

THE THIRD ORDER

Of the Society of St. Pius X



18th January 2010

jordiestephens@hotmail.com

Phone: [61] 3/5629 1045

Fax: [61] 3/5629 2710

PO Box 500, Tynong
Victoria, 3813

Dear Postulants and Professed members,

As you may know, the SSPX runs a number of Ignatian Retreats throughout the year, which are a tremendous grace for those who attend them.

The prime purpose of the 5-day Ignatian Retreat is *not* to "have a break" or "get away from my spouse for a week", as profitable and welcome as these secondary reasons might be.

Their purpose is rather to thoroughly reorientate one's life in the direction of eternal salvation, which comes to us only through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether the retreatants are first-timers or experienced campaigners, the exercises (if followed faithfully) work a complete revolution of all the soul's powers, turbo-charging them in the direction of heaven. They can be likened to the re-laying of the foundations of a house (or at least major renovations thereto), the cleaning out of one's obsolete computer files for greater speed and storage, or really any major renewal of something's powers to help it reach its end more efficiently and effectively.

You may have heard stories before about retreatants who experienced some troublesome preternatural activity (i.e. from devils) when they went on Retreat. There has even been talk that maybe some of the Retreat houses are haunted, thus accounting for the problems encountered.

Certainly the devil *hates* the Mass, the Rosary, the Sacraments, etc. But he only really starts to **fear** them as a threat to his kingdom when people **receive them fervently with a daily effort to change their lives.** He likes nothing more than to see Traditional Catholics fall into the trap of thinking that pious exteriors will cover interior nakedness and tepidity. It is only those who really want to change their lives (and take the means to do so) that attract his attention and thus spiteful hatred.

Even the generous sacrifice of devoting one week of the year exclusively to one's soul is enough to make the devil furious. After all, his most effective work is done amidst distracting noise and showy glamour, the very antithesis of which is found by the retreatant. This is why he works hard just to keep the faithful from attending. It is common for there to be many cancellations in the last few days before the retreat begins. Some of the cancellations are perfectly legitimate, but most are probably not.

The devil will try anything to put people off. One of our retreatants earlier this month not only almost choked to death on a piece of food on the eve of his first ever retreat, but was also almost killed in a car accident. Unfortunately for the devil, he spoke to a priest, and attended the retreat.

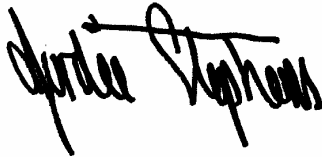
Once the retreat has begun, there are numerous manifestations of diabolical dissatisfaction. It is not uncommon to hear complaints of the perception of a foreign presence in one's room at night, sudden difficulty sleeping (especially the night before the general confession) and the waking up to find an arm or leg immovable.

These occurrences don't happen to everyone of course, and many may have never been bothered by anything. There is certainly no reason to fear coming on retreat because of things like this, but rather their occurrence should be to us a great inspiration to do something that the devil puts all his razor-sharp intelligence and fury into preventing. We should be flattered that he gives us so much attention. It is not valleys that feel the brunt of lightning and storms, but high mountain tops. To attract so much fury from God's most intelligent creature must mean we are doing something very important indeed. Our Lord said that the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and this does not just refer to the vigour and effort required on our part to conquer a reward of so high a value, but also to the violence inflicted on us by the enemy of mankind whose eternal suffering is intensified with each soul won to sanctifying grace and virtue.

Let all this be an incentive to fulfil your obligation of attending a Retreat every 2 years. If you do try to arrange it, expect opposition from the enemy, allowed by God (the devil is on a short leash) to try your love for Him. Remember that the devil is a past master at having insignificant and trifling things appear as insurmountable obstacles. For example, a young man left halfway through the retreat this month because he saw a gun!

Lastly, If generously attended, the 5-day Ignatian Retreat, besides its soul-changing effectiveness, will probably be the most beautiful 5 days of your life, which is why we have so many faithful return to them year after year. Don't so much fear Lucifer and his evil hordes, but rather that which *made* him evil, which is **sin**. When you are baptized, in the state of grace, and devoted to the Blessed Mother of God, you are indeed terrible to the devil. In possession of these 3 things, Our Lord can truly say to us, speaking of the numerous hordes confronting us, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee" (Psalm 90).

In the Sacred Heart, through the Immaculate heart of Mary,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordie Stephens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line striking through the middle of the name.

Fr Jordie Stephens
Spiritual Director of the Third Order of SSPX for Australia

P.S. PLEASE NOTE THE NEW ADDRESS FOR ALL 3RD ORDER
CORRESPONDENCE, BEING NO LONGER IN ROCKDALE, SYDNEY,
BUT RATHER TYNONG, VICTORIA.