESDAY	5-6	2104-2111	
THURSDAY	7-8	2112-2117	
FRIDAY	9-10	2118-2126	
FOURTH WEEK			
MONDAY	11	2127-2132	The Bridge-pg.140-160
TUESDAY	12-13	2133-2141	
WEDNESDAY	14	2142-2149	
THURSDAY	15-16	2150-2155	
FRIDAY	17-18	2156-2159	

On a separate piece of paper briefly outline your thoughts or questions on the articles you have read for your homework, to be turned in next time we meet