

# THE IMMACULATA



## Ten Rules to Being Happy Parents by Fr Raoul Plus SJ

1. **Always appear before your family in good humour.** Nothing is so depressing as a father or mother out of sorts. See that the family never has to suffer because of your nervousness or irritability.

2. **Never weary in cheering your family with your smile.** It is not enough to avoid depressing them; you must brighten them up and let their spirits expand. Be especially vigilant when the little ones are around. Give them the alms of a smile, hard though it be at times. What a pity when children have to say, "I don't like it at home."

3. **What can be shared, speak of it openly. If something must not be told, then don't tell it.** Do share what you can so everyone profits by your experience, especially the family.

4. **Amiably show the greatest interest in the smallest things.** Family problems are generally not affairs of state, but everything that concerns those we love most in this world should be worthy of interest: the baby's first tooth, the honor ribbon won at school, the entrance of one of the little ones into the Holy Childhood Association.

5. **Banish exaggerated asceticism from your life.** If your home is Christian and each member of the family is learning to carry his cross, then it is essential to avoid making others suffer by a too ostentatious or inopportune austerity. There is abundant opportunity for self renunciation in devoting oneself to procuring joy for others. Marie Antoinette de Geuser used to sacrifice her great longing for recollection and her taste for a simple life by accompanying her brothers to evening affairs for

which she wore dresses that she said "made her look vain."

6. **Be sure to treat all alike.** Nothing is so disrupting to home life as favouritism for one or the other child. The same measure for all!

7. **Never think of yourself, but always of them in a joyous spirit.** Henry the Fourth of France used to crawl around on all fours, with his children on his back, to enliven the family get-together. Louis Racine, son of the famous French playwright, author of "Athalie," relates, "My father was never so happy as when he was free to leave the royal court and spend a few days with us. Even in the presence of strangers, he dared to be a father; he belonged to all our games."

8. **Never begin an argument; always speak prudently.** Discussion should not be banned unless it develops into bickering. A free habit of exchanging ideas on a broadening subject cannot but be profitable; the children should even be encouraged and led into it to develop in them a wise and discriminating mind and a habit of suspended judgment. Unsavoury and disturbing subjects and those beyond their depth naturally ought to be avoided.

9. **Always act patiently and answer graciously.** That it takes the "patience of an angel" to rule vigilantly over the little world of the family is beyond question. Affability is essential.

10. **By good will you will gain hearts and souls without exception.** Loving much is the key to gain all. These slogans for a happy home life are not marvels of prose, but do express a precious rule of wise family discipline.

## Miracles of the Eucharist

In Valpariso, Chile, at the beginning of the 20th century, Fr. Mateo Crawley-Boevey SS, CC., well known as the great Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was a young priest. Fr. Mateo told this story wherever he preached and he found that where people were prepared to earn "three golden coins" with love, many graces were obtained and many conversions followed.

He relates that one day an 8 year old girl told him that Jesus spoke to her every time she received Holy Communion. Father was somewhat skeptical and requested her to ask Jesus to give him proof. The proof Father requested was the sudden conversion of a certain man who was a big sinner, a fallen away Catholic, and enemy of the Church ... and also that this man should come to him for Confession.

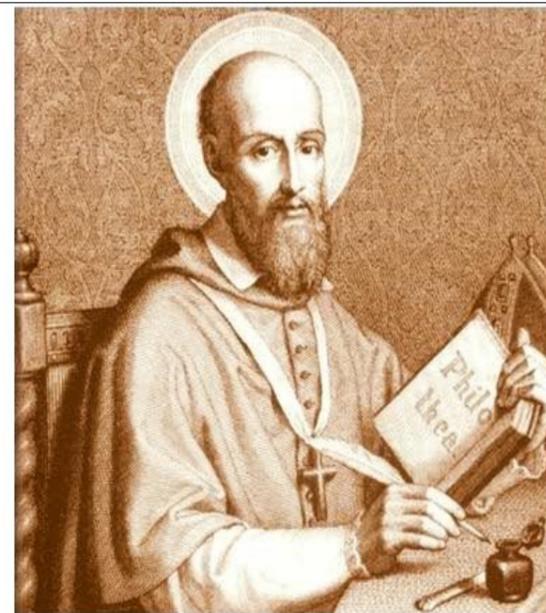
About a week later when Fr. Mateo was hearing confessions, the young girl told him that this sinner was coming up to the church. As the priest was leaving the confessional, the fallen away Catholic came into the church and walked over to Fr. Mateo and asked him to help him with his confession. He said that it was the first one since he was baptized. He did not know what came over him that morning but he suddenly understood the necessity of going to confession. Father realized that he had received the proof he requested.

The young girl told the priest that Our Lord revealed to her that He would give the graces to repent and mend his ways to this fallen away Catholic, and also to many other souls. He said, "Always ask Me for souls and I will give them to you, and tell Father Mateo to ask Me for souls. I will give them to him, too, but first you must become My missionary."

She thought she was too young to be a missionary. Our Lord assured her that He would make her His missionary and that she would have to pay

a certain price for souls. "I want you," said Jesus, "to earn three golden coins a day." Our Lord then explained what He meant by golden coins.

- 1) The first golden coin was her prayers to Him for souls.
- 2) The second golden coin was her little sacrifices, especially acts of obedience.
- 3) The third golden coin was a promise: **"never to miss Mass or Holy Communion through your own fault and to visit Me often in the Blessed Sacrament."**



"It is not those who commit the least faults who are the most holy, but those who have the greatest courage, the greatest generosity, the greatest love, who make the boldest efforts to overcome themselves, and are not immediately apprehensive about tripping."

~ St. Francis de Sales

## *Sins of the Tongue by Fr Belet*

Let us see what Saint James has to say on the subject: of backbiting. "We put bits into horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we control their whole body also. But no man can tame the tongue." Without a doubt the most poisonous tongue of all is the backbiter's. It spits its deadly venom to the four winds. It is an evil known throughout the earth. One can never stigmatize and deplore it enough. Therefore, we shall now study the nature of this evil, its various species, and the gravity of the evils it breeds.

A person may wound someone by word in two ways: *openly* and to his face (that is, by insulting him); and *secretly*, when he is absent - and that is backbiting.

Palladius relates that someone once asked Saint Anthony, "What is backbiting?" and he replied, "It is every sort of wicked word we dare not speak in front of the person about whom we are talking."

There are eight specific ways in which a man can backbite his neighbour:

**1. When he gets carried away by vanity and imputes things against his neighbour that never happened,** or when he adds to the truth imaginary circumstances that constitute either a lie or detraction.

**2. When he brings a hidden or unknown fault to light.** What he says is true, but he should not say it. He backbites, not by saying something untrue, but by wounding his neighbour's reputation. This is a very common sin among us. Now you might object "Do you mean to say I can't tell the truth?" No, my friend. It is not permitted, unless you can do so without harming your neighbour. What you say is true, I admit but it is hidden. The sinner has wounded his conscience in God's sight but he has not lost his reputation before men; therefore, you may not weaken or destroy it with your tongue. And even if the sin you reveal is not altogether secret but known only to a few, as long as it is not public knowledge, you are backbiting if you reveal it to someone who was unaware of it. And thus you are harming your neighbour.

**3. When he exaggerates a crime,** be it true or false. This is a danger to which we readily expose ourselves when we talk about the vices of others.

**4. When he relates something about another per-**

**son: that is not evil in any way, but speaks as though his neighbour had done it for evil reasons** and adds various explanations such as, "Yes, he did that, but not with God in mind. He's not so pious as all that; he seeks to please men, he wants to stand out. You should know him, he's a hypocrite."

**5. When a backbiter declares nothing but is happy to say, "I've heard it said that .. " or, "There's a rumour going around ... "** or when he relates something as if it were doubtful: "So-and-so might not be exactly what you think, I don't think he is deserving of confidence. His neighbours never heard anything about his holiness, except that only since yesterday has he been rated among the devout." Or again, when he praises with coldness and reticence. Aulu-Gelle says, "It is more shameful to be coldly and reservedly praised than harshly and bitterly accused." All these ways of acting must be avoided with the greatest care, for people always seek evil more than good.

**6. Backbiting is so subtle that anyone can defame another person with a simple gesture.** He hears someone being praised for his integrity, piety or generosity, and he says, "Oh, you don't know that fellow? I see right through him. Ask me anything about him, I know him inside out." Or he raises an eyebrow and remains silent; he shakes his head; he turns his eyes so as to have it understood that the person being praised does not deserve it. Sometimes a backbiter may keep his mouth shut and just turn his hand two or three times to indicate that the person in question is lightheaded and changes from hour to hour.

**7. He can backbite not only with body language but also with silence.** He may wickedly say nothing about the integrity or morals of his neighbour, especially when he is questioned about them or when his neighbour is accused of some crime.

**8. Finally, a person is guilty of backbiting if he is publicly blamed for something he did, and he denies his guilt thereby his accuser pass for a liar.** It is an obligation to publicly admit a matter in secret. However, one should himself in some other way, instance, "Those are only words, prove anything. Whoever heard them may have been mistaken. Don't believe you hear." This way of speaking is far more acceptable than the first.



## *How Not to Get Discouraged by Fr Faber*

*We often receive letters of women overwhelmed by their responsibilities.*

*The following quote is typical: the duties of motherhood terrify me all the time. I find it so hard to anticipate the children's needs, and I fail all the time. I start out with the best of intentions but seem to be going backward all the time. Even the articles about Motherhood in the 'Catholic Family' daunt me. I just don't measure up at all. The thing is if I want the children to be saints I have to be one myself so they have an example."*

*We believe that the story of St Giacinta Mariscotti (canonised by Pius VII) will help our readers to overcome their temptations of discouragement. It is taken from Fr Faber's book 'All For Jesus.'*

"She was an Italian lady, and her distinguishing characteristic as a girl was a great love of fine clothes and gay ornaments. Her father and mother sent her to a convent to be educated; but all the time she was there she would occupy herself with nothing but the foolish frivolities of the world. All her girlhood passed away in dissipation. Then she wanted to get married, and, because her sister made a good match, and she none, she was filled with spite and envy. Her temper was completely soured, and she became so disagreeable that people could not bear to go near her.

Her father foolishly, or worse than foolishly, wished her to become a nun; and although she felt no vocation at all, she thought she might as well do that as anything else; and so she entered a convent of the third order of St. Francis in Viterbo. Neither her taste nor her character changed; the convent seems to have been as lax as lax could be, and she did just what she pleased.

The first thing our Saint did was, out of her own money, to build a grand room for herself. She furnished it in first-rate style, and decorated it, her biographer says, quite sumptuously. She neglected the rule, and such parts of it as she chose to keep, she kept, as may be supposed in very lukewarm and un-

satisfactory way. She became more and more eaten up with vanity, and thought of nothing but herself all the day long. Queer training for a saint! In this way she lived nearly ten years. God then sent her a severe illness. She called for the Franciscan monk who was the confessor of the convent; but when he beheld the magnificent furniture of her room he refused to hear her confession, and told her paradise was never meant for such as she was. "What!" she cried, "and shall I not be saved?"

He told her the only chance was to beg pardon of God, to repair the scandal she had given, and to begin a new life. She burst into tears, and descending to the refectory, where all the nuns were assembled at the time, she prostrated herself before them, and begged forgiveness for the scandal she had given.

Yet for all this, no great change, or at least, no heroic change, took place. She did not give up her fine things to the Superioress: but she gradually, quite gradually, improved in her way of life. Again and again it was necessary for God to send her illnesses, that she might at length give herself wholly up to grace; and at first, remorse of conscience succeeded in its work by gentle pertinacity sank deeper and deeper, till it lost itself in love, and she became a Saint.

Now this is a consoling history. We are too apt to think that Saints are people who have been extraordinary from their cradle upwards, who, by special grace, have never lost their baptismal innocence, and have hardly felt the rebellion of evil passions, and certainly have not known the worst of all struggles, the fight with old sinful habits. Or, if this be not the case, then we think of them as persons in whose behalf God has interfered in an extraordinary way, as in the conversion of St. Paul, and of St. Ignatius. So we think it is out of all question our becoming Saints. But this story of St. Giacinta gives us quite a different view; years of lukewarmness, venial sin, and unworthy vanity are succeeded by a half-and-half conversion, followed up by some other little conversions afterwards, just as it may have been with so many of us."

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