
“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

b) The other important point is to see that casting out demons is not a question of natural talent or of a certain temperament. It is Christ who gives the order and to whom also the fallen angels have to obey. One author said: “The devil does not dare to touch even the swine until Christ gives him leave (Lk 8:32).” (J. Drexelius, *Heliotropium*, V, 3). Therefore, when called to fulfill this task, the humble rely on Christ. From Him comes the power and authority that issue from the priestly words.

c) Third, we should not just practice what we read in Scripture. Just as we received the sacrament from the Church, so too have we received the priestly mission from her. Since the priesthood, by its very nature, is a share in the episcopal power, in which resides the fullness of the priesthood of Christ, it follows that to the priestly power through the sacramental character must be added the ecclesiastical authority. In a word, we need to be sent, so that we carry out our ministry in obedient submission to the Church, even as Christ was obedient to his Father in all things.

4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood

Our task is great. Eternity is at stake, the clash of the spiritual battle can be discerned on all sides! Only the total abandonment in Jesus, and the daily renewal of our union with Him will enable us to fulfill God’s expectations. Like St. Paul let us say: “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1Cor 15:10). We should not be afraid. While it is true that without Jesus we can do nothing (cf. Jn 15:5), yet with Him we can “do all things”, that is, “in Him who strengthens” us (Phil 4:13).

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

Grateful to all who joined us in the 2012 annual retreat, we are happy to announce the date for this year’s retreat:

Nov. 18 to 22, 2013

at the same location: Holly, Michigan.

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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”



Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

“... cast out demons” (Mt 10:8)

Vol. XIX, January, 2013

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

The divine call is addressed to all mankind. First there is a general divine call to salvation in Christ through Faith and Baptism; and then there is the particular call addressed to each individual by God. The divine call comes to us in many ways, through the Church, through the angels. Evidently, there is a special call addressed to us in the gospels. As priests joined in a special union with the holy angels we want to consider those texts in the Gospels which relate more particularly to the world of the angels, both the faithful and the fallen ones. The texts we have meditated over the past several months regarded the fallen angels. Of course, it is never fitting to consider them alone, but we did so in reference to Christ, our Lord in His Divine Lordship and sovereignty. The present text about the mission of the Twelve to preach and cast out devils recalls the purpose of Christ’s incarnation and mission on earth. He came to witness to the truth, that we might have life,... and “to destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn 3,8). While the goal is always ultimately positive – our spiritual restoration and perfection – it remains that in order to accomplish this, He must defeat the devil (cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* # 2)

1. Christ continues through the history

Christ’s works are of infinite value! Creation cost Him nothing; whereas our recreation came at a very high price, as we recall every day at holy Mass: “*Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei, novi et aeterni testamenti* – ... the Blood of the new and eternal Covenant”. That fruits and merits of his Redemption might be applied individually to each individual person till the end of the world He instituted the holy Church. He calls us priests to continue His work:

“He called to himself his twelve disciples and gave them authority...
Preach... , Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.” (Mt 10:1,7-8)

a) “Raise up men to share in his own divine life”

In each of these tasks we can see the restoring act, less so, perhaps, in the last, the expulsion of the demon, yet to removed the deepest cause of evil is the pre-supposition to every curative effect. The missionary activity refers in part to

CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

man’s physical life. The principal concern, of course, is man’s spiritual salvation. Still, this is a substantial good of man, who is substantially one, body and soul. Moreover, the well being of the body is a certain prerequisite, such that by his spiritual faculties of intellect and will man be more able and disposed to choose freely for God and “share in divine life”. Further, the physical healing of the body is a tangible sign for the invisible healing of the soul. Hence, both for reasons of compassion and for pedagogy the mission of the Apostles is also addressed to man’s physical well being. “The Holy Church daily does spiritually, what it then did materially by the Apostles; things far greater, inasmuch as she raises and cures souls and not bodies,” comments Gregory the Great. This, of course, is said without prejudice to the fact that the Anointing of the Sick formally addresses the physical well-being of the individual. The pastoral value of this sacrament for invigorating the faith and well-being of the parish should not be lost on us. We should have more time to care for the sick than to attend meetings! Be that as it may, we can describe these priestly tasks as follows:

- Through *preaching* we purify men from the darkness of ignorance;
- With *healing* we restore the damaging effects in the immortal souls caused by original sin and purify them from imperfections and venial sins;
- *Raising from death* is particularly true when we absolve men from mortal sins through which they separated themselves from the Living God!
- *Cleansing lepers* we may consider as a way to describe unification of all among themselves as the lepers were considered separated from the community.

b) “Cast out demons”

Different is it, however, with casting out the fallen spirits. As spirits, whose substance is completely free of any material components, their rebellious decision during their trial is irrevocable. They themselves shall never want to nor could they ever revise their choice of evil, once taken. Hence, there is no way to restore their union with God. Accordingly, the task given by the Master is solely one of separation: “cast out!” To understand this better, consider the following.

First, God takes each creature seriously; He respects the autonomous liberty of each one, and would never violate it. The reprobate spirits, however, have no such regard for the autonomy and freedom of man. Therefore, in order to guard man’s freedom, God gives spiritual power to his ministers to drive the fallen spirits back, so as to ‘create space’ for man to act freely and knowingly regarding his eternal choices.

Second, there is also a mutual relationship, an “interdependence” and “solidarity among all of creatures” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* # 340 and 344). This is based on the law of life in God which is love or sharing, giving and thus, constructive and edifying. The fallen spirits, however, perversely

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

want to “be like God” and thus tyrannically exercise their influence over as many creatures as possible, even over all other creatures; they do not seek anything but death and destruction. Life and communion can only be built up on a principle of love; therefore, the evil spirits must be driven out, in order that the kingdom of God reign in the hearts of man.

2. Jesus asks to do what he did before

Before any one takes up and continues the work of another, he prudently watches and observes what his predecessor does. Therefore, prudence counsels us to watch Jesus in the Gospel to see and understand as far as possible His way to “cast out demons.” In this way, we first enter His school and become literally his ‘disciples.’ Biblically speaking, of course, a ‘disciple’ is a learner! For, He did first what He asked His apostles to do afterwards in His place.

Therefore, let us ask: How did Jesus deal with them (cf. our meditations since last July)?

1. For our instruction, he allowed himself to be tempted, so that we could learn to fight and conquer the tempter by imitating Christ;
2. He simply expelled the demon (This was the case where it was simply a question of healing someone who was sick, e.g., the bent over crippled woman);
3. In the case of demoniacs there is discussion and interrogation. Jesus’ questions are to the point, his answers are final.
4. At times he silenced the demons and sent them out. He silenced them, for by acknowledging him as the Messiah, they sought both a confirmation (possibly a confirmation marred by vain glory) of his messianic mission, and wished to redirect his spiritual mission into a worldly mission of bread and merely social-justice.
5. In the hour of darkness, Jesus bowed to the will of the Father, who had deigned to accomplish his salvific will through the malicious initiatives of evil men and spirits. In this way, Jesus demonstrated his supreme inner freedom and the crucial fact, that the devil is never truly victorious, even when he succeeds in bringing about the martyrdom of the saints.

3. Cast out demons as priestly mission

Beyond these observations, what more should we take to heart when we assume the priestly ministry?

a) First of all, we see is that this particular task against demons is just one of five tasks entrusted to the disciple, and it is listed as the last. This implies that we should first care for the natural needs of the people by preaching or nourishing them through the word and Eucharistic Jesus. The stronger one’s health and one’s own immune system become, and so the less chance there is to be taken down by an infection.