

Summa Corda

St. Augustine and the Jolly Beggar

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P. Editor, The Catholic World

I used to give a lecture on "The Philosophy of Life." The title was perhaps pretentious and I had a fear that it might frighten away those who didn't care for anything didactic or academic, or as they would say, "high-brow stuff."

Of course I did worm in a few ideas from Schopenhauer and from Shakespeare (his plays, of course, are packed with fragments—sometimes not so very fragmentary—on the meaning of life) and from the Greek dramatists (bringing up the question whether they were fatalists) but all in all the lecture was "popular."

Perhaps the best natural philosopher I ever met was a cook in a lumber camp in the deep forest of the State of Washington. He was out of the woods when I met him. We spent eleven weeks together in the desert among rattlesnakes, sage brush and sand.

Still stranger was the fact that when I was a young priest gathering impressions on my first assignment in Chicago, I had occasion to listen to many an impromptu lecture from fellows called "Bums" on how to live and how to get the best out of this terrestrial existence.

Every serious and studious Catholic even though he has never gotten to reading Dante's Divine Comedy, ought to know about the magnificent Book of the Paradise with its incomparable picture of the Communion of Saints.

Library Signpost

Autumn's Great Holyday

By Rev. Benedict Ebanon

"I believe in the Communion of Saints..." Thus our Credo on the great holy-day at the head of November. The full meaning of it is the fulfillment of Christ's Body down the arches of the years—Mary, Peter, Paul, Augustine, Patrick, Boniface, Gregory, Anselm, Bernard, Dominic, Francis, Aquinas, Catherine, Clare, Francis Xavier, Peter Claver, Margaret Mary, Therese.

Our joy will be greater in this marvelous mystery of the Kingdom, the more we meditate on it.

"Communion of Saints—what a glad and blessed light illumines it!" It is the hidden treasure, the secret joy of the Catholic. When he thinks on the Communion of Saints his heart is enlarged. He passes out of the solitariness of here and there of yesterday and tomorrow, of "I" and "thou," and he is enfolded in an unspeakably intimate communion of spirit and life, far surpassing his needs and dearest wishes, with all those great ones whom the grace of God has forged from the refractory stuff of our humanity and raised to His height, to participation in His Being.

"Here are no limitations of space and time. From out of the remote ages of the past, from civilisations and countries of which the memory is now only faintly echoed in legend, the saints pass into his presence, and call him brother, and enfold him with their love. The Catholic is never alone. Christ, the Head, is ever with him, and along with Christ all the holy members of His Body in heaven and on earth.

"Streams of invisible, mysterious life flow thence through the Catholic fellowship, forces of fertilising, beneficent love, forces of renewal, of a youthfulness that is ever flowering anew. They pass into the natural, visible forces of the Catholic fellowship, especially to pope and bishop, completing and perfecting them. He who does not see and appreciate these forces, cannot fully understand and expound the nature and working of Catholicism.

"And, indeed, it is simple, child-like faith alone which perceives these forces; and therefore that faith alone discovers the road to sanctity. For such is the prayer of Jesus: 'I praise thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight' (Luke x, 21).

(This beautiful selection is the last section of chapter 8 of The Spirit of Catholicism. All of chapters 7 and 8 is on the Communion of Saints. You would do well to read them this week-end to inspire your holy-day observance. You might then be carried along to read the whole book. It will give you wide new vistas on your Catholic faith. I know of one local teacher who was converted to the Church by it, after all other books had left her still seeking. You may find it at the Catholic Evidence Library, in the lobby of the Columbus Civic Centre.)

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model of an entertainment once a week. We got in return their point of view, and in some cases their philosophy of life.

Yes "Bums" have a philosophy of life and so do hoboes on "gentlemen of the road" as they prefer to be called. They tell you that their way of life is that of Abraham, they are nomads who abhor the slavery of being always in one place and doing always the same monotonous round of duties. They think that we are "saps." They consider it slavery to be tied down to a regular schedule. They wouldn't submit to it not on a bet. As for priests who lived by a religious rule, one of those State Street castaways actually quoted Lord Byron's "Blaves-to-a-rule-and-vassals-to-a-bell." Yes, they had had education, some of them. One who used to come down with the query, "Who is your favorite lexicographer?" It came to light that he had been turned out by Trinity College, Dublin. He was very much the gentleman, even when in his cups, though often to outward appearance he was battered and bruised.

These memories came back to me when I happened on the tenth issue upon the famous chapter on the Jolly Beggar in the CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE. Read it. Book VI, chapter 6. It's good for a laugh as well as for a thought.

"My heart," he says, "was set on promotion gain, and the married life, but Thou O Lord wast laughing me to scorn. I was preparing a panegyric to be delivered in the presence of the emperor in which I was to utter many an untruth and to be applauded by those who well knew that they were untruths. When I walked through one of the streets of Milan, I observed a poor beggar. I suppose he had had a good meal (what he had had as appears later) as too many drinkers and he was joking and laughing. At this I sighed and spoke to my companions, 'The many sorrows that attend our insane pursuit, how that all our labors such as that which I was then engaged in, tugging at the load of my misdeeds, and making it heavier by tugging had me other aim than the attainment of peaceful enjoyment, which the beggar had found before us, and we perhaps should never find it all. For what he has already secured at the cost of a few pence bestowed on him in alms, the best that is to say of temporal felicity, I was still pursuing through long and weary ways.'"

I must not quote the whole chapter. But, you see St. Augustine was in the process of getting a philosophy of life, he finally arrived at the noblest and divinest of all philosophies. But on the way he could muse over the apparently superior wisdom of a beggar in comparison with the way of life at that time followed to misery by the panegyrist of an emperor.

St. Augustine came by his final philosophy "the hard way." Perhaps that's why it rings so true, why it is so exact and so real. With passages just as undidactic as that one he leads you on to the ultimate. "Thou hast made us for Thyself O God and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee." (Copyright, 1941, N.C.W.C.)

EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 18)

The Faithful Departed

May the Angels lead thee into paradise, may the martyrs receive thee at thy coming, and lead thee into the Holy City of Jerusalem. May the choir of Angels be on hand to greet thee, and mayst thou with the once poor Lazarus have rest everlasting. As the body of a loved one is borne out of the church after the funeral Mass, Holy Mother Church chants this consoling prayer. It is a prayer she continues to place before God in the Mass on the 7th Day, the 30th Day, the Anniversary Days in the subsequent years. Her prayers, her good works, her indulgences, go with the soul of the departed one, and continue with that soul. Holy Mother Church can never be satisfied till the soul is delivered from Purgatory, and accordingly intercedes for that soul day after day. God hides from her the actual time of deliverance, but encourages her to offer her suffrages for the dead without ceasing.

Loving sons and daughters care for the memory of their parents for the years immediately following their death by their prayers and by the Masses they have said for them. Friends and neighbors remember their deceased companions for a time. The Church never for a moment forgets them. She includes in each Mass the Memoriam for the Dead, praying for all the poor souls. She includes in her calendar the annual Day for the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed, known as All Souls Day. She empowers her priests to say three Masses on this day, one according to the intention of the Holy Father, one for All the Faithful Departed, one according to the intention of the celebrant. An age-old custom leads parishioners to ask their Pastor to include in the Mass intention for All Souls Day their parents, relatives, clergy, friends, departed. The intention of the Holy Father includes all those who die in the war.

All Souls Day on next Monday should find us assisting at Mass and praying for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. They have preceded us with the sign of faith and sleep the sleep of peace. Our prayers and Masses will hasten the day when God's Angels may lead them into Paradise, that there they may have rest everlasting.

They Took Counsel

The Pharisees were never careless of any task they had to perform. They looked for efficiency in the deed and effectiveness in the deed. On one point they were more than usually united, and that was hatred for Jesus, for His doctrine, for His standing with the people. They wanted to destroy Him, His teaching, His reputation. Therefore, they took counsel: they talked the matter over, they discussed ways and means, they determined to entrap Jesus in His speech. The Jews hated their Roman Masters, hated their exactions, their taxes. The Pharisees shared this feeling. What a wily piece of business it would be to put a trick question to Jesus a question about the lawfulness of the Roman tax! If He said "Yes, the tax is lawful," the people would turn from Him. If He said "No, it is not lawful," He would incur the penalty of the Roman law. Either way, He was bound to lose. It was a wonderful find, a proper outcome of earnest discussion, this trick question that would surely ruin Christ with His followers.

They took counsel! The enemies of Christ and of His Church constantly enter into secret session that they may discredit them. They have been taking counsel for two thousand years: their counsels failed at the beginning, they have failed through the years, they fail today. God's wisdom is at hand to meet all the trickery of their counsels. God's answer can avoid the dangers of an imperfect response that looks to only one aspect of the question. God's justice remains as a power today even as it was when pronounced in the words of Christ's reply to the Pharisees: "Render therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's!"

Why Do Catholics Pray To Mary?

Catholic devotion to the Mother of our death. (These words are a plea for our Blessed Mother's prayers now and just before we are to meet our God.) The Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, is so beautiful so inspiring, so well authenticated, that we cannot understand why the Religious Revolutionists of the sixteenth century, could, with any sincerity, throw out the Queen of Heaven from their churches, allowing the Catholic Church alone to fulfill Mary's own prophecy: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."—Luke 1:45.

Mary, the Mother of God has been immortalized by poem and prose, by painting and sculpture, by song and by prayer, down through the ages. Would you like to hear more about Mary her immaculate Conception, the Virgin Birth, her sinless life and the Assumption of her body as well as soul into heaven? Write us for details of this beautiful and helpful devotion or for information on any Catholic subject.—(Catholic Information Society of Norfolk, Pa.)

Hail, Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. (These are words of honor, praise and exaltation, spoken by the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, as shown in your own Bible. Luke 1, 28-42.) Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Five Years Ago--

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Oct. 29, 1936, Edition. Transported by a chartered plane, His Eminence Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State, sped across the United States on a mission from the Holy Father of peace and good will. Visit of His Eminence at key points in the nation were marked by cordial receptions.

Creation of a National Catholic Theater to project the Catholic way of life and to preserve good drama generally was proposed by Emmet Lavery, distinguished author of "The First Legion," in a Los Angeles address.

Christ Our King

By Dolores Hoffman

O Jesus look down from on high From Thy great white throne in the sky Take over and rule this weary, war-torn world Once again let Thy flag of peace be unfurled.

May we who belong to Thee fight the good fight Persevere in the right instead of in might Until we are called to face Thee, our King Forever Thy glorious praises to sing.

Then Thou wilt heal every ill, every ache Reward every soldier who fought for Thy sake Eye hath never seen such beauty as this Prepared for His own in heavenly bliss.