

# THE THIRD ORDER

2 March 2007

## Of the Society of St. Pius X

88 Alma Rd,  
Wanganui, New Zealand

acranshaw@sspx.com

Phone: [64] 6/ 344 7634

Fax: [64] 6/ 344 2087

---

---

Dear postulants and professed members,

The number of Third Order members is growing even as I write, with 5 more members having made their profession in the Third Order last weekend, and five taking their step of one year postulancy this weekend. Deo gratias! We must all pray for each others perseverance.

Our commitment to the Third Order and to the Church is something which binds us to making intercession. We have a relation to the world which is no different from Christ's. Christ was both priest and victim. He had a vertical relation of intercessor with His Father in heaven and a horizontal relation of sanctifier with His fellow men on earth. On the Cross He was upright as a priest making intercession for all mankind; on the Cross He was prostrate as victim for our sins.

This double aspect of Christ's redemptive mission should be found in each one of us to a lesser degree. We are called to be intercessors between God the Father and fallen mankind, and victims of expiation for their sins and ours. Let me speak this month about our duty as intercessors.

### **Making intercession**

Seeking holiness can easily turn into a selfish quest if we lose sight of the social dimension of Christianity. No cell of a body can live normally outside of the body for which it is fitted, but the body can happily live without the need of any individual cell. The same is true for us as Catholics. We cannot go on through life pretending that we only have ourselves to save. No, we are part of an immense Mystical body which spans its arms over 2000 years and spreads its wings over the surface of the entire globe. When we pray the Rosary it's the world we have at our fingertips on each one of those lobe shaped beads. We should never limit the power of this prayer to just our personal needs. Every Rosary should encompass the missions in Africa, the priests and Catholics in Communist Russia, the refugees in the middle East, the Pope in his Vatican office. We are called by our Baptism to intercede near to Christ and intercede we must, for there is no one else who will. This is our vocation, our privilege, our duty.

Christ once said "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its savour what shall it be salted with?" We as Christians have a character imprinted on our soul at Baptism. The image of Christ is there fixed for all eternity. As an emperor knows his coin by the images of his bust on the reverse side of each one, so God knows His children by the baptismal character on their soul. This character carries with it a power of intercession which gives us the right to participate with the priest in offering prayer and the Sacrifice of the Mass to God the Father. We participate in the very priesthood of Christ Himself and enjoy therefore the right to intercede with the priest for souls. What if we who are the salt of the earth lose our savour? What if we do not make use daily, yea hourly of this power of intercession for the poor world in which we live, and for whose salvation we must live? If we lose our savour then with what shall the world be salted, persevered and saved? Perhaps one of the cruellest things we can do to someone who asks us for our prayers is not to pray, as though it didn't affect us or have anything to do with us. Every person, however small they may be, has everything to do with us because we are called to save ourselves in the context of our neighbour and the Mystical body. As one writer put it: "no man is an island"; and as St Paul said: "No man lives alone and no man dies alone." Personal sins, even the most secret, have repercussions on all the Church. A cut finger pains the whole body and a cut soul pains the whole Mystical body. The ripple caused by a stone thrown into a pond touches every point of the shore. A hidden violation of Christ's law by any member reverberates through and disturbs the equilibrium of the entire Church.

In Russia during WWII there was a group called the Herodivi (meaning born fools for Christ). They were mostly Baptists found in concentration camps. When a prisoner was about to be beaten, they would ask that the punishment be given to them. Their argument was that if that prisoner was beaten he'd hate back and there would be an increase of hate in the world; if however the Herodivi was beaten he'd forgive and there would be an increase of charity in the world. This is the vision that we must have of sanctification and sin.

Our sanctification has a social dimension. Every increase in your personal holiness causes an increase in the holiness of the entire Mystical body; every member of the Church profits from it. That is why Fr Faber doesn't hesitate in saying: "One saint is worth a million ordinary Catholics". St Teresa of Avila tells us that one soul, *not a saint, but seeking sanctity*, is more precious to God than thousands living common lives. Why? Because just as a million damp matches will never start a fire but one match, dry and enflamed, suffices to ignite the whole world, so too will one saint do more for the salvation of the world than a million ordinary Catholics. Listen to the words written by a religious in the 1930's in this regard: "I am striving for sanctity, because in this way I shall be useful to the Church. I make constant efforts in practising virtue. I try faithfully to follow Jesus. And I deposit this whole series of daily virtues – silent, hidden, almost, imperceptible, but made with great love – in the treasury of God's Church for the common benefit of souls. I feel interiorly as if I were responsible for all souls. I know very well that I do not live for myself alone, but for the Church entire ..." So, our sanctification has a social dimension.

The influence of one good soul, one saint, on the world is immense; let me explain by examples. Out of respect for Joseph, God prospered the house of Potiphar. The wicked city of Segor was saved by the prayer of Lot. Before God sent Jerusalem into captivity He said to Jeremias: "Go around Jerusalem and search the streets ... and if you find one man there that faithfully does his duty and keeps troths, the city shall be pardoned."<sup>1</sup> And after God had inflicted judgment on Jerusalem He gave the reason: "Who would ... intercede with me to spare the land from rain? Not a man was found! What wonder if I poured out my vengeance, burnt them up in my anger? It was but their just desert I gave them says the Lord God"<sup>2</sup>. Finally when the last Judgment comes, the day of vengeance "there would have been no human creature, if the number of those days had not been shortened; but those days will be cut short for the sake of the elect."<sup>3</sup>

God revealed to one privileged soul just what He would spare the world for her sake: "My beloved child, delight of My Heart, your words is dearer and more pleasing to me than the angelic chorus. All the treasures of My Heart are open to you. Take from this Heart all that you need for yourself and for the whole world. For the sake of your love, I withhold the just chastisements, which mankind has deserved. A single act of pure love pleases Me more than a thousand imperfect prayers. One of your sighs of love atones for many offences with which the godless overwhelm Me. The smallest act of virtue has unlimited value in My eyes because of your great love for Me."

Woe to us if we lose our savour by ceasing to sanctify ourselves in order to better intercede for a fallen world. Remember the man who was let down through the roof? He didn't ask to be brought to Our Lord, nor to be cured, nor even to have his sins forgiven. Yet Our Lord forgave him his sins and then healed him! Why? Because of the **prayers** of the four men who let him down. "This is something Catholics have forgotten: intercession for others; and in a period of time when the Church appears to be so socially minded. We mustn't neglect the spiritual influence we have on others."<sup>4</sup>

As a Third Order member you're especially devoted to praying for the sanctification of priests and to aiding them in their apostolate. The latter can be done in many ways; but let me give you an example of what is always the most effective way, and sometimes the only way, to help. In a large parish the assistant priest has just fallen sick; the parish priest is over worked and under prayed (not a typo!). The number at daily Mass attendance is dropping; the young men are turning to dope and the young women to immorality. The parents are on the parish priests back

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeremias 5,1

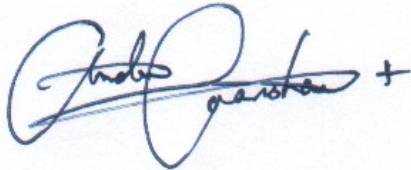
<sup>2</sup> Ezechial 22, 30-31

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 24, 22

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Fulton J Sheen. Conference on the holy hour.

about the state of the school, and the collection is not meeting the weekly running costs, driving the parish into debt. As a Third Order member you're asked to pray. What should you do? Spend an hour before the Blessed Sacrament. If we took our intercessory role seriously we'd often find an hour too short; so many people, needs and graces to pray for. Anyway prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and especially during Mass is very powerful. Please, for the sake of fallen humanity, think of praying a little more fervently and with a broader perspective on your intercessory role. Your sanctification has a social dimension.

In Christ through Mary,



Fr Andrew Cranshaw,  
Spiritual Director of the Third Order of FSSPX  
for Australia and New Zealand

### **2007 Retreats for Australia and New Zealand**

#### **Brisbane. Contact Fr Lafitte on 0403 083 328**

Men's retreats: 10-14 September 2007	Women's retreats: 20-24 August 2007
22-26 October 2007	24-28 September 2007
10-14 December 2007	19-23 November 2007

#### **Goulburn. Contact Fr Scott on 02 4829 5177**

Men's retreats: 18-23 June 2007	Women's retreats: 17-22 Sept 2007
	24-29 Sept 2007

#### **Wanganui, New Zealand. Contact Fr Laisney on 64-6-344 7634**

Men's retreats: 30 April-4 May 2007	Women's retreats: 10-15 Sept 2007
-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------