



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

It is hard to believe that this August 15th marks the 25th anniversary of the blessing of Mary Immaculate Catholic Church. Enclosed with this seminary newsletter is a leaflet to recall briefly the history of our church and to reflect on Divine Providence, God's loving care for us and the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For many of our priests, this church has been their spiritual home and the place of their reception of Holy Orders, and so it will be for our present seminarians and future priests.

The past few weeks have been a marathon of events with multiple catechism weeks at our various churches and chapels in the Midwest, our annual girls' camp (87 girls), boys' camp (62 boys), and finally our bi-annual priests' meeting. At the time of the priests' meeting, the CMRI priests held special meetings called



The religious and secular clergy gather for a quick picture at the conclusion of our bi-annual priests' meeting



Bro. M. Aloysius, CMRI (formerly Jordan Hartman from Snowflake, Arizona) receives the habit of novices

a Diet. Every six years, the professed CMRI religious priests hold elections for superior general, consultors, and other offices of the congregation and also discuss the constitutions and rule. In between these Chapters are held Diets to review the practice of the religious life. The Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen (CMRI) carefully follows the guidelines for religious established by the Church in Canon Law. The CMRI constitutions and rule date back to the mid 1980's and have been a great source of stability for the priests and religious. Many of the CMRI constitutions were taken from the Servite Order (OSM) which was an active religious Order dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Christians." Thus spoke the early Christian writer



Mary Immaculate Church Girls' Camp 2016



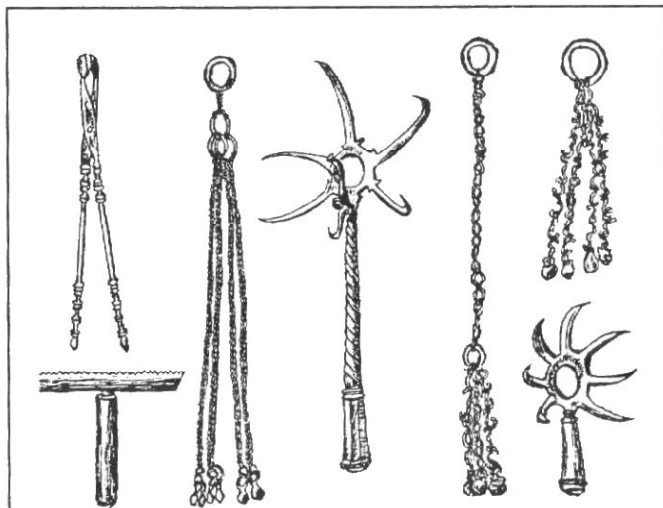
Milites Christi Boys' Camp 2016

(continued letter from the Rector)

Tertullian on the miraculous spread of the Church during the times of her greatest persecutions. Each month of the Ecclesiastical Year, Our Holy Mother the Church honors among her many saints, the martyrs, those heroic men, women, and children who shed their blood and suffered death for their Holy Catholic Faith.

During this month of August, we celebrate a number of well-known martyrs, St. Lawrence, deacon-martyr, St. Philomena, virgin-martyr, and St. Tarcisius, the martyr for the Holy Eucharist. What a tremendous example we find in the accounts of their supreme sacrifices. Imagine the strength of soul St. Lawrence exhibited while he was slowly roasted on the gridiron, exclaiming to his executioners, "Turn me over for I am done on this side!"

And how much more were the pagans moved by the martyrdoms of young boys and girls! In the life of St. Philomena, we marvel at a young girl who vowed her virginity to Jesus Christ and accepted the most cruel torments rather than compromise her Faith and her vows before the Roman emperor. Her executors scourged her, shot at her with arrows, and suspended an anchor around her neck in order to drown her in the Tiber River. Throughout St. Philomena's painful ordeal, many pagans witnessed the power of Almighty



According to the Ancient Christian writers, St. Justin, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria and others, the primary means of martyrdom of the early Christians were by crucifixion, by fire, by scourge, by iron hooks, and by wild beasts.



The Roman Coliseum, where many martyrs received their heavenly crown

God which miraculously sustained her in all these trials. She finally won the crown of martyrdom when she was beheaded.

In the Roman Martyrology we find recorded on August 15th, the young acolyte, Tarcisius, who was martyred while carrying the Holy Eucharist to the imprisoned Christians before their execution. Rather than expose the Blessed Sacrament to the sacrilegious profanation of a pagan mob, this young martyr endured the paltering of stones and pommeling with clubs. Pope Damasus commemorated the victory of his martyrdom with the following poem: "*Tarcisium sanctum Christi sacramenta gerentem cum male sana manus premeret vulgare profanis, ipse animam potius voluit dimittere caesus prodere quam canibus rabidis caelestia membra.*" (When a wicked group of fanatics flung themselves on Tarcisius—who was carrying the Eucharist—wanting to profane the Sacrament, the boy preferred to give up his life rather than yield up the Body of Christ to those rabid dogs).

The wonderful examples of heroism displayed by the martyrs in imitation of our crucified Saviour should be a powerful incentive for all of us to be ready and willing to make whatever sacrifices God may require of us in the practice of our Catholic Faith. I highly recommend to all of you the book *Victories of the Martyrs* by St. Alphonsus Liguori. In the midst of our crosses and trials and temptations, let us draw strength and inspiration from those who now hold the palm of martyrdom in the kingdom of Heaven!

With my prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

VALIDITY OF CONFESSION

Question: In the recent edition of *Summa theologiae moralis* by Noldin-Schmidt-Heinzel (Innsbruck, 1954), III, 293, it is stated that if a confessor did not understand *any* of the sins told by the penitent, the absolution would be invalid because there was nothing on which the confessor could sacramentally pass judgment. Evidently there is question of mortal sin, and by *understanding* is meant the recognition of the specific nature of the sin. Is this statement correct?

Answer: If the opinion in question is taken literally, as applicable to all circumstances, it is difficult to see how it can be reconciled with certain principles pertinent to the Sacrament of Penance admitted by all theologians. Unquestionably, there are certain circumstances in which the penitent can be absolved after a merely generic confession, which includes no mention of the specific nature of his sins, but indicates simply that the penitent has committed sin. Such a mode of confession would be valid and lawful on the part of a large group of soldiers about to take part in a dangerous battle. In a case of this kind the priest has understood no particular sin, yet the confession and the absolution are certainly valid. Therefore, it is not correct to say, without qualification, that if the confessor has not understood any particular sin, he cannot impart valid absolution. Of course, if the priest has not understood the specific nature of the sins confessed—for example, because of distraction, drowsiness, deafness on the part of the priest, or the lack of clear enunciation on the part of the penitent—he must ordinarily ask the penitent to repeat what has been missed, at least if there is reason to believe that it contains grave matter. But there are times when the priest would be justified in imparting absolution even when he has not understood any sin in its specific nature. Thus, if the penitent finds it very difficult to enunciate properly, because of illness or some physical defect, and there is no hope that another attempt will produce a more satisfactory confession, the confessor may absolve him, even though he has not understood any particular sin in its specific nature.

IMPOSING A MERELY INTERNAL WORK OF DEVOTION AS Penance

Question: May a confessor impose as a penance a merely internal work of devotion, such as meditation on the Passion of Our Lord for half an hour?

Answer: Some of the older theologians taught that the fulfillment of the penance imposed by the confessor, since it is an integral part of the sacrament (a sensible sign), must be an external act. However, it is now commonly taught that even an internal act, such as meditation, may be imposed as a penance by the confessor. For such an act is externalized inasmuch as the imposing of the act by the confessor and the acceptance by the penitent are external. Hence, while the confessor is advised to choose some external action as a sacramental penance, he has no reason to doubt the validity of the sacrament if he decides to impose a merely internal act of devotion.

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