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August 2023 – Monthly Reflections

*Hail, O Lady,
Holy Queen,
Mary, holy Mother of God,
Who are the Virgin made Church,
chosen by the most Holy Father in heaven
whom he consecrated with His most holy beloved Son
and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete,
in whom there was and is
all fullness of grace and every good.*

*Hail His Palace!
Hail His Tabernacle!
Hail His Dwelling!
Hail His Robe!
Hail His Servant!
Hail His Mother!*

*And hail all You holy virtues
which are poured into the hearts of the faithful
through the grace and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit,
that from being unbelievers,
You may make them faithful to God*

(St. Francis of Assisi's Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

Excerpts of daily quotes taken from the sources entitled *The Tribulations*

[continuation of section: Angelic Prophecies]

1

“The Word of God did not fail because the Jews did not accept me but rather persecuted me and killed my disciples, the remnant of my chosen one have been saved and will be saved; and my name has been made great among the nations. In a similar way, in this last hour, the chief effect and fruit of my promise and intention, which I decided to produce through you, cannot be hindered or destroyed by any opposition, whether human or satanic.” – **Love is, above all, the gift of oneself.**

2

His spirit was consoled by the words of Christ. And in order that the brothers might have no excuse in the sight of God, he fulfilled in himself what he preached to the brothers, and confirmed by the

example of his deeds what he taught in words. For he inspired them to observe perfectly the Rule revealed to him by the Lord. – **God wants the heart.**

3

Before their eyes Christ multiplied virtues and signs so that He might increase in them fidelity and love for this way and for His life and Rule which they professed, and that He might unite them in hatred of anything contrary to it. – **God loves all existing things.**

4

While [Francis] was at the Speco of Sant'Urbano, Christ Jesus sent him a glorious angel. The angel revealed to him the privileges or unique favors granted by God in heaven to those who love and observe the Rule purely to the very end. The angel encouraged him to announce to the brothers the unique glory which Christ has prepared in heaven for those who carry out the life and Rule faithfully and devoutly: blissful exaltation to the kingdom without any delay in the pains of Purgatory; the gleaming bright mansions for the disciples of Christ; defense during the exile of this pilgrimage; unique protection from the snares of the demons and from falling into mortal sin; – **One loving heart sets another on fire.**

5

joyful and Christ-like dwelling of Christ and His Spirit in the souls and bodies of those who observe the Rule purely and faithfully; and for those dying within the religion in the habit of humility and poverty, the forgiveness of all sins of commission and omission because of the sign and the reality, if they were found in it at the last, when they mercifully accepted the end. – **God has made you to love him, and not understand him.**

6

To those who have devotion for those who observe the Rule and for our religion, and to those who receive them devotedly and assist them kindly: an increase of the gifts of grace; protection from enemies; freedom from sins. If they listen to the brothers and persevere in their early love and reverence for them until the end, they will receive at the end mercy and the rest of eternal peace. – **All virtue is loving right, all sin is loving wrong.**

7

To those, on the other hand, who persecute, attack, and hate those brothers and their religion and this way of life, there will come, in the present, deprivation of grace; darkness of mind; entanglement in sin; bitterness of heart; and ungodliness; and, if they do not repent and regain their senses before death, the curse of Christ and eternal damnation will come upon them. – **All love, provided it is authentic, pure and disinterested bears in itself its own justification.**

8

Instructed by Christ and his heavenly messenger, in the power of the Holy Spirit Francis announced to the brothers the incomparable dignity, hidden glory, and sublimity of the imitation of the poor and humble life of Christ. With signs and extraordinary deeds, and with living and effective words, the upright of heart among them were inflamed to a pure observance of the life they had undertaken, and were strengthened in their reverence for the Rule they professed. – **What does it matter to a truly loving soul whether God is served by one means or by another.**

9

To those he knew to be perfect in love of Christ he revealed the secrets of his heart and what he had received directly from Christ. He told them that love and full, faithful observance of the poverty and humility of Christ were the foundation, the substance, and the root of the evangelical life and Rule revealed to him by Christ. – **Love is the only force that make tins one without destroying them.**

10

Jesus, the Son of God, consecrated it: born of a poor little mother in a cave, lying in a manger, and wrapped in swaddling clothes because he had no place in the inn; he was circumcised and offered to God; fleeing into Egypt and on His return from there, dwelling in Nazareth; begging for three days, fasting, preaching; dying, buried in another's tomb, rising from the dead. He declared that this was the root of obedience; the mother of renunciation; the death of self-satisfaction, greed, and avarice; the obedience and activity of faith; the expression of hope; the proof of humility; giving birth to the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. – **Human beings must be known to be loved, but divine things must be loved to be known.**

11

He said to the brothers: "Christ has assured me that the religion, when the foundation of poverty is removed, will become a cheap and miserable ruin. For this religion has been consecrated in a special way to the reverent service of charity and of the cross, in order to preserve humble poverty and the bonds of the commands of Christ. It has been chosen to receive spiritually and give birth to Christ Jesus in the inn of the Church in the last days, like another Virgin Mary in the Spirit. – **Love is the greatest thing that God can give us, for he himself is Love, and it is the greatest thing we can give to God.**

12

It is to promise, love and preserve this 'having nothing' on earth. Loving and preserving this, the brothers will bear Christ Jesus and His Spirit reverently and humbly. Persevering to the end, they will leave this life safe and sure of the kingdom of heaven. – **The only way to speak the truth is to speak it lovingly.**

13

Because of this he wanted them all to have the Rule, all to know it and, what is more, they were to die with it. Mindful of this admonition, that holy lesser brother who always carried a breastplate next to his flesh, in the end was sentenced to death by the Saracens for preaching and constantly confessing the faith. – **Truth is not only violated by falsehood, it may equally be outraged by silence.**

14

Taking the Rule which he always carried with him, he raised his eyes and his hands with the Rule to heaven, saying: "Into your hands, Lord Jesus Christ, I commend my spirit. And if, human as I am, I have in any way sinned against this Rule, may You, lover of all, graciously forgive me." After these words he was beheaded and passed to Christ with the palm of martyrdom. – **Only God is, only God knows, only God can do anything.**

15

Blessed Francis called this Rule the tree of life, the fruit of wisdom, the fountain of paradise, the ark of salvation, the ladder ascending into heaven, the pact of the eternal covenant, the Gospel of the kingdom, and the brief word which the Lord made on earth with His disciples. He taught the brothers that through the Rule they would find true rest for their souls and bodies, and experience the blessed sweetness of the easy and light burden and yoke of Christ, the weight that bears them up to heaven. – **No one can bar the way to truth, and at the same time advance its cause.**

16

In this way he had already organized and fully formed the brothers, assuring and strengthening them to the best of his ability by holy words and example to revere and observe purely and faithfully the life they professed. Then, on fire with the seraphic love which carried him into Christ, and to put words into action, he longed to offer himself to God as a living sacrifice through the fire of martyrdom. Three times he started out on journeys to the lands of unbelievers. But in order to test more fully the fire of his fervor, twice he was prevented by divine intervention. – **God's purpose in creating us is that we share his own family life.**

17

The third time, however, by Christ's design, he was led to the Sultan of Babylon after suffering many insults, chains, beatings, and hardships. Standing in the presence of the Sultan, he was entirely aglow with the fire of the Holy Spirit. He preached to him Christ Jesus and the faith of the Gospel with such force, such lively and moving words, that the Sultan and the bystanders were amazed. – **Why go searching for God in the stars when he is so close to us, within us.**

18

By the power of the words which Christ spoke through him the Sultan, moved to gentleness, willingly listened to his words against the decree of his own wicked law, and insistently invited him to arrange to stay in his land. He ordered that Francis and all his brothers were to be able have access to the Sepulcher freely, without paying tribute. – **The Trinity lives within us and transforms Christians into divinized children of God.**

[The First Tribulation or Persecution of the Order of Blessed Francis]

19

Meanwhile, with the shepherd away, the ravenous wolf tries to seize and scatter the flock, and the gate is opened to him by the very brothers who, more than others, were expected to oppose his attack and take precautions against his ambush. Those especially who were in authority and seemed wiser and more intelligent than the rest turned to pleasing their own way of thinking. – **We must not fear fear.**

20

They covered tepidity and infidelity under the appearance of discretion; and preached through cunning words and deeds a manner of life different from that given to them, the one their shepherd had received from heaven, supporting their views with passages from the Scriptures and the example of other religious. – **We fear things in proportion to our ignorance of them.**

21

They did not understand that by human prudence, which is called death by the Apostle, they were digging the pit of the abyss for themselves, forging the calf of idolatry, and retreating from the height of perfection they had promised. – **Let your only fear be the fear of doing an unrighteous or unholy thing.**

22

They judged it foolish, dangerous, and impossible to imitate and follow Christ simply and obediently, although He was the one who had spoken to them and had revealed the pattern of their life in Francis and through Francis. The sons of Israel, after coming out from Egypt and crossing the Red Sea, became unbelieving, and sure of their own self-sufficiency.

They gave no thought to the wonders they had experienced, seen, and heard while God was acting and speaking to them through Moses. In much the same way, these leaders, having left the world, given up their own will, taking on the evangelical life of the Cross, persuaded themselves and others that it was not useful humbly and obediently to follow Christ, who spoke and worked in Francis, the man sent to them by heaven. They therefore judged it necessary and just to drag behind them those who walked in simplicity and fidelity: they considered it praiseworthy – **We are taught and learn to be afraid and we can learn to be unafraid.**

[During Francis's Absence]

23

The presumption and boldness of these men increased after Saint Francis went on pilgrimage overseas to visit the holy places, preach the faith of Christ to the unbelievers, and gain the crown of martyrdom, as has been said. In many provinces they treated cruelly and harshly the brothers who resisted their efforts and opposed their decrees and who followed instead the footprints and teachings of their father with all their hearts. – **Fear is never a good counselor and victory over fear is our first spiritual duty.**

24

They not only inflicted unjust penances on them, but expelled them from their company and community as people lacking good sense. A great many brothers, especially the fervent in spirit, considered disobedient, were not received by them; and others, giving way to their fury, were scattered and wandered here and there. – **Do not fear God who wishes you no harm.**

25

They deplored the absence of their holy shepherd and guide, and with many tears and constant prayers begged the Lord for his return. God was looking down from on high on their invocations and pleas and was moved by their afflictions. He therefore appeared to Francis after that sermon to the sultan and his princes. – **Fear imprisons, faith liberates.**

26

“Francis,” he said, “go back. The flock of your poor brothers which you gathered in my name has been dispersed. It has taken the wrong way and needs your leadership so that, being united and strengthened, it may grow. They have already begun to turn from the way of perfection which you handed on to them and are not remaining in the love and practice of charity, humility and holy

poverty, and the innocence of simplicity in which you planted and established them.” – **Fear paralyzes, faith empowers.**

27

After this apparition, and after visiting the Lord’s Sepulcher, he hastened back to the land of the Christians. His flock, which he had left united, he found dispersed as the Lord had said. Seeking it out with great effort and tears, he gathered it together. – **Fear sickens, faith heals.**

28

When the afflicted brothers heard of his return, they went to him with haste, great desire, and immense joy of heart. Giving thanks to God, they threw themselves at his feet and honored the very footprints of the shepherd they had missed for so long. – **Fear puts hopelessness at the heart of life, while faith rejoices in God.**

29

He encouraged the timid, consoled the sorrowing, rebuked the restless, and reprimanded the fault of those who dispersed them; and he brought together in charity those who were scattered and those who scattered them. He inspired and inflamed both groups by his exhortations and admonitions to bear happily all hardships small or great and even death for the sake of Christ and observance of the Rule. – **We must fear God through love, not love God through fear.**

30

All were filled with wonder at the words of grace which came from his mouth; and they were amazed on considering the perfection of his life, his outstanding practice of virtue, and the countless signs and wonders God accomplished every day through him. - **Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.**

31

Those who put the prudence of their own ideas before his warnings and exhortations could not openly resist or reasonably argue against his words. - **To be able to find joy in another’s joy, that is the secret of happiness.**