

Jesus † Mary † Joseph
Chapter 9
Frailty of Human Nature
Christ:

My child, all human beings are weak. Do not think that you are stronger than others. Circumstances do not create the weakness of a man. They simply draw it out and show what he really is. You must be convinced of this fact. Your will is weak, and your blind human desires are strong.

2. It should not be too hard for you to admit your frailty. See how often you are troubled by a small matter! At times you resolve to become a better man. Then along comes a small temptation, and away goes your resolution. Just when you think you are safe, when you least expect it, you find yourself pushed over by a slight temptation. Even when you do not give full consent to it, your feelings and desires confuse you. Hateful imaginations rush in on you and refuse to leave.

3. Before you can become serious about self-perfection, you must be convinced of its necessity. See how weak you are! You often tend toward what is wrong. You confess your sins today, and tomorrow you commit the same faults again. You resolve to be on your guard, and an hour later you act as though you had never made the resolution. You are so weak and unsteady. It is only right, then, that you should humble yourself and refuse to think too highly of yourself.

4. You are more inclined to go backward than forward. You do not remain in the same state of mind for any length of time. Your moods and attitudes change with the changing hours of the day. If you would only turn to Me! I can help you rise above these changing moods. Let your heart turn to Me and find its rest in Me.

Think:

My human nature is like a spirited horse. It must be controlled at every step. It would like to run free and uncontrolled. Therefore, I need not be surprised at my changing feelings and moods. They are not the higher self within me. God will honor me only for what I am trying to be. I would improve much faster if I begged His help more frequently by prayer and the sacraments. Too often I fail to put up a fight against my unreasonable feelings and blind desires. At other times I try to fight them alone. Only with God's help can I make any permanent progress. With the knowledge He gives me through His holy Church, and with the strength He offers me in His sacraments, I can live a holy life in spite of the restless lower self within me.

Pray:

Dear Lord, my smallness and weakness are perfectly known to You. Have pity on me. Pull me out of the mud of self, so that I may not be stuck in it forever. Consider the labors and trials of my daily life. Please stand by me in my efforts. Strengthen me in my resolutions. I have often failed because I depended on myself alone. Now, however, I shall seek advice and direction as often as I need it. Only in this way can I hope to make progress in true and solid virtue. Make me wise and honest in my daily efforts, so that I may no longer waste valuable time. I hope to become at last the kind of person You want me to be. Without You I can do nothing. Lord, help me! Amen.

November 4th – Saint Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, (1538-1584)

Saint Charles Borromeo was born in 1538 in the castle of Arona on the borders of Lake Major, fourteen miles from Milan. He was the son of Count Gilbert Borromeo, a descendant of one of the most ancient families of Lombardy, very famous for its great men. The Count was known for his almsgiving and his rigorous fasts; it was his custom never to eat a meal without first giving alms. The Countess, Charles' mother, was also exceptionally virtuous. Their family was composed of two sons and four daughters, all of whom manifested in their lives the splendor of their Christian heritage. Their maternal uncle, John

Angelus of Medici, became Pope Pius IV. Charles was clearly destined for the ecclesiastical vocation; all his preferences in study made it clear.

When he was twelve years old, a paternal uncle willed to him an abbey in commendam; and the child constantly reminded his father that this revenue was the patrimony of the poor. His father wept for joy, seeing his son's solicitude for the just application of his trust.

Count Gilbert died when Charles was twenty years old, and he was obliged to come home from Pavia where he had been studying law; he returned there, however, to complete his doctorate at the university after settling his affairs. One year later, when his maternal uncle became Pope Pius IV, he created Charles cardinal, and after another year nominated him Archbishop of Milan. The Pontiff detained him in Rome, however, seeing his extensive capacities and adding to these offices other administrative duties which ordinarily require the prudence of mature years. No one was disappointed in his services, despite the fact he was maintaining delicate papal relations with other nations, as protector of Portugal and the Low Countries, and was at the head of the Knights of Malta, the Orders of Carmel and Saint Francis, among other duties.

When the Council of Trent (1545-1563) was nearing its conclusion, Saint Charles, who had participated with authority in many of its twenty-five sessions, desired to leave Rome to attend to his diocese of Milan, a duty which his vicar general had carried out until that time. The urgency of the situation there persuaded the Pope to consent regretfully to his departure. Saint Charles intended to put into execution the reforming decrees of the Council, create seminaries and schools and in general restore discipline in the Church of Milan.

As Archbishop of Milan he enforced the observance of the decrees, and thoroughly restored the discipline of his see. Criticism hounded him there, but left him unmoved; he kept with him in his episcopal household of about one hundred persons, a certain priest who delighted in finding fault with whatever he did; he treated him with great consideration, and in his will left him a pension for life. He was very severe with himself, eating only once a day, and limiting himself often to bread and water. When someone suggested he should have a garden at Milan to get some fresh air, he replied that the Holy Scriptures should be the garden of a bishop.

The sermons of Saint Charles produced great fruits among all ranks of the people. When young he had manifested a speech defect with a tendency to speak too fast, but he overcame these handicaps with many efforts. A man who admired him said that he always forgot the orator himself when he preached, so transported was he by the great truths he heard explained, and the longest sermons of Saint Charles seemed short to him. Everywhere the holy Archbishop established schools of Christian doctrine, numbering in all seven hundred and forty, in which over three thousand catechists were employed, presiding over forty thousand students.

Once Saint Charles heard a cardinal who was a bishop of a small diocese say that his diocese was too small to require his constant residence there, as canon law required; Saint Charles said to him with force that the price of one soul is such as to merit the residence and entire time of the greatest of men. He himself visited the most remote corners of his diocese, traveling in mountainous regions amid the greatest dangers, which he regarded as nothing unusual, and unworthy of mention.

Inflexible in maintaining discipline, to his flock he was a most tender father. He would sit by the roadside to teach a poor man the Pater and Ave. During the great plague which broke out in Milan, which he had foretold as a chastisement for the disorders of the Carnival, he refused to leave, asking those who remonstrated with him if it were not more perfect to remain with one's flock than to abandon them in need, and adding that a bishop is obliged to choose what is most perfect. He was ever at the side of the sick and dying. He stripped his palace of literally everything to aid those who had lost their support in their fathers and spouses, even giving away his straw mattress. As he lived, so he died, having governed his church for twenty-four years and eight months. To the heroic sanctity of this faithful copy of the Good

Shepherd, many miracles came to testify, through his relics and his intercession. In 1610 he was canonized by Pope Paul V.

Sources: *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Principal Saints*, by Rev. Alban Butler (Metropolitan Press: Baltimore, 1845), Vol. IV, October-December; *Little Pictorial Lives of the Saints*, a compilation based on Butler's *Lives of the Saints* and other sources by John Gilmary Shea (Benziger Brothers: New York, 1894).

Daily Thoughts and Prayers For Our Beloved Dead
Fourth Day

Death separates us; it breaks the earthly tie which bound us one to the other, but it cannot break the spiritual tie which unites one soul to another – one heart to another.

Prayer: Our Father. 3 Hail Marys. Glory Be. De Profundis.

O Lord Jesus Christ, by the merits of Thy Precious Blood, deign to succor and release the Souls in Purgatory, particularly the soul that is most abandoned. Place it today in Heaven, that in union with the angels and Thy Blessed Mother, it may praise Thee forever. Amen.

Ejaculation: Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, inflame our hearts with love for Thee. (500 days)

De Profundis (Psalm 129)

1 Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord:

2 Lord, hear my voice. Let Thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

3 If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it.

4 For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of Thy law, I have waited for Thee, O Lord. My soul hath relied on His Word:

5 My soul hath hoped in the Lord.

6 From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.

7 Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him plentiful redemption.

8 And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Source: Douay Rheims Bible, Imp. 1899

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