

THE IMMACULATA



The Little Virtues

Indulgence, by which we excuse others faults, making little of them, quite simply forgiving them- although we cannot assume that we ourselves will be pardoned in the same way.

Charitably pretending, not to notice our neighbour's defects, wrongs, failings and inappropriate words; putting up with everything without saying anything and without complaining

Compassion, which soothes the pain of those who suffer, which weeps with those who weep, which is affected by everyone's misfortune and which makes us ready to go through the fire to alleviate it or to bear it ourselves.

Holy joy, which enters into the joy of those who are happy in order to increase it and which sees to it that our brothers share in all the consolations and all the benefits of virtue and of community life.

Gentleness of spirit, which except for very serious reasons, never imposes its opinions on anyone, but willingly adopts whatever is wise and good in other people's ideas, praising their discoveries and their sentiments and so safeguarding concord and charity.

Charitable concern, which anticipates others needs in order to spare them the pain of feeling them and the humiliation of asking for help; it is the goodness of heart which cannot refuse anything, which is always on the watch to give assistance, to give joy and to oblige everyone.

Affability, which without showing the least annoyance, listens even to those who make excessive demands and is always ready to come to the aid of those who ask for help, it is tireless and patient in instructing the ignorant.

Urbanity and politeness which appeal to everyone by means of gestures of respect, regard and deference, and which always yields the first place in order to give honour to others.

Condescendence *not to be confused with "condescending" as commonly interpreted and accepted today in modern terminology, which accommodates itself easily to others' wishes, which bends down to make those beneath us feel at ease; which willingly listens to others' reasons and seems to appreciate them if not always well-founded.

Devotion to the Common Good which prefers the interests of the family, and even of particular members of it, to one's own, and which sacrifices itself for the good of one's brethren and for the prosperity of the family and society.

Patience which, keeps silent and endures, always endures, never tiring of doing good, even to the ungrateful. An agitated man is like someone suffering from a fever; the patient man is like a doctor who moderates the fever's attacks, restoring peace to those who have lost it through passion.

Balance of Soul and Character By these we remain always the same, not letting ourselves be drawn away into silliness, passion, irritation, melancholy, ill-humour, but are always kind, cheerful, affable and content with everything and everyone.

The little virtues are social virtues. They are extremely useful for everyone who lives in society alongside other reasonable beings. Without them, the little world we inhabit cannot be well governed, and the communities to which we belong are in constant agitation and upset.

Without the practice of the little virtues, peace cannot exist in the home, and thus people are deprived of the very first consolation in the midst of the thousands of daily trials which life brings in this valley of tears. What a sad house it is where the little virtues are scorned. Superiors and inferiors, young and old; everyone is at loggerheads. Without love and the practice of the little virtues it is impossible for family members to live in peace under the same roof. Without charity and the practice of the little virtues, a family house is like a prison; a hell.

Do you want your house to be a paradise, where hearts are in unity? Love the little virtues, practice them faithfully, for they are what makes a household happy.

Saint Marcellin Champagnat, great friend and fellow seminarian of the Holy Cure of Ars, St John Mary Vianney

With God, anything is possible

It was a day in 1912. Felix Leseur and his wife Elizabeth were chatting when she said something that made him sit back and laugh out loud. He was a physician, distinguished political journalist and business man, but he was also a militant, anti-religious sceptic and free thinker.

What made him laugh was his wife's statement: "I know you. I am absolutely certain that when you return to God you will not stop on the way because you never do things by halves, you will someday be Father Leseur!" To think of his coming back to the Church was to Felix very funny, but to think of his ever becoming a priest-that was absurd.

But what Felix did not know was that his wife Elizabeth had made a special pact with God. The last 15 years of her life, described by her doctor-husband as "one prolonged malady", she offered to God to obtain, among other supernatural intentions, her husband's conversion.

When she died on May 3, 1914; Felix was heart-broken, but he had given no sign of going back to God. Since he no longer had the lady he loved, he turned to the things she wrote- they were all spiritual, and they made him think. Then one day, it was in August, 1914, he was sure he heard her voice telling him to go to Lourdes. He did go. And

at the Grotto, under what he described as "the power of a mysterious and invading action of grace", he knew he was conquered.

To the famous Dominican preacher Pere Janvier, he made a confession covering 40 years! Under the holy priest's direction he went to Mass and received Holy Communion every day. He joined the Dominican Third Order and, to top it all off, startled his confessor by stating that he wanted to become a priest!

Father Janvier, thinking it was Leseur's first fervour, would not approve. His family objected. When in a private audience the question was put to Pope Benedict XV his answer was "No". But with a smile he added, "If Pere Janvier, however, approves; I will bless the undertaking."

Felix Leseur; at the age of 58, became a Dominican novice in Soulchoir, Belgium. Four years later, in July, 1923, at the age of 62, he was ordained Father Marie Albert Leseur. He had been married for 25 years, and spent 27 as a priest. Father Leseur died in 1950 at the age of eighty-nine.

Catholic Family September October 1995

Prayer for Housewives

Lord, keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from the craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

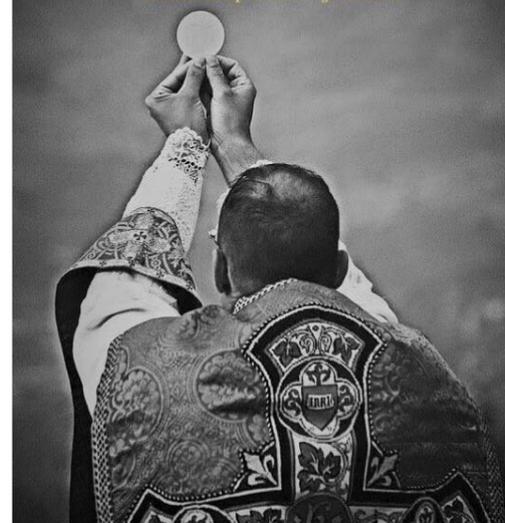
Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips when inclined to tell of my aches and pains; they are increasing with the years and my love of rehearsing them grows sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet, for a sour woman is one of the crowning works of the devil.

The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white host.

- Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen -



Rearing Children by the Dominican Sisters Part 2

This is the second and final part of an extract of a talk given by the Dominican Teaching Sisters. The entire talk is available online: www.sspcx.com.au/samg.html

TELEVISION: Deadly poison for their soul

Often one television program is enough to push a youth into mortal sin. By letting your children sit in front of the television, you run the nearly certain risk of killing the supernatural life in their souls. **There is no such thing as a harmless television program.** Impurity, ugliness

and vulgarity strike their eyes, their senses, their imagination and soil their souls.

TELEVISION: Deadly poison for their mind

Watching television requires no intellectual effort whatsoever. In front of a television people are passive, that is, they receive what is presented without making any effort to think. They swallow and swallow all that the television pours out, without their mind's having the time, or even the possibility, to react. The pictures strike the imagination and leave their trace on the mind, where they destroy any personal life, any personal thought or reaction.

TELEVISION: Deadly poison for their studies

Ask an intellectual effort of children who watch television, you will obtain no response. These children have, firstly, an inability to concentrate, and inability to be attentive, which comes directly from television. They are unstable, superficial, incapable of maintaining an intellectual effort, and intellectual reasoning. In addition, they have lost their liking for this sort of work – it is so arduous! With television, we just turn it on and the whole world is before our eyes! These television watchers are full of illusion thinking they know so much.

And when this artificial world of television, this world of sin, of ugliness and of stupidity has captured their intelligences and their hearts, irreparable harm has been done. Their intelligences and their hearts remain untouched by the language of the Faith and of education. And all your efforts, all our efforts are made sterile.

'By letting your children sit in front of the television, you run the nearly certain risk of killing the supernatural life in their souls'

Do not think that attending Sunday Mass is enough to save your children. But refer everything to this Mass, to Jesus Christ and to His love. If you do not, there is a lie in your life. It has always been necessary for Christians to cut themselves off from the world: "You are in the world, but you are no longer of the world," Jesus tells us. This means that your behaviour must be different from the world's.

Today's idols are no longer Zeus or Venus. Today's idols are television, singers, sports stars, rock music, movies. We are to be as firm towards these idols as the first Christians were toward their false gods.

TELEVISION: Deadly poison for your family life

Your homes must be sanctuaries where God is honoured, loved, served, where the parents watch vigilantly over the education of their children.

What is television doing in the middle? Television is breaking family life. It is keeping the father or the mother from talking, rectifying, advising, encouraging. The television is the stranger who has the place of honour in the home, the place that belongs to God, the place that belongs to the parents.

Well? What is the conclusion? It is easy. Get rid of the television. Throw it into the garbage. That is where it belongs. Do it this evening. Do not wait until tomorrow; your courage might fail. Tonight while your children are sleeping, without asking their opinion, of course!

And you will be surprised to see how much time you will then have to enjoy your family life and to look after each other. You will be surprised to see how fast the level of your conversations will go up, to see how docile your children will become to your authority. Family prayer, morning and night, family rosary, will take back their place of honour. The artificiality of a life which goes on in front of the television kills the personality of everyone in the family, and the result is mediocrity, laziness, slavery to fashion, and always impurity in one way or another.

Do not renounce educating your children.

The education of a child's interior life is the only thing that will arm him against the false appearances of the world. Helping him become accustomed to the truth, attracted to what is simple, energetic in the faithful accomplishment of his duties, proud in upholding moral

values, aware of the presence of God, of an interior voice, teaching him to bear the arms of a Catholic who is baptized, who is confirmed all these things galvanize the undecided frailty of teenagers and forge their characters.

To give commands is to love, precisely, with due measure and mild firmness.

It would also make all of our labour fruitless. We can obtain nothing from your children if you yourselves do not have the same requirements in their education. Children must learn the same truths and contemplate the same examples to follow at home and at school. If the case were to be the opposite we would be obliged, God forbid, to send away the children whose parents would educate them in a different direction: an atmosphere of carelessness, permissiveness, or liberal ideas in the intellectual, moral, and religious domains.

So, for the love of your children, be courageous enough to take heroic steps, of which only the first steps are hard, then the others come easier:

- **Eliminate all the candy and cookies throughout the day.** Save them for feast days and holidays, and even then in moderate quantity.
- **Require that your children eat everything at meals** without choosing, and without making comments which reflect their likes or dislikes.
- **Establish a set time for studies in the evening,** with calm, quiet surroundings. Supervise their work and insist on neatness and perfection.
- **Punish them severely when their work is bad,** and take measures until it changes and improves.
- **Take a concrete interest in their schoolwork.** Follow it closely. Without your help in this area we will have a hard time truly captivating their interest.
- **Send them to school, even if they have a headache or a stomach-ache.**
- **Require that your girls help around the house.**
- **Demand of them true Christian generosity** towards you, first, then toward their brothers and sisters. (This is a sacred and religious duty.)
- **Insist upon physical efforts:** walking, hikes, bicycle riding, etc. They are too lax, weak and wanting in energy, no physical or moral vitality!
- **Throw out the makeup,** the fingernail polish and the rest, for all of this develops the worship of the body to the detriment of the soul, the worship of one's own person instead of the worship of Jesus Christ and dedication to one's duties.

Whatever the causes may be, whatever weaknesses we may have or mistakes we may have made in the area of education, we must take courage and remain confident; for we have the graces to accomplish this work well, and

where necessary, to correct and improve our methods of education.

Everything is possible as soon as the family and the school have decided to work together, in the same direction, with the same firmness. It is never too late to do something well or to make resolutions. We must have Faith!

Don't give up! It will be easier than you think. Youth is made for heroism. The more you ask of a youth, the happier you will make him; for you are giving him a true moral, intellectual and spiritual value.

'The more you ask of a youth, the happier you will make him; for you are giving him a true moral, intellectual and spiritual value'

At the origin of all great saints, there were almost always saintly mothers and fathers. Look at St. Pius X, St. John Bosco and Archbishop Lefebvre. Prayer, work, sacrifice, poverty were the conditions in which they lived, walking in the traces of the model which we all must follow: the Holy Family at Nazareth. If Our Lord felt it necessary to spend 30 years of His life hidden, in humble and laborious circumstances, it was to teach us what our Christian homes must be like. Let us live up to His expectations, and glorify Him by putting all of our zealous energies to work, in order to live in imitation of the Holy Family.

Prayer of St Gertrude for the Holy Souls in Purgatory

Our Lord promised St Gertrude that 1000 souls would be released from purgatory each time this prayer is said devoutly.



Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.