

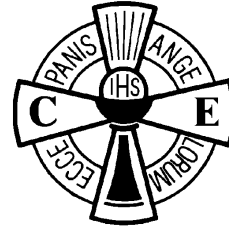
her this was the heritage he had promised her. Suffering was to be her lot, and her existence was one of those of which people say: "It is more admirable than imitable."

Our Lord appeared to Stephanie when she was seven years old, accompanied by His holy Mother, Saint Dominic, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Catherine of Siena, and told her He wanted her to be a Dominican like those great Saints. She promised she would enter a monastery, or at least be a member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic. Later in her life it was this latter path that she adopted, and she was given the habit of the Third Order. When she was about eleven years old, on the feast of Saint Andrew she saw that Apostle with a large cross, and he said to her: "My daughter, this is the road to heaven. Love God, fear God, honor God, embrace the cross, and flee the world." She began then to practice great austerities; even while working in the fields with her parents she wore a hair shirt and a rope cincture full of knots. She fasted perpetually. At the age of fifteen, on Good Friday, Our Lord told her she would endure in each of her members part of what He Himself had suffered. Her head afterwards bore traces of a crowning with thorns, and many persons saw her, every week on Fridays, suffering a kind of agony.



For forty years, she also endured the worst moral sufferings. She was in darkness, aridity, abandonment. This martyrdom of the soul was a worse torment for her than that of the body. An Angel said to her: "There are several means which cause a reasonable creature to rise to perfect love of God, but one of the principal ones is the life of suffering, a life steeped in sorrow and bitterness which must be accompanied and followed by thanksgiving and resignation to the divine Will. Affliction is the road to perfect love and perfect transformation." She was given Saint Paul to be her guide and instruct her in the secrets of mystical theology, that is, of the interior life under the immediate direction of God.

Blessed Stephanie could read in souls, and one day prevented a woman from poisoning fourteen persons, as she had resolved to do. She warned her not to accomplish that crime; otherwise, she herself would accuse her. She applied herself to the works of mercy and cared for the sick and the poor. She had to earn her bread by manual work; she begged in addition for alms for the needy. She became known to the nobility of Italy, who wanted to give her residences and keep her in their own regions; she remained nonetheless in Soncino, in a very poor dwelling. She was helped by the wealthy when she established a monastery in Soncino. This monastery, where about thirty young Sisters labored to attain religious perfection, and which she directed, was exempted from all taxes. She fell ill towards the end of the year 1529 and died on January 2, 1530, at the age of seventy-three years, saying, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!" Many miracles at her tomb made known her sanctity. She was beatified in 1740 by Pope Benedict XIV.



Handmaids of Christ and Children of Mary

Supplement to the Bulletin of the Eucharistic Crusade in Ireland

January 2009
Month of the Holy Family

This leaflet is intended for high-school girls. Being part of the Eucharistic Crusade, you receive the bulletin of the Crusade and pray for the intentions of the Crusade. As girls, Our Lady is your special model. Therefore as well as being Crusaders and Handmaids of Christ, you are also Children of Mary. The purpose of these few pages is to help you in your spiritual life.

AN EASY WAY TO BECOME A SAINT By Fr Paul O'Sullivan, OP

Chapter 6 - AFTER HIS ASCENSION (3)

JESUS ON OUR ALTARS

And, as if that were not enough, He remains on the Altar, waiting for our visits, ready to console and comfort us, ready to pardon the most depraved sinner, even as He pardoned the Publican in the Temple, to give help and strength to the weak, to comfort the sad, to console the sorrowful. This Sacrament is indeed a Sacrament of peace and love. Here Our Lord is on a throne of Mercy, continuing the work of His life on Earth, but----dare we say it----in a more merciful way.

When on Earth, He was in one land; only the people of that land could hope to approach Him. In the Blessed Eucharist, He is in all lands, in all cities and towns, even in the deserts, wherever a Catholic missionary is found. He is really and truly present; He sees us distinctly; He hears us; He loves us. He is waiting, longing for our visits.

A few incidents of recent occurrence will show us how really Our Lord is on the Altar.

A Protestant Minister in England was taking a walk with his little daughter, six years old. They entered a Catholic church, where the minister explained to his little girl the meaning of the Way of the Cross and other objects of note in the church. The little one, attracted by the red lamp burning before the Tabernacle, asked what that meant. Her father replied that it was to show that Jesus was in the Tabernacle.

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"Jesus!" she exclaimed. "Our Jesus, the Son of God?" "Yes, dear."

The child was deeply impressed. Even after, when walking with her father or mother, she insisted on going into a Catholic church to see the lamp and to visit Jesus. Wonderful visits! Our Lord was speaking to their hearts. After six months the child with her father and mother became fervent Catholics.

In London, two girlfriends, one a Catholic and the other a Protestant, went shopping. Passing a church, the Catholic said goodbye to her friend, as she wished to assist at Benediction. The Protestant, however, entered the church to wait. She remained standing, looking about. It was the first time she had been in a Catholic church. When, however, the priest placed the Monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament on the Altar, she instinctively fell on her knees and folded her hands on her breast, gazing at the Sacred Host. On leaving the church, to the surprise of her friend, she asked to be introduced to the priest. She wished to become a Catholic, though never before had she thought of it.

A Protestant young man fell in love with a Catholic girl, but after some time, as he refused to become a Catholic, she declared that she could not marry him, though she loved and respected him very much. She begged him to consider the affair ended and asked him not to write to her again.

Broken-hearted, the young man took his annual holiday and went off to a country village to try to forget his grief. The hotel in which he stayed was near the Catholic church, and he could see from his room the Tabernacle lamp. The lamp became a fascination for him; sitting at his table, his eyes invariably turned toward it. It became an obsession.

He asked the servant who had charge of his room what that red lamp meant. Smiling, she answered, "It is the red lamp that burns before the Blessed Sacrament."

The obsession continued, and finally he resolved to enter the church and see it for himself. On entering the church, great was his surprise to come face to face with the girl whom he had so wished to marry.

"What has brought you here?" he exclaimed. "I came," she answered, "to nurse my aunt, who is ill." "And what," she asked in turn, "brought you into this Catholic church, you who refused to think of becoming a Catholic?" He told her simply that the red lamp, which he could see from his room in the hotel, fascinated him and he had to come to see it.

"Then continue," she said, "Our Lord Himself is calling you." He did so and gradually his doubts and dislikes for the Church cleared away and he became a fervent Catholic and the happy husband of the girl he loved.

Instruction upon meditation

Meditation, or mental prayer, is a devout and fruitful consideration of Divine things, and of all that is conducive to the acquirement of virtue and of eternal salvation. It is not a difficult exercise; it requires attention and reflection, a desire to know God

better in order to love Him more. It should be done in the company of Our Lady, the saints and our guardian Angel.

Refer to the previous issues of this bulletin to learn how to make meditation properly. Remember that as Handmaid, you promised to meditate 15 minutes every day. St Teresa of Avila says that he who spends 15mn a day in mental prayer cannot be lost.

I WILL hear what the Lord God will speak in me.

Happy is the soul which heareth the Lord speaking within her, and receiveth from His mouth the word of comfort.

Imitation of Christ, Book 3, Chapter 1 "On the Internal Discourse of Christ to the Faithful Soul"

Meditation – The Cause of the Suffering in Purgatory - 3

If we saw temporal flames lighted up to torment us, having the power to quench them, should we forbear to do it, and madly rush into the devouring element? And yet we see by the light of faith, that Almighty God has prepared a purgatory for imperfect souls after death: we know the means of avoiding it, and still we refuse or delay to make use of those means. But what are those means? Contrition and penitential tears, love of God, self-denial, purity of conscience; in a word, serious efforts at perfection. Let us consider for a moment how we employ these means. Do we not find in ourselves, on the contrary, a great reluctance to bear pain, and an eagerness to avoid everything inconvenient? Do we not endeavour to avoid humiliation, privations, heat, cold, hunger, thirst; in a word, all those things which we should joyfully embrace, if we desired to substitute the slight sufferings of this life for the pains of purgatory? Let us ponder well these words of our blessed Lord : « Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it. » Matt. XVI, 25. To offer up our prayers and good works for the deliverance of the holy souls suffering in Purgatory is a very charitable practice, and also very advantageous to us. Ingratitude cannot exist in heaven; and if we are so happy as to procure or hasten for them the enjoyment of supreme beatitude, they will surely not be unmindful of us, but will intercede in our behalf with God.

BLESSED STEPHANIE QUINZANI

Virgin (1457-1530)

Blessed Stephanie was born near Brescia, Italy, in 1457, of fervent Christian parents. She was brought up in the village of Soncino, where there was a Dominican monastery well known for its preachers, eminent in doctrine, eloquence and sanctity. One of them knew her family and taught their little daughter the *Ave Maria* and other prayers. He told her that when he died he would *make her his heir*. A few years later, when Blessed Matthew Carreri died, she felt her heart painfully wounded, and suddenly saw the deceased man, who told