



Southern Sentinel

REGNAVIT A LIGNO DEUS

HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

At the start of the New Year we wish you the peace of Christ on earth as we march toward that perfect peace of Christ in heaven. Christ's peace on earth is essentially the same as that of heaven for it consists in conformity with God. In this life, our sinfulness, ignorance and weakness are obstacles to this peace, but in heaven there shall be no disorder. Consequently, the peace of Christ in this life truly resides only in men of good will, who are genuinely striving for this union with God and living as God wills.



Holy Cross Seminary, Christmas Eve Vespers, 2013

The New Year familiarly begins with many liturgical feasts which provide matter for reflection and refocus our desire to seek God and to live Christ in this world opposed to the reign of Our Newborn King. Eight days after Our Lord's Birth His Blood was shed, marking Him as One under the Law that directs sinners to God. Our Lord, the innocent Redeemer of us sinners, gives us the example of sacrifice in order for us to live faithfully the divine life in this world. We need direction; Christ gives it by His life marked with this inescapable generosity, whereby He comes to us and raises us to Him. We will struggle to live likewise and we may even shed our blood in the effort to overcome sin and to be overcome by the love of God – but to achieve this, we too must sacrifice.

Our struggle is difficult; in fact, it is impossible if we are left to our own. Christ offers to share His generosity and courage with us and this inspires our hope to share His victory. Of ourselves we are sinners, ignorant and weaklings; but Our Saviour,

Jesus, can raise us from these evils by His abiding presence – Emmanuel, which means *God with us*. Calling upon His Holy Name to be sanctified, instructed and fortified, we acknowledge that we will do like Christ and offer our lives totally to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

For the Christian the Sacrament of Confession is *like* a New Year, a “fresh start”, a renewed effort. Let us consider our renewed efforts to call upon Christ to save us and our requisite cooperation in this life as a true child of God. Whether one has had the misfortune of losing sanctifying grace or not, the Sacrament of Penance beckons the penitent to be purified from sin and all dangers of sin, to renew the desire to practice virtue, to avoid the occasions of sin, and to start afresh in the Christian warfare against God’s and man’s spiritual enemies. This spiritual combat has consequences for us even in our temporal lives.

The tribunal of the Confessional reconciles the penitent with God and this reconciliation has terms that must be met; namely, man’s spiritual and temporal lives are re-established, in a greater degree, according to the ideal of Christian order. Therefore, the Sacrament not only changes the penitent by the infusion of grace, virtues and gifts, but demands that these be used to change the penitent’s manner of thinking and habit of acting to a greater accord with the example of Christ. This, in turn, will cause the penitent to take measures that will truly transform him into a different man. These measures necessarily impact his surroundings – that is, his exterior life, family, friends, society, etc..

These consequences upon every facet of life draw up a programme which influences society through the life of the individual. It is this work of re-ordering men and society that Holy Mother Church wisely directs according to Christ’s word and example. The Church is endowed with the responsibility and the means to achieve this supernatural objective and it is Her ministers, priests, who fulfil this grave and most honoured responsibility.

If the Christian life is called the *spiritual combat*, the priest may be likened to the combat medic on the field administering aid, but who is also an officer giving instructions and, still more, who is the quartermaster equipping the combatant with weapons and all things necessary for battle. Additionally, the priest is rightly called an “alter Christus” because he truly is *another* Christ, endowed with Christ’s powers to sanctify, teach and fortify the members of the Church Militant as Christ Himself. This is greatly accomplished by this hallowed Sacrament of Penance.

Sanctify

The priest in the active ministry is in the world with the lay folk. The priest must be like *the* Priest, Who not only dwelt among sinners, but cured their infirmities, that is healed their spiritual wounds. The priest gives grace, the life of God, to souls. The Christian goal is to bring souls to God, then closer to God and ultimately to become as perfectly as possible like God.

Imagine a priest who gives little or no thought to the objective of sanctifying men in the Confessional. Perhaps the post-Vatican II desolation that has transformed the priest into an odd bachelor who works as little more than a quasi-spiritual but temporal social worker could be blamed; but this phenomenon of careless priests is not unique to our day.

This desacralisation of the Church and the Priesthood is greatly the responsibility of we Catholics, who, though possessing the integral truth, the supernatural means, the true faith and genuinely good morals, have forsaken our Baptismal birthright for a pot of humanist porridge. Catholics have somehow dropped the ideal of the Christian life to become saints. And before we Traditional Catholics pat ourselves on the back for rejecting or steering clear of the Novus Ordo and its baneful novelties, we should examine whether we too have not fallen sway to the natural inclination to take the easy way. Sanctity does not admit of ease.

When we approach the confessional do we have the resolution to overcome sin and live the heroic life of virtue? Do we seek and heed the spiritual instruction given as the personal remedy for our sins, that guidance on how to live more zealously in pursuit of perfection? It is a grave matter to neglect the priestly care of the confessor. Equally, it is grave for the priest to neglect to feed

the flock entrusted to him: ...*the little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them* (Lamentations 4:4). What a horror when priests neglect their obligations to feed Christ's sheep! The very reason for their being endowed with Christ's salvific powers is to sanctify the faithful – and this most especially in the confessional, so necessary for us sinful and wounded men.

Teach

Not only wounded by the moral responsibility of our personal sins, we are also wounded by ignorance and the difficulty of learning. However, God wonderfully infuses the supernatural virtue of faith in the soul with sanctifying grace. Faith enables us to firmly believe whatever God has revealed, but this supernatural virtue does not teach us what God has revealed. It is the duty of the confessor, once again, to instruct the penitent with sound truths to resist sin and temptation as well as salutary means to do so. It can be said that the supernatural virtue of faith grants a *right* to the believer to receive that helpful instruction from the Church, which rightly directs the believer to God. This divine mission is entrusted to the Church by the word of Christ, which commands its priests to teach the Faith: ...*teach ye all nations... [teach] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...* (Matthew 28:19-20).

This command upon the clergy of the Christ's Church is of the gravest responsibility. We have only to recall the admonition of St. Pius X in his encyclical *On Teaching Christian Doctrine, Acerbo Nimis* (§16):

Man has the faculty of understanding at his birth, but he also has need of his mother's word to awaken it, as it were, and to make it active. So too, the Christian, born again of water and the Holy Spirit, has faith within him, but he requires the word of the teaching Church to nourish and develop it and to make it bear fruit.

In these days of famine of true religious instruction how much more incumbent is the responsibility of priests to give this necessary knowledge to the faithful, who today are starved and dying in the rationalism and naturalism of a secularist society?

Fortify

The desert wastelands of secularism proffer nothing of the divine to sustain the weary pilgrim desirous of the true and supernatural world for which he was made: *My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God* (Psalm 41:3). The priest, like the Eternal High Priest, after purifying by absolution and then instructing in wisdom, provides spiritual strength to the soul to wage the campaign that attains to the heights of God.

Pre-eminently, courage is needed to face the onslaught of the spiritual and corporeal enemies of man, because courage “enables” one to use the strengths truly possessed. The fatherly assurance of the confessor to the fact of the penitent's possession of God's Omnipotence instills this courage. The sanctified penitent is thus equipped with the divine arsenal, that supernatural strength that ensures victory. The weak metal of wounded man is forged into a sharp and tenacious combatant in pursuit of victory. The priest has this duty to fortify and instill courage by his words in the confessional as well as by his example out of the confessional. A cheerleader who sits in safety gives weak “encouragement”. A comrade in arms, who fights valiantly among fearful souls inspires in them courage. Good example fortifies the words of confession and inspires all to *use* that strength acquired by the infused virtues.

Christ's victory over the world, the flesh and the devil is a fact, but it must be convincingly made known. This reassurance is given in the sacred peace of the confessional where the sinner is conquered by the Omnipotent and goes out a conquering soldier of God. True Christs must be seen in the world and this is the duty of all Christians, but most especially Christ's priests.

Therefore, dear friends, please pray for the priests of Christ and that God send us many more, holy priests. Priests are also men wounded by original sin and thus have great need of your prayers to withstand the temptations that would stifle their priestly ministry and leave many souls abandoned in their own weakness to the attacks of the their spiritual enemies.

As we set out at the start of this New Year upon a Crusade of the Holy Rosary, our Superior General re-echoes the call of Archbishop Lefebvre to live the Mass, to live Christ, to implore the assistance of the Blessed Virgin and Immaculate Mother of God. What better preparation for assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass than a sincere, devout and humble confession? Equally, what better preparation for the start of the year? And frequent confession with all its aids is supremely salutary for the daily *living* of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The wise soldier confesses before going into battle, the true Christian confesses frequently as he lives in a state of war.

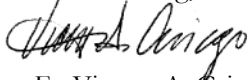
In the course of this Rosary Crusade, which began on January 1st and will end on Pentecost (8 June), as has been said so many times, it is not enough to simply say many Rosaries. We must *live* the mysteries presented in the Rosary, as well as the ultimate Mystery of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the spirituality of the true Christian.

For us at Holy Cross Seminary, this reality highlights the seriousness of our responsibility to form tomorrow's religious brothers and priests of our Priestly Society of St. Pius X. The young men studying for the Priesthood or preparing for the Religious Life must be faithful to Christ in all things; this fact necessarily solicits many acts of self-sacrifice in order to accomplish the duty to glorify God and to save souls.

As at present, many of our seminarians are working on summer camps, retreats or simply maintaining the Seminary and preparing the buildings and grounds for the start of another year of priestly and religious formation in March, we pray that they are striving to accomplish the priestly ideals outlined above (sanctify, teach and fortify) in their various apostolates. As we look forward to the start of the Seminary year in March, we happily prepare to receive a good number of new candidates to discern their vocation as well as a handful of young seminarians from St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in the United States of America.

Thank you for your generous support and please keep all of us in your prayers and be assured of our prayers for you and your good intentions. May God bless you and Our Lady Immaculate watch over you in the New Year.

In Christ the King,



Rev. Fr. Vicente A. Griego
Rector, Holy Cross Seminary



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- **You may request to receive an electronic subscription to the Seminary's Newsletter.** If you wish to receive the Seminary Newsletter via email, please send your request to: website@holycrossseminary.com
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