

To Love Jesus And To Make Him Loved

The Fraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

*Circular Letter For July
Year of Our Lord 2009
Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the Lord give you peace.

Many spiritual directors have found a common ailment among devout souls who are working to know, love and serve God with all of their hearts. These souls, perhaps like yourselves, dread offending the good God, and wish very much to live a life of peace united to Him at all costs. This ailment is fear, sadness and discouragement. It leads to a lack of confidence and a offensive and false fear of God which ultimately displeases Him.

Deo gratias we have great souls such as the Franciscan Fr. Athanase, Pere Almire Pichon, St. Therese of Lisieux and Fr. Mateo Crawley who had devoted their lives to God encouraging souls not to fear, but to serve Him through love. To know His Heart as it really is, and to realize that He is our Father. Really, God is our Father, our Papa, yes we may dare to be that familiar with our Father. St. Paul explained that we are really the adopted sons of the good God, he powerfully exhorted Christians to be free of servile fear : ***“For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons; whereby we cry: Abba (Father).”***(Rom. 8. 15.) Bishop Sheen in one of his conferences explained that the translation of Abba, is a tender expression, a filial statement like the word Daddy. Christ Himself used this expression, to teach us to boldly confide in Our Father in Heaven: ***“Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee.”*** (Mark 14.36.)

The Devil, who knows that he cannot snare souls who are of good will into mortal sin, tries relentlessly, to plunge them into sadness, into discouragement, into a sea of scruples. He who was very pleased to see the triumph of that horrendous error of Jansenism, wishes to warp our vision, and our knowledge of the true God, the God who is Love and Who communicates Peace wherever He reigns! Pere Pichon marvelously tears the mask which the Devil would love put on God, a false image of terrifying God: ***“My friends, you have the wrong idea of the good God if you believe Him to be hard of heart, a Master difficult to please, who weighs you down with heavy burdens. Oh permit me to say that, even before you, I became acquainted with that view of a rigorous Master. I also trembled before Him. I calumniated Him in my failure to appreciate His goodness when I was a child. I said to myself, “They want me to love and serve so terrible a Master, but there is nothing attractive about Him. He is a harsh and terrifying God. I might tremble before Him, yes, but love Him, adore Him? Fear Him? Oh, yes. Fear Him, above all! But love Him? Impossible! Show me a whip? Menace me with hell? Oh, no, no, it is not that way that my heart can be won. No, I refuse to have anything to do with such a god. He is harsh! He is a caricature of the true God! He is a false god! A counterfeit god!”***(1)

The Sacred Heart of Jesus, our true Brother, has come to earth to reveal Himself to us, to assure us, that He is a God Who loves to pardon our sins, Who wishes to make up for all our weaknesses and to abolish our sins forever! To reveal that though He is our Divine King, reigning forever in Heaven, He is still and always will be the Jesus of the Gospel. The Jesus Who, wherever He went did good, casting out demons, curing physical sicknesses, forgiving sins and converting souls, pouring out unutterable compassion and love. The Jesus who ***“came not to destroy souls but to save them.”*** (Luke 9.56) Who stays with us in Blessed Sacrament, as our nourishment and our strength, Who has left us the Sacraments and the priesthood so that we would hear His voice and obtain His pardon. Father Athanase in his wonderful work Why Are You Fearful, stated quoting many places in Holy Writ to prove his point that: ***“Yes, the good God is not even pleased with fear in His service. And yet many men and books of today repeat it***

over and over again: "Has not the Lord in the Gospel frequently threatened judgement and hell? And should not such threats fill us with fear?" True, the Saviour has pronounced these terrible threats, and that not only once. But for whom were they meant? Above all for the proud, the lazy, the uncharitable, the unbelieving! And the same Saviour's favorite topic was confidence."(2)

We can see that in the Holy Gospel, the only requisite for Our Lord's miraculous action is faith. He wants us to trust Him, to believe in Him, to hope for everything from Him. The blind come to Him to be healed: "*Do you believe, that I can do this unto you... According to your faith be it done unto you*" (Matt. 9.28) And they can see! St. Therese in a letter to Fr. Roulland boldly proclaimed her trust, and cast out all fear of the much misunderstood justice of God, again all the while quoting Holy Writ: "***I hope as much from God's justice as from His mercy. It is because He is just that He 'is compassionate and filled with meekness, slow to punish and abounding in mercy.'*** For He knows our frailness. He remembers that we are but dust. As a father is tender for his children, so the Lord has compassion for us!... That, Brother, is what I think of God's justice. My way is all trust and love. I do not understand souls who are afraid of so kind a friend... A single word of (Holy Scripture) discloses to my soul infinite horizons, perfection seems to me easy: I see that it suffices to recognize one's nothingness and to abandon one's self like a child in the arms of the good Lord. (LT, May 9, 1897.)"

(3)

A common trap of Satan is to make devout souls think they have sinned where there is not question of it. Or, he will at least try to make their situation so foggy and doubtful, that they are torn from their union with Jesus and fixated on themselves. Pere Pichon tries to set souls free in his explanation of certain principles which it is good to study: "*There are three kinds of doubtful sins, depending upon whether the doubt concerns the act, the gravity, or the confession. The doubt may concern the act itself. Did I really commit that fault? "It seems to me that I did." Are you sure? "No." Then you need not accuse yourself. The act is doubtful. "Yes, Father, I committed that sin. I am fully convinced of it." Did you realize at the moment that you were offending mortally? "Father, I only saw that afterward." One does not sin after the act is committed. At the very time of the act did you realize that you were sinning mortally? "No, Father." Then it is a doubtful sin and you need not accuse yourself. Father, I am certain that I committed that sin and I knew it was serious, but I am not sure if I accused myself of it. Perhaps I did, perhaps not." It is a doubtful sin according to the principle: the doubtful does not oblige confession. In order that one commit mortal sin, it is necessary that the conscience speak clearly. When the conscience hesitates, it is a good sign. We can never be in the state of mortal sin without being aware of it."*

(4)

Fr. Athanase O.F.M. tells us: "*But think what is required for a mortal sin: there must be the omission of a grievous obligation, or an act of disobedience against a commandment of God in an important matter- and this must take place with full knowledge and deliberation, and a completely free consent of the will. Should any of these three conditions be lacking, or should you honestly doubt whether these three- important matter, full deliberation and full consent- were present, then there is no question of grievous sin. Foolish and contrary to the teaching of theologians is the opinion, that a person can stumble, as it were, into a grievous sin without knowing it or wanting to commit it. Thus the learned Father Pesch."*

(5)

It is not to put a blanket my dear brethren on the ugliness of sin that this little letter is being put forth! May God forbid that! But, it is our experience, that an unhealthy fear of the good God; a false fear, the fear which leads to discouragement and a certain inability to sacrifice and do good, is a common snare of the evil one. It is something which cannot be resisted enough! It is because trust, confidence and love of the good God, will aid our souls in all of the different aspects of the spiritual life, and will procure for us a spirit which is willing to pour itself out for Him, Who has poured Himself out with infinite love for love of us that we combat this erroneous image of God. It is so that we may serve the Sacred Heart with love as He truly desires that we will fight this spirit, very evil indeed, of sadness and discouragement.

For this reason we will continue to relate in future, what many holy souls have left for us on this

subject, so that we may defend ourselves from this terrible snare, and will in future through the grace of the good God, serve the Sacred Heart in a spirit of sons and daughters, and not as trembling, terrified little servants, for He has said to us: ***“I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends.”*** (John 15.15.) May God grant that we pray, and serve Him with this spirit of friendship!

We wish to close this circular, wishing our beloved Rev. Fr. Freddy Mery S.S.P.X. a happy 30th anniversary in the sacred priesthood! A priest forever and one serving the good God on this earth for 30 years. Thank you Pater, for all that you do, and especially for taking very good care of this little flock with so much love in Il Poverello.

Your little servant in the Merciful Love of God,

Fra Pio-Francis T.O.S.F.

Fra Pio - Francis T.O.S.F.

Circular approved by Rev. Fr. Freddy Mery. S.S.P.X.

Albi Freddy Mery pater.

(1) Seeds Of The Kingdom. Almiré Pichon, S.J. The Newman Press. Westminster, Maryland. 1961

(2) Why Are You Fearful. Fr. Athanase. By Marion A. Habig. St. Anthony's Guild. Paterson, New Jersey. 1937. Chp. 1. Pg.4

(3) Therese of Lisieux A Vocation of Love. Alba House New York. 1982. By Marie-Pascale Ducrocq. Pg.68..

(4) Seeds Of The Kingdom. Almiré Pichon, S.J. The Newman Press. Westminster, Maryland. 1961. Pg. 48

(5) Why Are You Fearful. Fr. Athanase. By Marion A Habig. St. Anthony's Guild Press. Paterson. New Jersey. 1937. Pg. 65-66.

All quotes of Scripture From:<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>